

Kenneth Bruinsma

June 27, 1963 - May 7, 2021

Funeral Service

Minister: Guy

May 7, 2024

Minister's Introduction

Welcome friends. And a special welcome to, Kenneth's wife Georgina and his son Kaeden, who are here with us today.

We are here to honor the life of our beloved friend, Kenneth Bruinsma.

Once again, we witness a great mystery: our friend, who moved through this lifetime, playing the role of his name, is no longer among us. He has transcended his role to become once more what he always was, an invisible, immortal soul.

Let us stand and remember Kenneth 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."

Kenneth 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: Section 5 from "Song of the Open Road" by Walt Whitman]
(Reader: Christopher K.)

From "Song of the Open Road" by Walt Whitman

From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines,
Going where I list, my own master total and absolute,
Listening to others, considering well what they say,
Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,
Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of the holds that would
hold me.

I inhale great draughts of space,
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south are mine.

I am larger, better than I thought,
I did not know I held so much goodness.

All seems beautiful to me,
I can repeat over to men and women You have done such good to me I
would do the same to you,
I will recruit for myself and you as I go,
I will scatter myself among men and women as I go,
I will toss a new gladness and roughness among them,
Whoever denies me it shall not trouble me,
Whoever accepts me he or she shall be blessed and shall bless me.

[Eulogy: Georgina]

Surrounded by family, Ken completed his task three years ago today, May 7th, at 10:28 am. He had requested that his remains be scattered here at his beloved Apollo. My son and I are happy to be here with you today to fulfill his final wish and to share some thoughts about his life and being.

Death is inevitable for all of us. But the way we choose to live and the impact we make during our journey on this earth are what truly define our legacy.

Ernest Hemingway said, "Every man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another."

Ken was born in Clinton, Ontario on June 27, 1963. He grew up in Montreal, Quebec in a family of six. I feel that being the older brother to three younger sisters gave Ken an understanding and sensibility of women from a uniquely different angle.

When we married, Ken already had one child, Hali. He had been a single parent for seven years. Then came Annalise. The four of us were packed into a 980-square-foot condo in west Toronto in which, as centre directors, we hosted weekly Sunday meetings and prospective student meetings. We bought a house in Toronto and added to the family with Evan Blake and then finally, last but not least, Kaeden.

Ken spent hours upon hours with his children. He encouraged and supported their interests. He liked nothing better than playing board games on weekend afternoons with his kids and their friends. He liked to change the official rules and help other players with their strategies. He even created his own board games to play. He thoroughly enjoyed all types of games, including soccer, which he coached.

Ken had many talents. He was a modern-day, self-made Renaissance man. His professions included animation sound editing and computer programming. When the dot-com bubble burst, he retrained again, as a truck driver. As the main provider for his family, Ken chose this job

intentionally because he could always find employment. In addition, since Ken was moving-centred, driving was enjoyable for him.

Woodworking was his passion. He lovingly restored old furniture, mastered marquetry, designed electric guitars, and built furniture, decks, and sheds. This passion naturally evolved into reupholstering and roofing and eventually to repairing the family's two cars. Dovetailing with these interests, he studied guitar and piano. To achieve many of these skills, he first would visit the local library, read a book on how to do it, and then simply start doing it. His consistency and perseverance in obtaining these many skills reminds me of his commitment to the School and his Teacher. It was unwavering. He valued the knowledge, friendships, and emotionality it brought to his life. And of course, the friction.

As we all know, friction comes in many forms. By the time Ken completed his task, he had been a devoted, active parent for over 34 years, a grandparent to Kenyon for 14, a husband for over 25, and a student for almost 28. His life was friction-filled, as I know first-hand. His cancer diagnosis in 2017 added another layer of friction. For those who know cancer, dealing with it is like having another full-time job. Then came Covid, adding further friction to an already challenging time.

Deep into Ken's illness, he had stated, "I have been ungrateful of my fate." Yet every day when I was with him in hospice, I knew he was transforming and accepting his suffering. He expressed no negativity or self-pity. He was setting an example – that transforming one's suffering is a pillar of awakening to one's life.

Plutarch said, "Fate leads him who follows it and drags him who resists." Ken accepted his fate fully.

One of his friends wrote, "Over many years, our friendship grew. I personally experienced how he became simpler, gentler, more loving, caring, and considerate. His struggle to be and stay present to his life brought out his most noble being and aspirations. I felt great admiration and love for all his efforts to rise above the challenges of life. Ken trusted life, the School and Influence C for whatever circumstances were presented to him."

Another friend wrote, "The last thing I heard Kenneth say was 'I am not failing.' He said this quite loudly and clearly very near the end, when his speech was generally very weak and difficult to understand."

To me, it was evident that his desire to become a mature soul was achieved when he remarked many times on his deathbed, "It is not why me, but why not me? *Why not me?*" he questioned.

Ken was a unique and singular individual who delighted in developing his own capacities as fully as possible. He was refreshingly unapologetic in who he was.

Thank you all for being here to honour him and to share these memories of him.

[Reading: from Rumi]
(Reader: Kaeden)

From Rumi

Death has nothing to do with going away.

The sun sets.

The moon sets.

But they are not gone.

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.

May Kenneth's perseverance and joy in cultivating the talents of his essence inspire us as we develop our own talents,
May his unwavering commitment to his family, his teacher, and his school strengthen our dedication, and
May his acceptance and lack of self-pity during his long illness encourage us as we strive to transform our suffering.

The task of this lifetime has been fulfilled. The role of Kenneth is complete, and the soul that played the role is released to continue its divine journey.

Dear Kenneth, we thank thee.

[PAUSE]

This morning, Georgina and her son scattered some of Kenneth's ashes in the olive grove where they had spent their honeymoon in 1995 picking olives. She would like to scatter some of his remains now in the Apollo cemetery.

[Ashes are scattered.]

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 Kenneth, and then depart, with renewed gratitude for the gift of life we have received.

Minister scatters rose petals into the grave.

Participants scatter rose petals, then gather for the toast.

[Toast: Marina]