

**The Celebration of the Life
of
Evelyn Johnston Mathews Edwards**

June 13, 1998

Harp Prelude

Processional of the Ashes

The Grandchildren

Come to My Garden

Melisa Mathews & Co.

Nestled in the hill, there I'll keep you safe beside me
Come to my garden. Rest there in my arms.
There I'll see you safely grown and on your way.
Stay there in my garden, where love grows free and wild.

Come to my garden; come sweet child
Lift me up and lead me to the garden
Where life begins anew, where I'll find you.
And I'll find you love me too.

Lift me up and lead me to the garden
Where love grows deep and true
Where I'll tell you, where I'll show you
My new life. I will live for you.

I shall see you in my garden
And spring will come and stay
Come to my garden where love grows free and wild
Come sweet day.

The Welcome

Joseph Matthews

The Welcome

The Matthews Family would like to welcome you to Evelyn's garden. So that there be no doubt what or where her garden is, just look around you. Do you see all the vibrant colors? Do you smell the intoxicating fragrances? Do you hear beauty unfolding revealing the mystery and the wonder of nature? Do you feel the tranquility carried on the wind, free and unadulterated? I do, and for that I am grateful. Every person here knows Evelyn, each in a particular and unique way. Yet, we all share fertile common ground in her gentle tending to our needs and her guarding the life forces essential to our evolution. We are in full blossom today, thanks to her nurture, and what a marvelous sight it is to behold! Come, let us celebrate the Eternal Spring of Evelyn's lifeforce where love grows deep and true.

Community Singing: Please stand

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved,
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come,
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun

Poetry Reading

Song of a Man who has come Through

Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!
A fine wind is blowing the new direction of Time.
If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry me
If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate, a winged gift!
If only, most lovely of all, I yield myself and am borrowed
By a fine, fine wind that takes its course through the chaos of
the world
Like a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade inserted;
If only I am keen and hard like the sheer tip of a wedge
Driven by invisible blows,
The rock will split, we shall come at the wonder, we shall find
the Hesperides.

Oh, for the wonder that bubbles into my soul,
I would be a good fountain, a good well-head,
Would blur no whisper, spoil no expression.

What is the knocking?
What is the knocking at the door in the night?
It is somebody wants to do us harm.

No, no, it is the three strange angels.
Admit them, admit them.

D. H. Lawrence

We are Transmitters

As we live, we are transmitters of life.
And when we fail to transmit life, life fails to flow through us.

That is part of the mystery of sex, it is a flow onwards.
Sexless people transmit nothing.

And if, as we work, we can transmit life into our work,
Life, still more life, rushes into us to compensate, to be ready
And we ripple with life through the days.

Even if it is a woman making an apple dumpling, or a man a
stool,
If life goes into the pudding, good is the pudding,
Good is the stool,
Content is the woman, with fresh life rippling in to her,
Content is the man.

Give and it shall be given unto you
Is still the truth about life.
But giving life is not so easy.
It doesn't mean handing it out to some mean fool, or letting the
living dead eat you up.
It means kindling the life-quality where it was not,
even if it's only in the whiteness of a washed pocket
handkerchief.

D.H. Lawrence

Scripture reading:

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-12

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

- a time to be born, and a time to die;**
- a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;**
- a time to kill, and a time to heal;**
- a time to break down, and a time to build up;**
- a time to weep, and a time to laugh;**
- a time to mourn, and a time to dance;**
- a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stories together;**
- a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;**
- a time to seek, and a time to lose;**
- a time to keep, and a time to cast away.**
- a time to rend, and a time to sew;**
- a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;**
- a time to love, and a time to hate;**
- a time for war, and a time for peace.**

...He has made everything beautiful in its time.

Reading

There is nothing I can give you
Which you have not;
But there is much, very much that,
While I cannot give it, you can take.

No heaven can come to us unless our hearts
Find rest in today. Take heaven!
No peace lies in the future which is not hidden
in this present instant. Take peace!

The gloom of the world is but a shadow.
Behind it, yet within reach, is joy.
There is radiance and glory in the darkness, could we but see,
and to see, we have only to look. I beseech you to look.

Life is so generous a giver, but we, judging its gifts by
their covering, cast them away as ugly, or heavy, or hard.
Remove the covering, and you will find beneath it
a living splendor, woven of love, by wisdom, with power.

Welcome it, grasp it and you touch the angel's hand
that brings it to you. Everything we call a trial, a sorrow
or a duty, believe me, that angel's hand is there, the gift is there,
and the wonder of an overshadowing presence.
Our joys too, be not content with them as joys.
They too, conceal livening gifts.

And so this time I greet you,
Not quite as the world sends greetings, but with
profound esteem and with the prayer that for you,
now and forever, the day breaks, and the shadows flee.

by Fra Giovanni 1513 A.D

Community Singing: Please stand

Fifth City Love Song

And I love you so, that people ask me how,
How I've lived till now, I tell them I don't know.
People say I've changed, that they don't understand,
Ever since the day, the day I took your hand.

First refrain:

And yes, I know how lonely life can be.
The shadows follow me, and night won't set me free.
But I don't let the evening get me down,
Now that you're around me.

And you love me too; your thoughts are just for me.
You make my heart alive and set my spirit free.
The book of life is brief, but once a page is read
All of love is there; this is my belief.

Repeat first refrain

You are City Five, Chicago's Old West Side,
Where Iron Man first was born to build a global sign.
Oh, yes, I know you've changed, and some do not believe
This world has a new day since courage set you free.

Second refrain:

And yes, we've known this world's great agony,
The billions still denied their hopes and destiny.
But we will go wherever they may be,
'Til all communities live free.

I've lived with you so long; no other love have I
Your pain is all my own; your buildings, streets and cries,
Soon I may pass away, but love will still remain,
The Iron Man standing tall, that all the world may gain.

Repeat second refrain

The Obituary

Let there be gatherings around the planet earth to celebrate the life force of Evelyn Johnston Mathews Edwards who has traveled on to a world of pure and eternal spirit. She was born Evelyn Clara Johnston to Carolyn Myrtle Wilson Johnston and Samuel Howard Johnston in Wilmington, Delaware on June 19, 1917 and peacefully departed, surrounded by family on June 4, 1998 in Chicago Illinois.

Evelyn was a wife, mother and sister. Married to Joseph Wesley Mathews, who died in 1977, she gave life to three sons: Joseph, James, and John who died in 1972. She was also a matriarchal presence and role model to her daughters-in-law, Nancy and Teresa, and a loving grandmother to Melisa, Juan, Brent and Amber. Later in life she enjoyed a second marriage to Clifford William Edwards who preceded her in death. She is survived by her sister, Eleanore Johnston Peterson.

Although formally educated at Stanford University in California, Evelyn spent her life's journey being tutored by the pain of the Great Depression, World War II, the Civil Rights Movement and the innocent human suffering of the disenfranchised. Her destiny was significantly shaped as well through her participation in the missions of the Christian Faith and Life Community in Austin Texas, and The Ecumenical Institute and The Institute of Cultural Affairs in Chicago, Illinois. Yet, in the end, History itself mediated her intellectual and spiritual development as no person or institution could have. Not one to measure her worth by material standards, she creatively expended the power of her knowledge and the wealth of her spirit in a relentless drive to create a safe, caring and just world.

Evelyn was, and will continue to be, a member of her family, a friend, a colleague and a mentor to many people of diverse cultures, races and spiritual orientations. She has now come full circle and will be deeply missed but never forgotten.

The Prayer

We pray in gratitude for the life of Evelyn:

for her affirmation of life in a time of negativity;

for her boundless curiosity that was not curbed by fear of the new;

for her care that was wide and deep, directing itself to those most of us forgot, and played out in large and small ways;

for her purity of heart, and the innocence that made the most jaded amongst us reconsider our lives;

for her willingness to do whatever was needed, whether it was speaking before hundreds or washing the dishes;

for being slow to anger in an age that needs this reaction for the sake of its survival;

for living out of forgiveness and never holding a grudge;

for being a lady and making it possible for us to know one;

for her eagerness for life when many her age have retired in every way;

for all the times she showed up where no one expected her to go and forever changed what was possible;

for the love she showed the youngest and the oldest of the lives around her;

for her mind that loved the majesty of the universe and gave it to others;

for the sadness we feel that tells us something marvelous is over.

We pray in gratitude to the creator of us all for the wonder that was Evelyn's life.

Amen.

Lyn: A Profound Contribution to History

Lyn was a lady. Elegant, caring

Lyn was a wife and a mother. Loving, sharing, nurturing.

Lyn was a friend. Doing all of the “little things” that enliven and refresh relationships.

Lyn was a colleague. Challenging people to live their commitments

Lyn was a profound spirit person. A symbol in the best sense of that word.

One of her most cherished ways of looking at the deeps of spirit life is called the Other World, a four-part description of the topography of the life of spirit. It is, therefore, altogether fitting and proper that the Other World is used to describe the greatness of Lyn’s life in the dimensions of mystery, consciousness, care and tranquillity.

First is MYSTERY. Lyn was “elegant enigma.” The elegant part is obvious. It had to do with a style that defined gracious presence. Whatever she was doing, she did it with the passion and intensity that convinced you of its significance — whether it was addressing a meeting in an Indian village like Maliwada or acting in a play at the Admiral or keeping books in Chicago or producing the Kanbay newsletter. If Lyn was doing it, you knew it was worth doing.

But there was more. In the midst of whatever she did, there was a twinkle, a note that indicated more, something hidden, another dimension, a mysterious quality that defied specification. Lyn could cling stubbornly to values many of us considered passé, but she was also relentlessly open to the new, however many sacred cows it demolished. No matter how committed she was to a project, you always knew her real commitment went further. The twinkle proved it. She was in awe of life and life was in awe of her.

One never, I think, really knew Lyn. It wasn't just that she kept her own conscience, although she did that with care. It was rather that the better you knew Lyn, the more aware you became of Mystery. While she was an accessible person, you could never be quite sure what she would say or do. Perhaps that was one of her greatest gifts to us who were her friends and colleagues: translucence to the Mystery.

Lyn was Mystery.

Second is CONSCIOUSNESS. She was actively aware. Always reading new, "edge" books on the world and spirit, she continually engaged life. She intentionally gleaned meaning from the many situations life presented her.

In recent years Lyn hosted the "Wild Women's Book Club," a sign of her interest in lifelong learning and interest in creating and being a part of a conscious community. In her late seventies she attended two Vipassana meditation retreats. She declared that those ten days of silent meditation were the most difficult thing she had done in her life. Yet she kept coming back for more.

While deeply rooted in the historical church, she had a profound understanding of the oneness of humankind. An elder in one of the villages her organization was assisting was asked if these foreigners were religious. He replied, "Oh no, they're too holy to be religious." Lyn was a true holy person.

Lyn was Consciousness.

Third is CARE. She was boundless love. She cared deeply for her family, friends and colleagues. She knew most clearly when a colleague or friend needed a word or intervention and she never shrunk from delivering that word in a caring direct fashion. She worked tirelessly at figuring out how to assist people through difficult situations and often chose to help them see the importance of what they were doing as a way to give them courage to deal with their own challenges.

She was sustained by possibility. She was clear that at the heart of things, there is hope and possibility. What a grand demonstration her life was. Although she was sensitive and responsive to the needs of others, her care exceeded feeling. She deeply loved 5th City and its struggles for socio-economic change and justice. And she felt a wonderful affinity to the people of that Chicago neighborhood where she lived and worked.

She was a woman who believed she could do anything and would do most anything. In her lifetime she was a financial person, a fund-raiser, a teacher, an archivist, a historian – telling her story and collecting other stories. In recent years while working on projects like the archives, the redoing of the Religious Studies I course and the Stories Project she focused on mining the wisdom of the past, bringing forth the gems that could reflect and possibly influence the future.

What she did not know she set about learning. Lyn poured her care into particular projects passionately. She could cook you a personal dinner or be a leader at an international conference.

Lyn was Care.

Finally, Lyn was TRANQUILITY. She looked upon life with a sense of gaiety and freedom. She took the vicissitudes of life in stride, appropriating them in a joyful manner. In one of her most memorable public speeches, she declared, “I am stuffed with effulgence!” While it might seem effulgence means unspeakable joy, it also means radiance or light. Lyn is the embodiment of radiance; her radiance illuminated the lives of all of us that gathered here to celebrate her completed life.

Lyn was and is endlessly Tranquil.

Lyn both lived the Other World and delivered it most powerfully and empoweringly to those around her. She was a demonstration of living one’s life fully at every age. She shall be missed. We are privileged to have shared her journey. And she remains for us as the symbol she was while alive: a symbol of a profoundly human life. May there be those raised up who might carry that life posture forward.

Community Singing

At the Center Tranquil

Tune: Shenandoah

Universe, illumination
All unknown, absurd assurance
Everywhere is found life's meaning
And I, I am the way
At the center tranquil.

There's no hope, yet all is hopeful.
Then no cares, there are no problems
No enemies, no earthly foes
And I, I am the struggle
At the center tranquil

Pulsing exhilaration
Everything's become a blessing
Embraced by joy, a dance of rapture
And I, I am the stillness
At the center tranquil

Gloriously condemned to die
Life is new, a great resurgence
Community with all the faithful
And I, I am forever
At the center tranquil.

Reflections:

James Johnston Mathews

- I'd like to begin by thanking all the friends and colleagues of Lyn who have gathered here today to celebrate her life and death.
- The family is very grateful for your support over the past month. Our family owes a huge debt of gratitude to Betty Pesek who walked "*the extra mile*" to put this memorial together.
- Lyn died a week ago Thursday, on June 4th, at 7:40 am surrounded by her family. She died as she had lived with great dignity.
- Lyn would have been 81 on the 19th of June.

Active to the end, being totally engaged in life was very important to Lyn.

~Travel - Lyn loved to travel and was always on the go. One of the family jokes in my household was to ask "Where's Lyn?"

- On an Alaskan cruise
- She's in Arizona
- On her way to Egypt
- In Texas meditating
- East coast

.....

Lyn still worked two days a week at Kanbay. I think she was in line for a raise, for a job well done.

.....

She was fully engrossed in making sure the ICA archives were catalogued. She also was an important member of the Wild Womens' Book Reading Club, having served as their hostess for their monthly meetings. And she was the editor both the ICA Newsletter and the Kanbay Times. Her latest passion was in collecting stories of the hundreds of colleagues that she knew in the work of the ICA.

Lyn wore many hats in life,

- a loving mother
- a nurturing grandmother
- an educator
- a mentor
- a ruthless scrabble player
- a gracious lady
- a good friend

Most people can count their true friends in life on one hand. Lyn ran out of digits many years ago.

The quality most admired in my mother was her grace. She lived her life with grace. I looked up grace in the dictionary last night, and came up with this:

*.....eloquence.....charm.....refinement.....good-will
.....a compassionate nature.....kindness.....a disposition
to be generous*

All these I'm very comfortable with when I think of Lyn. Yes she will always be remembered as a gracious lady.

.....And part of her grace and what made her such a valued friend is she was a great listener. Lyn always made our stories important, and thus gave our lives significances and value.

Grace and Peace

Joseph Wesley Mathews, Jr.

Today we celebrate life, replete with sadness and pain, joy and fulfillment, love and healing. When I was 12 years old a lady named Helen Salisbury, a family friend and supporter of the mission of the Christian Faith and Life Community in Austin, Texas, took me aside and softly spoke the following, "Your mother is truly a Queen." It was not until many years later that I understood exactly what she meant, too late for some decisions I made which caused my mother anguish, but in time to heal, thus allowing us to profoundly enjoy each other's company.

I must confess that it took me a long time to reconcile and put to rest a degree of resentment I felt at having to share both my parents with the entire world. Too often I felt the needs of my family were subservient to the myriad demands of so many others. Regarding Evelyn, I allowed myself to stand in public crowds as a stranger witnessing and applauding the virtues and acts of kindness of a woman who really was an enigma to me. Well, I stand here today, in Evelyn's garden, completely at peace and eternally grateful for having had the opportunity later in life to rediscover my mother.

So how does this humble son remember his mother? In the broadest possible context, she was a woman who did not waiver in unconditionally caring for a son who experienced countless moments of profound weakness and numerous episodes of self-destruction. Having survived and transcended life as it had been, my mother and I began a new journey. In this journey we lived a whole lifetime of honesty, sharing our emotions and feelings which had been out of reach for so long. Never missing an occasion, I was able to tell her over and over again how much I loved her, and she would do the same. She would tell me how proud she was to be my mother and I in turn, proud to be her son. She embraced my pain and struggles, all the while telling me how proud she was of what I had accom-

plished in life, and I too fully embraced her life's mission. We hugged. We kissed. We laughed. We cried. In the morning we would greet the sun and later run off to the sunset, singing praises to life. Every day was celebrated by a thousand rainbows and heavenly rains of shooting stars. All life's pain and guilt was washed away, and I was finally able to shout at the universe, "Thank you Lord for my life." This woman Evelyn, my mother, rekindled the fire within me. She taught me to live life to the fullest with honesty as my guiding light, my beacon.

Although she will always live in my heart and counsel my soul, I will miss the times of this world. So I bid farewell to this woman, my mother, my friend, my Queen. Mom, I love you and I am proud to be your son.

Community Singing: Please stand

Those who Wait on the Lord

Those who wait on the Lord
Shall renew their strength
They shall mount up on wings as eagles
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint,
Help us, Lord, Help us, Lord, in thy way.

Those who know the Mystery...

Those who see the risen Lord...

Those who symbolize their lives...

Those who live the global style...

Send out: Remain Standing
Bishop James K. Mathews

Recessional

Just now I walked around the table upon which Lyn's ashes lie. Was this some archaic ritual? In reality, I was "walking around the boundaries," to help define the sacted space which gives meaning to our gathering. Whenever God's people gather there occurs a fresh definition of sacred space - or we could say that the Church happens all over again -- even in the beautiful sanctuary.

-- Because here we have sung the Songs of the Spirit -- songs she and we have come to love; and to hear words which in their very sacredness make this a more sacred space too.

-- Because here words have been spoken which have made clear our love for Lyn -- words too long left unspoken in the past.

--Because here Lyn finally received her very own "4 by 4". In fact, she lived her way into it. In rare way she embodied the Mystery. She progressed through the years from, a relatively casual approach to life to an acute sense of Awareness or Consciousness. Surely her Care extended to all. Through vicissitudes which would have overwhelmed most of us, she was the very model of Tranquility.

I cannot help thinking that Lyn is even now laughing a little at the rest of us. For she possessed a sly sense of humor. Here we are: still puzzled about mystery and meaning while she now knows the answer.

Let me say more about sacred space. It is a good thing that we meet in a rather large church for a great multitude needed to be accommodated. Nevertheless this church has proved to be not nearly large enough. From where I stand the invisible ones who are present far outnumber those we can see.

We rather piously confess from time to time that we believe in the "Communion of the Saints" -- as if we knew what we were talking about. We must mean something by the phrase. Could it be that whenever we gather in solemn and sacred assembly, somehow all those who believe-- of whatever time or place -- are present with us? So you see why a great deal of sacred space is needed.

Thus it is that:

Abraham and Sarah are here;

and Isaac and Robekah;

and Leah, Rachel and Jacob;

and Joseph and Moses and Aaron and Miriam;

They too are here.

And what of King David? -- though Kinging has more or less gone out of style.

Present too are the prophets. Isn't it great to have Isaiah here, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel and Daniel and all the Minor Prophets too?

And Ruth and Naomi together with all the faithful men and women of old. Then the Apostles are here and Mary and Mary Magdalene and Jesus: especially Jesus, who promised that where two of three are gathered together in his name, he would be in their midst.

In the number is also Paul, for this St. Paul's Church. He has to be a very busy Apostle to get around to all the churches which bear his name!

There is St. Augustine, and St. Cyprian and St. Tertullian, although the Church never got around to calling him a saint, he who said that "the soul is naturally Christian" - sort of like Lyn.

Then there is St. Francis, St. Thomas, St. Martin Luther, Sts. John Wesley and John Calvin.

And St. Martin Luther King, Jr. and St. Mother Teresa and that other St. Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi.

They're all here! And host of others too. This is indeed sacred space!

But this is supposed to be a sendout. Well, it is -- with extended remarks! These ashes are not Evelyn, for she was separated from them days ago. We send her out because she has been called out of God into the Great Venture which lies ahead of us all. She is not alone on her journey, for others have gone before: like her son John; her parents; Joe, Bill. But above all has gone before her - the One who conquered the last enemy, death and called it what it is: Nothing!

And we send out all the others gathered here to go out and be the scattered people of God, doing unendingly the "necessary deed" which brings life to all.

We sang a moment ago "Those who wait upon the Lord." Some of us recall that those words were sung around Joe's death-bed while he, with his last strength, tried with his lips to shape the syllables. Not a bad way to die! Not a bad way to live!

Lyn was a Global Person. Therefore, I give the benediction in Marathi, the language the people of Maliwada speak;

then in Shona of Zimbabwe where Joe long ago danced like Zorba on the rim of the chasm of Victoria Falls. And then in English:

“The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ;

Which is the Love of God the Father;

Made real and present right here and right now by the Holy Spirit;

Be with us all, now and all along the way.” Amen

Evelyn's ashes will remain in the sanctuary for a private moment as individual needs dictate.

Her remains will be distributed to the following persons at her request

Her sons, Joseph and James Mathews

**The Ecumenical Institute and The Institute of Cultural Affairs
Fifth City**

Rev. Frank and Aimee Hilliard

The Admiral Retirement Community

Lyn has commissioned these persons to scatter her ashes at designated locations.

Memorial Fund

A memorial fund will be established to help bring to fruition Lyn's latest project and passion — the collection of stories from the Spirit Movement. In lieu of flowers and other gifts, the family suggests a contribution to this fund. Checks may be made out to

**ICA Story Project
4750 N. Sheridan Road
Chicago, Illinois 60640**

**LYN
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ON THE EVE
OF YOUR PASSING**

Lady Lyn
Elegant, powerful
(Sugar and steel
And everything real)
You may not know from me
How totally transforming
Knowing you has been...
How much of you
Reflects in who I am becoming.

Calm, centered, always reflecting
(Such considered space
Between stimulus and response!)
Yet I never saw anyone more strategic.
You always know your bottom lines
And how to hold your ground.

Diplomats should have trained with you
They sorely need your art
Of affirming the Other...
Your gift of "listening down the well"
Until one hears
The Mystery.

Matter of fact,
I'd wish everyone a 'Lyn experience.'
The Aldonza in you won't last
Five minutes around Lyn's seeing
Only your beauty and strength!

I dare say, Lyn...
Dear friend, mentor,
Colleague, second mom...
It is so very difficult to imagine
This world without you!
But as I struggle to see
Past my own current grief

It will be a collection of the most
outlandish, outrageous,
out-of-this world experiences
of a group of
ordinary people
who led
extraordinary lives.

I realize it is totally All Right
To allow life its completeness
After all, God seems to think it's fine.

Your life has been bright
And full of bold vision...
We've found many ways
To participate with you
In plotting miracles
And being a midwife
To a myriad of dreams
Of the possible Now.

What a Grand Time we had!
The Gift of your being
With all of us
Is now reverberating
Through many thousands of destinies!

Thank You Lyn
For your grace filled life
Beautifully lived
When I'm not out there in the Chaos
Trying to sling a creative bridge or two
I trust that I'll hear you
Now and then Cheering me on.

Dance then,
Wherever you may be....

Joyce Burnet Bonafield 6/3/98

The Obituary of Evelyn Johnston Mathews Edwards

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