

## EDITORIAL

In this Node we wish to focus on celebrating the completed life of Lyn Mathews Edwards. Lyn was always a champion of the Node encouraging us to keep it going and even offering to do it herself if we had to stop publishing it.

I went to Chicago for the memorial service of a woman who thrust me into a world of finance, community care and graciousness.

As I entered St. Paul's United Church in Chicago, I experienced the presence of the Global Order standing still in awe, honouring the life of one of our "saints". I looked around and saw people I hadn't seen for 15-20 years - Fred Buss, Aimee & Frank Hilliard, Priscilla Wilson, Bishop Jim Mathews, Larry Ward, Ruth Carter, Martha Talbott, Joe Crocker, Kay and Geof Nixon, Lyn Wisman, Doris and Charles Hahn, Joe Slicker and so many more. I saw children of children I once knew- one of them being Naomi Lazear with her baby and her husband.

Memories both joyous & painful flooded in. In seconds during 3 different receptions following the service we rediscovered each other - now who is that - oh yes and a face and name would come together. Across the room - I know that person and you would go rushing over to see that one of long ago - older and yet the same. A hand on your shoulder and you would turn and a presence from another time and place-remembering together, sharing hopes, dreams and care. Our faces and voices spoke of the dying and rebirths we all have experienced.

In the first reception - awe was so deep that we ate very little of the wonderful fruit and pastries and they had to be put away for another time. By 7 or 8 p.m. when we got to Ray Spencers & Tina Valdez's home - we were starved as I'm sure Tina and Raymond discovered.

From the beginning of the memorial service which began around 2:00 p.m. with wonderful harp music until midnight, gathering and regathering continued to happen as we celebrated together and experienced being with Lyn in her endless tranquillity.

A big thank you to all of Lyn's family and to our colleagues in Chicago for your deep care filled attention.

In this Node, you will find excerpts from Lyn's 1998 letter, as well as a copy of the memorial service with the witnesses by her sons and a

send out by Bishop Jim Mathews. One of the stories from the Kemper conversation is shared by Fred Buss. We encourage you to use all of these materials to create your own celebrations of Lyn and to share your own stories. We would love to share some of these stories in a future Node as well. In the rest of the Node we continue to celebrate the lives of families and individuals around the globe. Jeanette Stanfield

## THE CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF EVELYN JOHNSTON MATHEWS EDWARDS

### The Welcome

The Mathews Family would like to welcome you to Evelyn's garden. So 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 tranquillity carried on the wind, free and unadulterated? I do and for that I am grateful. Every person here present 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 life force where love grows deep and true.

### Witness

I would 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 a.m. surrounded by her family. She died as she had lived with great dignity. Lyn would have been 81 on the 19th of June. She was active to the end. Being totally engaged in life was very important to Lyn.

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.

The ICA archives was very important to her. She was in the Book Reading Club and involved in the Admiral newsletter. Her latest passion was Storytelling - stories of the spirit project movement.

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 I 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, goodwill, a compassionate nature, kindness & a disposition to be generous. All of 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 significance and value.

Grace and Peace, Jim Mathews

## Reflections

Today we celebrate life, replete with sadness and pain, joy and fulfillment, love and healing. When I was 12 years old a lady name Helen Salsbury, 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 that 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 accomplished in life, and I too fully embrace 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.

Joe Mathews.

## The Sendout

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 sacred 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.

This has become sacred space for us because here and now the earthly part of Evelyn Johnston Mathews Edwards made its final entrance. We all stood as one to acknowledge the honor we hold for her.

It became sacred space because Lyn's life has touched each and all of us significantly in so many ways which have made all the difference for us.

- 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 x 4". In fact, she lived her way into it. In a 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 Tranquillity.

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 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:

Sarah & Abraham

and Isaac and Rebekah;

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 or three are gathered together in his name, he would be in their midst.

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

Then 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 Jon Calvin.

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

They're all here! And hosts of others too. This in indeed sacred space!

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 in 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, “They that 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;  
Make real and present right here and right now by the Holy Spirit;  
Be with us all, now and all along the way.” Amen James K. Mathews

Lyn Mathews Edwards  
Letter of January, 1998

My weekly schedule is well paced to yield available time to savor each day. Three days a week, M-T-TH, I work at Kanbay where I particularly enjoy having lunch with Betty Pesek. This work provides the income stream needed to keep the car in good repair and hopefully running for another 100,000 miles and also to economically undergird my attending the ICA:I global meeting in Brussels next August. Life at the Admiral is comfortable, gracious, low-level energy demand, and a place of having the companionship of some great people, among whom I am one of the youngest!! Social life abounds. Never did I dream of a time when the legitimate theater would be twice-a-month on my calendar. I revel in the excellent performances at the Goodman; the renewal of the classics - Moliere, Chekhov, etc. - that is the focus of the Court “Theater; and the spirit exuberance of the Black Ensemble Theater - all great. Next week I am going to the Goodman to see “The Notebooks of Leonardo de Vinci” - excellent reviews. I love to cook so it is always a treat to prepare a meal and evening for colleagues coming through Chicago (next Saturday Neil Vance will stop in for breakfast) or for those living in the Chicago Area or for my Admiral friends. Enough, enough. But I do hope it communicates that life is blessed and filled with joy.