

Michael Stoodley

May 11, 1946 – October 22, 2024

Memorial Service

Minister: Blair W

June 7, 2025

Minister's Introduction

Welcome friends.

We have come together to honor the life of our dear friend, Michael Stoodley — Michael — whose energy, dedication and being helped build the school we have now.

We are here to remember and pay tribute to the person who played his role so courageously and to his immortal soul that has now transcended that role.

Let us stand and remember Michael in silent presence.

(Silence)

Thank you.

Robert says that the purpose of this life on earth is to produce an immortal astral body. When that purpose has been fulfilled, this vessel of flesh has played its part and can be laid aside.

Though it is painful to lose a friend, we can rest in the trust that Michael takes with him all the moments of light he has distilled from his life — and that he keeps his sacred connection with Influence C, bringing it with him on his soul's continuing journey.

[**Reading:** Walt Whitman from “A Passage to India”]
(Reader: Mark A)

From *A Passage to India*
By Walt Whitman:

Take ship, O soul,
Launch out on endless seas,
Fearless for unknown shores...
Amid the wafting winds, caroling free,
Singing our song of God

[Eulogy: Paula J]

Our dear friend, Michael Stoodley was born in 1946 in Eastbourne, England, and grew up in Truro, a small city in Cornwall. He was the youngest of 4 children, with a sister and 2 brothers.

Michael lived an adventurous life. From a young age he travelled and camped all over Europe each summer with his family. It was by the ocean in Cornwall that he developed a lifelong love of boating and fishing.

After finishing school, Michael joined the British army where he became a master welder, a trade that allowed him to work and travel in several countries. One of those jobs was in Kiel, Germany, where he managed a crew of British welders and tradesmen, building and repairing tankers in the dockyard.

During his time in Germany, he taught himself German by memorizing 10 words a day, and asking locals to help him put sentences together, until he could speak the language fairly fluently.

While working in Augsburg, Germany in 1975, Michael met Helen Caton at a Mardi Gras party, the beginning of their 9-year relationship. They stayed in Germany until 1977 when they moved to Boston where Helen's family lived. It was a cold and snowy winter, and after an icicle from the eaves of the house went through their car windshield, they decided to move to Portland Oregon.

In Portland Michael became interested in psychology, neuro-linguistic programming, and Gestalt therapy. He met a psychologist who had clinics for weight loss and smoking utilizing hypnosis. Michael trained in hypnotherapy, and worked in the psychologist's clinics around the state of Oregon. This period provided much nourishment for his growing magnetic center.

On a visit to San Francisco they encountered a friend who gave them books by Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. Shortly afterwards, Michael found an ad for the Fellowship and joined the School in August 1979.

In 1981, he moved to California to work at Renaissance Vineyard and Winery welding the rebar for the concrete pours at the winery. Michael

lived and worked for the Fellowship in some capacity over the next 25 years, building the winery, working in the vineyard and the metal shop, running the maintenance octave, recycling wine bottles. A friend said of him "He was one of the quiet, strong and consistent pioneers of our School"

Besides working on salary, he developed 2 rugged properties in Oregon House, sometimes amidst a lot of denying force. Michael also helped other students with plumbing jobs, hauling away derelict vehicles, fixing cars, taking students to car auctions to get a good deal. He was adept at building and fixing just about anything.

Our Teacher once advised Michael to focus on quality rather than quantity but his Jovial part made him a great collector of things. People would call him when they needed a tool or a part for something, because they knew he would usually have it.

Michael met Marie and they married in 1986, together for almost 40 years. They had many adventures traveling around the world together, one year spending 2 months in Southeast Asia in their late sixties, as elderly backpackers. He was a loving stepdad and grandpa to Marie's son and her 2 granddaughters.

Michael was strong, brave, creative, adventurous, practical and resourceful, capable of tackling the most daunting situations and projects.

He was not a social being, not much of a talker, but he had quality friendships with many people over the years, in and out of the Fellowship. With close friends his conversations went deep. He encouraged his friends and also helped them transform difficult experiences. A student remarked that they were grateful to have had a friend like Michael.

His health issues in the last years left him incapacitated and dependent. This was very challenging for his active and self-reliant mechanics, but he had an attitude of acceptance of what he called "his lot", and making the best of it.

Michael had great valuation for the Work and the School. He had a deep respect for his Teacher, commenting that he knew Robert was a man who could change his life.

[**Music:** Johann Sebastian Bach, “Prelude from Cello Suite No. 1”]
(Musician: James F, guitar)

Minister's Conclusion:

The passing of a dear friend is a reminder of our own fleeting mortality — so poignant and so brief. Yet, mysteriously, the presence of consciousness passes beyond that, into eternity.

May Michael's pioneering spirit and his quiet dedication be an inspiration to us all as we live out the remainder of our days.

Dear Michael, we thank thee.

As Robert said, “It is not goodbye, my love. It is goodnight.” We are separated from our friend only by this fragile veil of earthly existence. But we are already united in a place that is beyond time.

Friends, please stand now, and follow me to the plaque that has been placed for Michael.

[Minister leads participants to the memorial column.]

Minister:

With this plaque, we make a final home for Michael at Apollo, which he worked so tirelessly to build.

Krishna said, “Nothing Real can be threatened; nothing unreal exists. Therin lies the peace of gods and men.”

Let us scatter rose petals to celebrate Michael's life, and then toast to his journey, grateful for having known him, and for what is left of our own precious lives.

[Minister and participants scatter rose petals.]

[**Toast:** Christian H]