

In Memoriam: Georgette Kelley

Georgette Kelley, Ed.D., died on July 17, 2005, at the age of 59 after a long encounter with cancer during which she explored many forms of healing. She is sorely missed in the community.

For more than 25 years, she was a vibrant part of the New York Jungian community as a student, colleague, supervisor, teacher, committee and board member, and friend. For the past several years she also taught in the Philadelphia Interregional program. Early in her career, alongside her private practice, she was Director of Psychological Services at Douglass College, a part of Rutgers University.

Born in the Midwest, she traveled east to graduate school. And her love of travel was important throughout her life, taking her on many trips to Asia and Europe. In the last weeks of her life, she was in Italy with her partner Daphne and friends.

Georgette will be remembered for her ability to combine common sense, humor, compassion, steadiness, and an ever-increasing knowledge and experience in many fields. Her clarity of vision enabled her to express her profound psychological and spiritual understanding with a friendly precision that made her deep understanding of the material available for her students and colleagues to assimilate. She was a generous teacher and friend, able to assign and read candidates' weekly journals, always willing to take on new courses and tasks and to be fully present to listen sensitively and respond attentively.

She had a gift for fairness and for getting others to reflect on their parts in any quandary so each could take responsibility for their own shadow qualities. And she worked diligently to fathom her own, welcoming opportunities with the annoyed acceptance that is one mark of an individuating soul.

A courageous explorer of psyche and psyche/soma connections, she continued opening to her own depths in relationships with her good friends, in the personal supervision and case group with colleagues that went on long after her student years at the institute ended. In her long-term Buddhist practices and in more recent work with Andean shamanic traditions, which she was studying in the years before she died, she continued to plumb the depths of psyche.

She was competent and knowledgeable in many areas: able to assemble furniture and do essential house repairs as well as navigate the intrapsychic corridors of her Buddhist Dark Retreats. In them she spent days alone in pitch blackness experiencing the projected psyche and alternative, mystic realities. The fruits of her wide-ranging interests often formed the basis of presentations and papers in which she shared her experiences of bridges between Buddhism and Jung's psychology, for example, or of the Tibetan Dakinis and contemporary women's reclamation of their access to the feminine principle.

Her home was a central gathering place for an eclectic group of friends she brought together and made into a family over her years in New Jersey and New York. A gracious, openhearted hostess, she was also vividly exuberant in her love of communal festivities. At one point she danced so hard at her own party that she broke her ankle. Her friends remember her bursts of spontaneous, delighted laughter.

Her love of nature led her to build a rustic cabin in the woods of Vermont, where she spent time alone with her beloved dog and sometimes also with friends. This sanctuary has been left as a place for others to use when they need a time of creative incubation.

Her stepchildren remember her as an extraordinary, cherished stepmother. All of us who knew her remember her richness and diversity, the wide spectrum of resources that she shared, and her legacy of heart.

She wrote the following eulogy for her own memorial:

We will remember Georgette Kelley as a loyal, loving and committed friend, a woman who always explored the outer limits of whatever she was interested in. Her interests catered to the unseen—the mysteries of soul, spirit, psyche and life. Her spirituality was a core aspect of her being on this plane, and I am sure that is very true now as she has passed on to this new, maybe ancient plane. As a young college student she pursued mystical Christianity, fascinated by the Christ within. Then she was drawn to Eastern practices of Tai Chi, Chi Gong, Buddhism and Taoism.

Her love of nature gave her solace in this world. Spending time at her Soul's home, her Vermont cabin with few modern amenities, was her favorite activity. She pursued shamanism intensively at the end of her life.

Her cancer diagnosis made her more present and available to us.

We will remember her pursuing alternative health care—a model of courage in facing the fears of a terminal illness. Her deep sense of being guided and learning to listen were very real to us as we lived this with her. She is survived by her loving partner, Daphne.

Her strong spirit and Soul presence will live on with us.

*Marjorie Formann
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