

delight to watch his heart melting through those years as he risked more and more of the “touchy feely stuff” he was so good at helping the rest of us to engage in.

Then, too, Robin was an innovator, a man of vision, often seeing needs and trends long before others did. And he was an activist. He was probably most content when he was contributing to others. He had a knack for getting people from disparate backgrounds together. He was a superb organizer, doing with an ease and grace things that would daunt most people. He could quickly identify what was going on with people or groups or organizations; then he would just as quickly see what could be done to improve things—and he would offer his help.

In all he did, Robin was a re-former. He would seek to re-form things by changing their shape for the better. I suspect he was hardwired for this, because it was so fundamental to him. We can see it in his first job as a toolmaker, in which he would create something useful from something of a different form.

And we can see it in every other job and area of interest he had, including: social work and his committed interest in youth; in scouting and the contributions he made to the lives of many thousands of children and young people; in transactional analysis and his contribution to people’s freedom, aliveness, happiness, and effectiveness; in his work as a psychotherapist, counselor, mentor, teacher, and management consultant; and in his interest in and involvement with the Army Reserve.

Robin was a leader, too, always ready to step forward to take responsibility, something he did in many different organizations. It is worth noting that most of these activities were voluntary—a real measure of the man. He was: a captain in the Army Reserve, the Chief Commissioner of Scouting in South Australia, the president of the South Australian Branch of the Australian Association of Social Workers, an ITAA Board of Trustees member, a long-time chairman of the ITAA Ethics

by Ken Mellor

I had the honor of being one of six people to speak at Robin Maslen’s funeral on 12 August 2008 in Adelaide, Australia, a privilege guided by the strict instructions he left. We were all to talk for a maximum of 5 minutes each. His rationale: He had been bored by people at funerals going on and on, and he did not want that to happen at his. However, as I pointed out to Val, his wife, 5 minutes was far too short a time to do justice to a man like Robin, so she relented and allowed me 10!

We are here today to honor Robin Maslen and to celebrate his life. We are also here to get closure on the loss we are each experiencing and to say good-bye.

I met Robin over 37 years ago. He was a man of stature, someone who touched the lives of many thousands of people directly and many hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, indirectly.

First and last, he was a family man. He loved his family—a love he expressed in ways typical of the era in which he was raised, where love was demonstrated by providing for the family rather than through statements of affection. It was love, nonetheless. I count myself greatly blessed that Rob and Val Maslen opened their hearts and lives to me and mine, so that we, like many here today, became members of their family, too.

Once he retired, he devoted much of his time to Val and his children and grandchildren. It was a

Committee, and ITAA President from 1992 to 1993.

He appropriately received a great deal of formal recognition both for who he was as a person and for his many contributions. Perhaps the most important of these, and the one he would both have cherished and been very embarrassed about, would be the presence here today of so many to honor him with love and gratitude in our hearts for a life well lived and for the direct influence he has had on us all. More formally, he was also awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study overseas correctional systems and the Order of Australia for his contribution to youth.

This year, he was granted two additional honors: a life membership in the Australian Association of Social Workers for his service to the association and to the profession of social work and the Muriel James Living Principles Award from the ITAA for being a man who lived by the principles espoused in transactional analysis.

As we sit here today, the question that I think faces each of us is: What now? My answer is this: I am convinced that Robin will continue to make the best of things, just as he did right to the end of his physical life. For those of you who don't know: He only got the diagnosis of stomach cancer and extensive liver cancer a few short weeks ago. Having explored his options to his satisfaction, he decided on chemotherapy. He got some temporary relief from this, but became very ill soon afterward and was admitted to hospital on Sunday, 3 August. Despite his declining condition, he remained upbeat for the next 4 days. In fact, it was only when he was told that medicine could do no more for him that he shifted gears. That was at 10 am on Friday the 8th. Having assured himself that Val and the rest of

the family would be all right, he moved to peaceful acceptance of his condition and slipped away quietly and easily with his family around him at 2:42 pm that afternoon.

Ever since, I keep chuckling to myself about a recurring fantasy: I see Robin talking to St. Peter at the Pearly Gates (not that he believed in anything like that). Before they have been chatting for long, Robin is offering to help reorganize the recruitment system into heaven. He has already noticed the hinges on the gates could do with a touch of oil and keeps talking to St. Peter over his shoulder as he makes a start. Then, quite predictably, after starting, he decides to pull the whole structure apart in order to restore and to re-form it.

This Pearly Gates fantasy aside, there is a lovely Hopi Indian poem by Mary Frye that may be closer to what is now happening for Robin, words that may help each of us to deal with our sense of loss.

Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow;
I am the diamond glints on snow;
I am the sunlight on ripened grain;
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet white doves in circled flight;
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there;
I did not die.

I am now near the end of what I am going to say, and I have three more things to offer. First, we have a part to play in what comes next for Robin, because we are still linked with him in consciousness to some extent. We can support him now, as he is poised on the threshold of what lies beyond this world that many experience as bound by flesh and blood, feeling and thinking, space and time. We can support him by releasing him from our hearts and minds—saying goodbye. This will help him to move on into what is there for him, where he now is, rather than keeping him caught here with us, because of his love and concern for us. It will also help us to move on into the rest of our lives when we are ready.

Second, let us now encourage him on his way by internally affirming:

Robin, go with our love and thanks.

Leave us now with the rich legacy our memories of you provide.

Move on into all that is beyond this world, all that is there for you now.

Open yourself to the complete acceptance there for you.

Allow yourself to be filled full by the infinite love already enfolding you.

Dissolve into the ineffable joy and bliss now greeting you.

And become the dazzling light that shows your true stature as a living being.

The last thing is this: After the family had left the hospital last Friday, Elizabeth and I meditated with Robin and his body for a while. It was a peaceful and serene time. Then, as we walked outside, we looked up, our attention attracted by a brilliantly colored complete rainbow that was overarching the hospital. Gasping at its beauty, we thought of one of the meanings of rainbows in Tibetan Buddhism: They are Eternity's expression of momentary delight at the [physical] demise of a great teacher and of his ongoing presence permeating space and time.

Thank you, Robin, for blessing us with your presence for all these years. We miss you and will always remember you.

Ken Mellor, with his wife Elizabeth, heads up BIANNE Network, an international, nonprofit educational organization. He can be reached at bianmenet@eck.net.au. Condolences can be sent to Val Maslen at vmaslen@ozemail.com.au.