

Michael Eroy

April 9, 1952 – April 2, 2024

Funeral Service
Minister: Benjamin

April 20, 2024

Minister's Introduction:

Welcome friends. And a special welcome to Michael's sisters Rosie, Joanie, Mona, and Fran, and to Rosie's husband Ronald, and Joanie's husband Michael, all of whom are with us here today.

We have come together to honor the life of our beloved friend, Michael Eroy.

Once again, we witness a great mystery: our friend, who moved through this lifetime, playing the role of his name, has disappeared from among us. He has transcended his role to become once more what he always was, an invisible, immortal soul, released at last.

Now let us stand and remember Michael in silent presence.

(Silence)

Thank you.

Walt Whitman wrote, "All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier."

Michael takes with him the presence and being that he gained in this lifetime, and his connection with Influence C. Our teacher has said, "That is all we can take with us, but it is more than enough."

[Reading: "When I Consider How My Light Is Spent," by John Milton]
(Reader: Kathleen S.)

Sonnet 19: When I Consider How My Light Is Spent by John Milton

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide;
“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”
I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need
Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o’er Land and Ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait.

[**Music:** Bach, Allemande from French Suite no. 5 in G]
(Musician: Justin, piano)

[Eulogy: Robert Mac.]

Michael Eroy was born April 9, 1952, and grew up in Los Alamitos, a small town in Orange County. He was the only son of a Puerto Rican mother, Aura, and a Filipino father, Casimiro. Michael had five sisters: three older sisters—Francie, Rosie, and Mary Lou—and two younger sisters, Joanie and Mona.

As a boy and teenager, Michael was drawn mostly to reading and studying the liberal arts: poetry, philosophy, history, and art appreciation. He even took a home economics class. And he remained an avid reader all his life: he learned speedreading techniques that allowed him to read quickly and absorb texts and literature on a wide range of subjects.

Scholastically Michael was only an average student in high school, but he did remarkably well on the college entrance exams, and he enrolled in nearby Long Beach State, as a Philosophy major. After two years Michael dropped out of college, and for a while he basically did nothing. In retrospect, this seems to have been a period where his internal compass was seeking its true direction. Then he heard about home building projects taking place in Florida, so he moved to Florida and worked as a builder. He soon acquired his contractor's license, and when he returned to California a year later, he entered fully into the practice of the lifelong career he is so well-known for.

Michael had been reading books about the Fourth Way, and when he came upon an ad for the Fellowship, he called the number at once, arranged for prospective student meetings, and joined the School in Carmel in early February 1974. He began attending meetings and events, while driving back and forth between northern and southern California as his jobs dictated.

Just a few months after he joined, Michael moved to Apollo. It was a special time, as Robert had decided to begin in earnest to develop the property and establish buildings, dwellings, and agriculture. Michael was immediately able to contribute, helping to expand the Lodge, install the mezzanine, and create the first really beautiful room at Apollo—the Library, with walls, floors and shelving of polished redwood. This space, which now encompasses the Bar and Gift Shop, was also used for evening dining.

Michael often liked to recount a story dating from the Lodge construction phase that remained a signature moment for him. The roof began leaking where the old and new spaces were connected, and Robert politely requested the carpenters, one by one, to get it fixed. Each carpenter would explain to Robert the particular problem with this leak—but without offering to do anything about it. Robert finally approached Michael, and at first Michael too began to explain what the problem was. But unlike with everyone else, Robert interrupted Michael and said, “Michael, a man is a man, and a roof is a roof—fix it!” Michael fixed it, and he took from that moment a deeper understanding of avoiding defeatist attitudes and completing octaves.

Michael worked on the Bath House in Andersen Court, helped install the roof here at the Festival Hall, and in the mid-90s oversaw the construction of the large kitchen and upstairs salon at Apollo d’Oro. Perhaps his biggest achievement was the construction of the large concrete pad for the Winery. The architects drew up the required specifications for the floor, the runoff channels, the mounts for the tanks, and the air support system for the dome tent. The project was very complicated, and everyone involved at that time agrees that Michael was the only one who understood how to do it.

He and four untrained workers built all the forms, installed the rebar, managed a complicated series of concrete pours, and completed all the finish work. It remains one of our greatest construction achievements, and that foundation is still in place today.

In 1980, Michael moved to the Bay Area and for the next ten years did construction and renovations. Michael was a true master builder. He managed the construction of a high-rise apartment building near the Bay Bridge and was once tasked with stopping an apartment complex situated on a hillside from slipping downhill. As masterful as Michael was at his craft, however, the person who most everyone knew and loved was Michael the student, the lover, the friend and companion on the spiritual path. As one student put it, “Michael would light up whatever room he entered with an unquenchable optimism. He was always fun to be around and always had a positive outlook on life.”

Michael had this infectious laugh—which it was impossible to resist; he laughed easily and often. During the years he lived in San Francisco he hosted many students, always beaming positive energy and showing how sincerely happy he was to open his door to them. He had an exceptionally refined palate and was a connoisseur of good wine and good food. He maintained a collection of fine wines, and he was an accomplished chef. He had a great appreciation for beauty. Even after his stroke, on his way to and from appointments he would often gesture to indicate that his driver should take a more beautiful route home just to enjoy the impressions.

Michael was always looking out for others. In the aftermath of the '97 fire, to take one instance among many, he spent several days driving around to the homes of the students who were the most vulnerable—single mothers, women and handicapped friends living alone—just to see if there was anything he could do for them. And after the '89 earthquake, when he learned that his mother's small home near Watsonville had been seriously damaged, Michael showed up unannounced and put it all back together.

Michael moved back to Apollo in 1990, and except for a year in London and another year in San Francisco, spent the rest of his life here. Michael loved being a woodworker. He ran the carpentry shop and served as mentor to many students, constantly emphasizing the importance of using the right tool for every job. He was often a strict supervisor, and he would never allow something to stand that was beneath his high standards. But as one fellow carpenter put it, “that was Michael's tough love.” The last major project Michael worked on at Apollo was the renovation of Villa Bacetti. Over the skepticism of a few architects, he expanded the tiny living room, moving out the patio-side wall to meet the end of the balcony above. He also reworked the kitchen doors, installed a new bathroom, and fashioned the extensive metalwork that decorates part of the building we all enjoy today.

Michael was happy, strong, intelligent, loving—and then, he was called upon to take on a new, unexpected burden.

In early December 2009, Michael was working alone on a job site in Napa Valley, when he suffered a massive stroke—the right side of his body was paralyzed, and a brain scan later revealed damage to almost half his brain. Along with paralysis, Michael suffered severe aphasia and lost the ability to speak and to write.

Michael moved in with Solee and myself in early February 2010. Several friends helped monitor him day and night for the first two weeks, until he felt confident enough to manage daily routines himself. Many friends offered help in any way they could: bringing meals, taking him to therapy appointments, watching a film with him, or just coming by to say hello. He greatly appreciated every effort, every visit, long or brief, constant or occasional.

Robert invited Michael on a regular basis to private dinners at the Galleria. He would always come over and give Michael a kiss on the forehead, and looking into his eyes he would say, “Michael, you never looked better.” And this was true—Michael was often simple and present. You gazed into his eyes, and he was always there to look back at you. By the standard of remaining in the moment, Michael continued to have much to teach us all.

He struggled to regain some level of speech, and he was able to make himself understood, but the Michael who had mastered the art of conversation was no longer able to share in the way that delighted him and so many others. And over time it became clear that, as hard as Michael worked to regain his mobility, speech, and acumen, he also understood at a certain point that he had to let go. And this he did. As we know, letting go is an ongoing process, not a single event. This side of Michael’s suffering—the silent, day after day living with his condition, receiving love and attention, but also living in loneliness and isolation—was the great burden that he bore for fourteen and a half years.

In 2016, Michael moved into his last home in Oregon House. There he lived for five years, until it became necessary for him to transfer to a nursing home in Marysville. His motor functions soon declined to the point where even moving him to a wheelchair became too difficult, and so he was confined to bed. Michael continued to receive visitors over these final years, and those open and present eyes of his were always there to greet you. A few friends continued with Michael's regular care, bringing him meals, and watching a film with him or reading to him. He especially favored hearing the words of our Teacher, particularly from "Bread upon the Water" and "Awakening."

Michael died in the early hours of April 2, one week before what would have been his 72nd birthday. He had over fifty years in the School. As he was unable to attend his fiftieth anniversary dinner with the Teacher, all of his companions from that year sent him a card, conveying to him their love and fondest wishes. The last person to sign the card was Robert, who wrote: "I am so grateful to have seen everyone in Paradise."

Fare thee well, Michael. Fare thee well.

[**Music:** "Dance of the Blessed Spirits," by Gluck]
(Musicians: Noah, violin, and Justin, piano)

[**Reading:** From “Song of the Open Road,” by Walt Whitman]
(Reader: Guy)

Selections from SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD
By Walt Whitman

You road I enter upon and look around, I believe you are not all that is here,
I believe that much unseen is also here.

Allons! whoever you are come travel with me!
Traveling with me you find what never tires.
The earth never tires,
The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first,
Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first.

Be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well envelop'd,
I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell.

Allons! we must not stop here,
However sweet these laid-up stores, however convenient this dwelling we cannot remain here,
However shelter'd this port and however calm these waters we must not anchor here,
However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us we are permitted to receive it but a little while.

Allons! to that which is endless as it was beginningless....
To know the universe itself as a road, as many roads, as roads for traveling souls.

Minister's Conclusion:

The shock of a friend's death reminds us that our bodies are fragile, our period on this earth temporary. Only the realm of uncreated light--which unites us and is us—is boundless and eternal.

The teacher once told Michael, “I believe that you were a champion warrior in your last lifetime.” He was certainly a warrior in this one.

May Michael's devotion to his craft and pursuit of the highest standards inspire us to use our own skills and essence as a means of honoring the present moment;

May his faithful love of his friends, his family, and his teacher remind us to value one another dearly; and

May his acceptance and transformation over many years of suffering and isolation strengthen us as we strive to transform our own plays.

Dearest Michael, we thank thee.

The task of this lifetime has been fulfilled. The role of Michael Eroy is complete. The light of the body is extinguished, and the light of the soul is released to continue its divine journey.

Candle Ceremony

St. Augustine wrote,

“With the eye of my soul I saw the Light that never changes. What I saw was something quite different from any light we know on earth. All who know this Light, know eternity.”

Minister: Please rise.

At the Cemetery

[Music: Moshe, kanun, Rustam, flute]

Minister's Introduction:

Here in this sacred place, we gather to release Michael to his, and our, true home. From earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Words fade in the face of a great reality. We, too, arrive at this simplest of moments—our friend Michael showing us the way.

[Reading: “The Last Invocation,” Walt Whitman]

(Reader: Patrick)

AT the last, tenderly,
From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the well-closed doors,
Let me be wafted.

Let me glide noiselessly forth;
With the key of softness unlock the locks—with a whisper,
Set ope the doors O soul.

Tenderly—be not impatient,
(Strong is your hold O mortal flesh,
Strong is your hold O love.)

Urn is placed in the grave.

The earth returns to the earth, and a divine spark returns to its divine source. The circle of life is now complete. Let us join in raising a glass to Michael, and then depart, with a renewed and vivid appreciation for the gift of life allotted to each of us.

Minister scatters rose petals into the grave.

Participants scatter rose petals, then gather for the toast.

[Toast: Mary]

Michael's life was full—full of accomplishments, of fun, of suffering, of love, and of presence. Let us toast to Michael as we embrace his inspiration.