

# David Warkentin: August 20, 1951-September 9, 2010

It is with much sadness that I write to acknowledge the death of David Warkentin on September 9, 2010. He passed away peacefully at his home in the forested hills of Nicasio, California, attended by his partner Vajra Matusow and many close friends who cared for him tenderly through his last days. He had no inkling of illness until early July and survived barely two months from the time of his diagnosis. It was stunning to see such a rich and complex life extinguished so rapidly. How we will miss him!

David Kent Warkentin was born in Atherton, California on August 20, 1951. We can only imagine the dawning happiness when, as a young homeopath, David realized that his very birth name contained the heart of homeopathy in it. J. T. Kent was one of David's great heroes as reflected in the name he christened his ground-breaking software company: Kent Homeopathic Associates or KHA.

After studying computer science and electrical engineering at the University of California at Berkeley, David followed his diversified interests with great passion before finding homeopathy. He became an expert river guide, he led wildlife kayaking tours in remote areas of Alaska and Mexico. He was a fantastic outdoorsman, finding renewal in nature. David made hundreds of whitewater rafting trips including nearly a dozen trips down the dangerous Colorado River. In fact his only expressed regret concerning his illness was that he was unable to make a planned trip down through the Grand Canyon this summer. Even after brain surgery, he still held some glimmer of hope that he would be able to make the trip! Many of my most treasured memories are of the various nature trips to which David invited Nancy and me -- to raft or kayak amongst grey whales, sea otters, glaciers and desserts. Though these trips often had their harrowing moments -- such as the time a grey whale swamped Michael Quinn's kayak forcing Nancy and me to ferry the largest hood ornament ever conceived (ie Michael) back two miles to shore on the front of our kayak.

But these mishaps became over the years the most cherished of family stories - it is often the flaw that makes the diamond most unique.

I met David in Athens, Greece when I attended the first international seminar given by George Vithoulkas in 1978. At that time, still in medical school, I had never laid eyes upon an actual homeopath. David took me under his wing and we immediately became friends and travel mates. I remember his dry and cutting wit balanced by the gentlest of spirits. At that time, David was already a practicing homeopath of high

reputation, working in an office with Bill Gray, Nancy Herrick and Peggy Chipkin as a lay prescriber. David attended the month long Esalen seminar given by George Vithoulkas in 1980. While there together, his only flaw as a roommate was that he had an unerring ability to ferret out the stash of chocolate that George Guess tried to hide from him in our joint room. And of course at 6'4" (1.94 meters) he also had a killer spike in our Esalen group volleyball games - I remember Karl Robinson was the victim of a particularly wicked one.

In the early 1980's David decided that gaining a credential would increase his effectiveness as a force for the spread of homeopathy. He earned his degree as a Physician Assistant from the University of California at Davis following his friends Christine Ciavarella and Nancy Herrick in the program. He revered many of his many teachers especially George Vithoulkas, Francisco Eisayaga, Bill Gray, Rajan Sankaran and his dearest friend, Massimo Mangialavorri.

In 1985, David was one of the cofounders of the Hahnemann Medical Clinic in Berkeley and one of the first instructors at the Hahnemann College of Homeopathy where he taught until the college closed in 2004. David continued to teach at almost every educational forum in America and in Europe and Asia. David's practice of homeopathy was side-tracked in the mid-1990's due to the increasing responsibilities with KHA, but in 2006 he began to practice again.



He told me that his clinical results had reached their highest level in this year and he remained as excited by the miracle of homeopathy as he was when I first met him.

David began his great and seminal work with homeopathic software in 1986 with his program, *MacRepertory*. Originally designed for use solely on the *Apple* computer, David introduced the many purist, nature-oriented, vegetarian, California homeopaths into the world of technology. I remember the first computer David convinced me to buy was the second generation of *Apple* computers. He told me to buy an external hard drive with an astounding 20 megabyte capacity because "You'll never need more storage than that!"

KHA has remained on the cutting edge of homeopathic software ever since. Many people in competing firms have acknowledged that David was the engine that drove the nearly frantic development of homeopathic software. His innovative spirit, drive for excellence and desire to help make homeopathy accessible and rapid kept him in dialogue with the finest teachers in our profession, always willing to learn and to adapt the program to the needs and ideas of the profession. For many of us, David's encouragement and willingness to support our work with his technology made our work possible. My own investigation of Carbon remedies would have been impossible without David's help and I know many others feel the same way.

Luckily for KHA, the core staff continues to market, service and support the KHA programs without a hitch.

Furthermore, a strong group of homeopathic leaders including Nancy Herrick, Jan Scholten, Anne Schadde, Massimo Mangialavori and Rajan Sankaran will be joining me on an advisory committee to help ensure the integrity of the programs. We assure the profession that the same high standards and openness to the needs of prescribers will be maintained.

But, of course, we will no longer have David traveling to practically every seminar and conference in the world. Though incredibly shy, David loved exchanging ideas and information with people. His reclusive urges were overcome by his profound wish to facilitate the spread of knowledge and ideas. For example, David served for many years on the board of directors of the National Center for Homeopathy with Todd Rowe, Joyce Frye, Jay Borneman and Julian Winston. Our shy David was paradoxically one of the best story tellers I ever met and used humor to help connect people from various factions of homeopathy. Perhaps this role as facilitator more than anything else led to David being awarded the Henry N. Williams Professional Service award and an honorary doctorate from the British Institute of Homeopathy.

David died from a very aggressive malignant melanoma having a dozen cerebral tumors at the time he first became symptomatic. His primary tumor was hidden in his pelvis unnoticed. I mention this because David would want to help others even in his death. *There is a well-documented link between electromagnetic frequencies produced by cell phone and other technologies and melanoma. David's computer sat in his lap (immediately above the location of his primary tumor) perhaps twelve hours per day (except when river rafting and maybe even then!) hooked up to a cell phone receiver. Let us use this as a caution to be wary of allopathic assurances that these technologies are harmless. In David's name, tell your friends and patients!*

David was a loving friend. He gave his heart to many and was loved in return. There has been a tremendous out-pouring of love and sympathy from every corner of the globe by which David was profoundly touched and he asked us to tell everyone how much he appreciated these messages. David was deeply concerned with spiritual matters, read widely and participated in many meditation retreats and worked with spiritual teachers from many traditions. He had a great thirst for deeper meaning and realization. One of David's most cherished moments was a private interview with His Holiness the Dalai Lama whom he met with his dear friend Melissa Fairbanks. David will be remembered for his gentle spirit, his devotion to our profession and his innovative genius. The loss to our profession is as incalculable as it is painful to those of us who loved him.

Roger Morrison, MD

## An Appreciation

David's recent illness and untimely death were profoundly shocking on every level, because he was not only a great friend and benefactor to all homeopaths, and an epitome of the best that we have to offer, but also the very embodiment of robust health and the ideal of a balanced life, combining enlightened work, physical fitness, and love of wilderness and the outdoors in a socially-conscious way. To almost everyone who knew him or knew of his work - and there are very few among us who didn't -- his passing has an impact that will long endure.

I knew very little about his personal life, except that he loved to lead whitewater river trips, attracted lovely and accomplished women to his side, and had innumerable friends in every corner of the world. Yet I suspect that at bottom he was rather a private person.

I first met him in 1977, at the California State society



meeting in San Diego. Then 27, he was already a skilled and devoted prescriber, as well as an active member of the famous Berkeley study group, which later morphed into the storied Hering Clinic. In short, he sat on the cutting edge of the improbable revival of classical homeopathy in America. Among the several dozen attendees at that gathering were such future notables as Dana Ullman, Bill Gray, Bob Schore, Corey Weinstein, Lou Klein, Murray Feldman, Peggy Chipkin, Randy Neustaedter, and John Melnychuk, to name only the few that still stick in my aging memory.

Of course, there were no computers in those days, and our cases had to be solved in longhand, by laboriously writing out the remedies under the rubrics we chose, as of old, and tallying up the number of rubrics and the grades of the remedies in each. But already, even in that talented company, and long before his remarkable inventions, David stood out for his keen intelligence, lively wit, attractive personality, and an affable, engaging manner that seemed open to everything and everyone, without being in the least showy about his own personal contribution.

Largely because of distance, I didn't see a lot of him for more than a decade after that, until various brands of software appeared, claiming to streamline the repertorization process; and soon MacRepertory towered above them all, universally acclaimed as the best, most thorough, and most user-friendly program available. As a traditionalist by nature, and a confirmed technophobe who entered the computer age only reluctantly and under duress, I was thoroughly skeptical of the whole project at first, counting it a virtue to continue taking as much time as possible in doing my cases. Against that sort of headwind, to have converted the likes of me to the use and even the celebration of *MacRepertory* and *ReferenceWorks* must surely rank among his most difficult if unimportant achievements. In recent years, when the newer versions I bought were incompatible with my old machine, I tried mightily to rebel against this planned obsolescence, reverting to longhand for some months, but gave in when forced to admit how pleasant and easy they had made my chosen work, and how little reward my purist scruples earned me for my trouble.

Today his software is used, loved, and appreciated by grateful homeopaths of every stripe, in every country where remedies are prescribed. Throughout his career, he always acted and thought of himself as our benefactor, a claim amply borne out by his consistent presence at our seminars and conferences, both here and abroad, and his unflinching patience in instructing and guiding us, no matter how long it took or how dense or recalcitrant we proved to be. In that sense, he was *everybody's* friend.

He was a true American genius in the best sense: an inventor, a tinkerer, with a rare gift for improvisation, and an equally rare capacity for systematic thought and detailed scholarship at the same time. Yet these flowerings cannot be understood apart from his roots as a fine and dedicated homeopath, who understood from the inside what successful practitioners need, and who applied the new information

technology to the heroic task of computerizing the vast body of homeopathic literature into a single database, far exceeding the memory capacity of any living individual, and making it instantly accessible to us at the moments when we need it.

As built into *MacRepertory*, *ReferenceWorks*, and their various competitors, these technical innovations have also prefigured and made possible the important conceptual innovations of Sankaran, Scholten, Mangialavori, et al., in their attempts to systematize our *Materia medica*, and to develop practical applications of our most difficult notions, such as "miasm" and "family," a monumental task which pioneers like Farrington envisioned long ago but lacked the technical capacity to carry out. This great, transformative project is of course a labor of many generations, and far from being completed, if indeed it ever can be; but David's vision and inventiveness have played such an indispensable part in its history, and ours, that his own too-brief sojourn on earth can be fitly summarized by the epitaph which Hahnemann wrote for himself, *non inutilis vixi*, "I have not lived in vain."

Richard Moskowitz, MD, DHT

## A Deep Friendship

On 9 September, at the age of 59 years, David Kent Warkentin died peacefully in his bed.

Some say that true friends can be counted on the fingers of one hand ... and mostly on only a few fingers. My hand is bereft of one of the more cherished fingers, but this hand has had the pleasure of holding that of David's to the end. And I think there are few things in the world that make as much sense as accompanying one of your best friends to his ultimate earthly appointment.

I met David almost 20 years ago during what I think was his first business trip to Italy. We became fast friends, as a consequence of our common visions, ideas and projects concerning Homeopathy and much more. Since then we shared a lot in our work, but also in our private lives. David helped me so much through some difficult times, as I have tried to do everything possible for him, even though I have never quite managed to protect him from himself - if this is even possible in this life.

David was the genius, founder and soul of Kent Homeopathic: an innovative new "genre" of a company. KHA was founded in 1986 initially to share his vision with friends and colleagues of the possibility of using computer science to catalog and more effectively utilize our homeopathic literature. David was a true pioneer in every sense: he was also the designer of the first true network for homeopaths, even when this concept was completely unknown to most.

His vision became a reality for many thousands of homeopaths around the world. Currently more than ten thousand colleagues have significantly improved their study skills and precision in their work thanks to the creativity of David. The best teachers around the world use his programs, but

most came to love his philosophy: to provide the best possible instrument for the creative homeopath to freely work, beginning with the roots of our literature. But above all are the many, many patients, many more than our colleagues and their teachers, whose health has benefited or have come close "to the highest purpose of their existence", thanks to the brilliance of David and to *MacRepertory* and *Reference-Works*.

David's personality was grand: he was grand in his projects, in his efforts, and in his achievements. He was greatly admired, and always surrounded by great affection. But he was also grand in his errors, and this included a darker side: a sort of Peter Pan who continually refused to mend his shadow. He was a master of unconventional amongst the unconventional: seemingly care-free, free of responsibility, apparently innocent and playful, and yet could be quite obstinate and even sometimes constrained by his free-spirited image.

For instance, this amusing anecdote: a few years ago I arrived in Germany, where I held a seminar. It was a beautiful winter resort, where all could enjoy the amenities of the area and study in the afternoon. We were in line to take the chairlift when David suddenly blushed, wondering why he felt watched by all. I pointed out that his was the only pair of sandals, when the rest of the tourists were wearing boots and skis.

David's work not only represents a fundamental contribution to the last quarter of a century of Homeopathy, it has been and will continue to be a beacon for the many thoughtful homeopaths who are unafraid of using the tools offered by this technology.

I know that the best way to honor David is to continue his project, make it even more alive, efficacious, and attuned with our daily work: in the study of our art as well as in our work as healers. We have a lot to do to follow in his footsteps and we will do our very best.

Overwhelmed by the certainty of a wretched end, when David made the decision to die, I encountered so many emotions: grief, emptiness, anger, compassion, love. Experiencing this at the end, made me realize that this was not his death; that this was simply his life. It was then I felt that I had not lost anything; I can lose what I have, but not who I am. And who I am is in part thanks to David.

Massimo Mangialavori, MD

## Generosity of Spirit

I was part of a year-long preparation to study with George Vithoulkas that Bill Gray undertook in 1979 or 80. As I

recall, young (he seemed very young and boyish) David Warkentin would appear now and then and just sort of hang out, hang around. I also remember Bill Gray urging him to get on with his life. David, in those days, was very California, mildly hippy, pretty carefree and not at all driven. So, it was quite a surprise when, some years later I ran into him again after he had founded Kent Homeopathic Associates. He was so changed, as if he had grown up and had become a purposeful, even driven, man. I never quite got used to the new David, juxtaposed in my mind, with the boyish one. That is not to say he had lost his charm, (he never did) but that he was so grown up and fiercely determined to make a success of his new business.

The other thing I recall was his generous spirit. I used to use *MacRepertory*, did so for years. Loved it, too. Then because, of I don't know what, perhaps my friendship with Frederik Schroyens and Kim Elia, I switched to *RADAR*. But when I would run into David he was always entirely friendly and welcoming, bore no discernible grudge whatsoever. It was as though my leaving *MacRepertory* and going over to *RADAR* was off his "radar." I never forgot that kindly spirit he showed. I wish I could be that open, forgiving and generous of spirit.

Karl Robinson, MD

## The Dalai Lama

I sat next to David at an NCH board meeting one year and noticed on David's computer a screensaver photo of himself with the Dalai Lama. Needless to say, I inquired how he happened to meet him, and the story as I recall went something like this.

David's friend had invited him to come to India, but he had already done it enough times that he had grown weary of it and replied that he would only come again if he could meet the Dalai Lama. Much to his amazement, about nine months later he received an invitation. To get the invitation, his friend had faxed the Dalai Lama's office daily over those months saying that David urgently needed to see him. So David went. The Dalai's handlers wanted to evict him from the office after about five minutes, but when the Dalai asked what was the great need for the meeting, David replied, "I just want to be a better person." The Dalai sent the handlers away and spent forty-five minutes private minutes with David.

Joyce Frye, MD

## A Chance Encounter

In the early 80s I attended frequent meetings with the Pacific Academy of Homeopathy in Berkeley. At dinner one evening, I enjoyed sitting at dinner with a group of students including a very pleasant young man with a diastema (gap) between tooth number 8 and number 9. We were doing all the work with the repertory and materia medica in the class. At dinner, this young man talked about putting the entire repertory on a computer. I thought to myself what an interesting idea, but of course, that would never ever work. That gentleman was David Warkentin, to whom I owe a great deal. Without the computer to more quickly organize my cases, I would find it hard to do acutes and chronics in a busy dental practice.

I will miss him greatly as a friend and a major force in homeopathic medicine.

David L. Stephenson, DDS, LAC

## Death at the Door

Many will write of David's software contribution, revolutionizing the face of homeopathy so significantly. Others will speak of David's openness to myriad methods and authors and how this fair-minded and unbiased trait helped to build collaboration in the homeopathic community. And someone else will write of his great love of poetry, rafting and kayaking.

But what I want to pay tribute to is the beautiful way he died. I believe we die as we live and I was deeply touched by the gift of David's transparency particularly during his first weeks of illness. He would write daily, describing how it felt to be watching death approach. Having been told he may have two weeks to live, he felt enlivened by the preciousness of life and curious about his journey towards death.

David wrote, "I can feel that I am different. ... There's space for something new... I just am... filled with light and transperence. This whole process is very strange. Loss of many simple things and a glimpse of vastness. It seems so full of deep tragedy. And magnificence. ... I have this time, every day, to see it, [to] keep the door open... appreciate... revel... [and] collapse in it."

Facing death can uproot all our previous ideas that were safely sheltered by an imagined long life. David continued to examine who he was, finding wonder in life, and marveling at the unknown, as he did through all the years I knew him:

"Then I say, seemingly out of the blue, 'Am I dying?' and start sobbing - too much mucus, saliva, tongue, incoordination to breathe... am I going to die? ... the story to look at now is *this* one - more than my easier resistance to letting love come close."

I love this admission by him. David wondered many times if he had loved well, if what he had done in this life was valued, which baffled many of us - how surprising, yet

poignantly human, that he was uncertain of his gifts we admired and loved so deeply.

One of his last emails posed a question that I now keep close to my own heart:

"I am alive and not alive, awake and not awake.

Bright, sudden sparking and dull, gray, isolated, constructed, homogenous, controlled.

Ah, I haven't come alive yet.

Ah,

And it is clear these - how many days? - are the end days.

Can I risk coming alive, really alive?"

Krista Heron

## A Brilliant Innovator

In 1975, I entered private homeopathic family practice. For a number of years, I repertorized cases the old fashioned way, using my big Kent's *Repertory*, specially printed grid paper, and a number two pencil. Then, I began exploring the possibility of computer-assisted analysis of cases. The early computer software repertories were only partial, such as including only the mind symptoms. That was not desirable to me. Several years later, I had the opportunity to observe the demonstration of the *RADAR* program at a homeopathic meeting at Dean Crothers's and Jennifer Jacobs's office in Washington state. Two things struck me at that time; first, one had to be computer literate to use that program then because one had to type in codes to have the program carry out its functions and, second, it was too expensive for me at the \$10,000 asking price.

In 1985, I was invited to speak at a homeopathic meeting in Santa Barbara, California. There, I saw a flyer for the new *MacRepertory*. Here was a program that worked on the very user friendly *Mac* in which one only had to point and to click to have the software function. Also, the program, while not inexpensive, was much less costly than the *RADAR* program had been. The advent of David Warkentin's *MacRepertory* persuaded me to computerize my office for the first time and with user friendly Apple *Macs*, in 1986. Down to the present, I have continued to have an all *Mac* office and to use *MacRepertory* on a daily basis. In my view, David Warkentin has been a giant in the homeopathic world with the development of his elegant, helpful, and easy-to-use *MacRepertory* and *ReferenceWorks*, both of which he continually worked over the years to improve and to upgrade.

It was a pleasure over the years for East Coast to meet West Coast when I would encounter the soft-spoken David at various homeopathic conferences and seminars here in the U.S. and around the world where his Kent Homeopathic Associates would occupy a prominent place in the exhibit hall and he would grace the podium with a cogent presentation. Most recently, I spoke with him at the American Institute of Homeopathy hosted 65th Congress of the *Liga Medicorum Homeopathica Internationalis* in May of 2010 in Redondo

Beach, California, where, again, his KHA exhibited and he offered a paper.

The homeopathic community has lost one of our giants with the passing of David Warkentin, PA., creator of *Mac-Repertory* and *ReferenceWorks*.

Sandra M. Chasc, MD, DHT

## A Dear Friend

Just as homeopathy delves into our patients' lives to a much greater degree than allopathy, it seems only fitting that our remembrances of our dearest colleagues extend beyond their professional accomplishments to describe the person. Somehow, David Warkentin just naturally evokes that desire, largely because of his personality, and also because his many and great accomplishments are already so well recognized and highly prized by our profession as a whole. Thus, this remembrance is more personal in nature.

David's and my friendship began about two decades ago with the advent of Bill Gray's postgraduate training program held in the Bay area of California – Marin – in 1978, as I recall (or maybe 1980). We gradually grew closer with each successive class as well as during the many seminars George Vithoulkas gave over the years. David, as most of us know, was a very charismatic, affable fellow – gifted with an engagingly ironic smile, bright eyes, gentle humor tinged with just a hint of sarcasm (all in good fun), and a seemingly effortless approachability that just drew one to him. Those were exciting, relatively carefree years as we were all in our honeymoon phase with homeopathy (though David had more experience and considerably more knowledge than I) and thoroughly intoxicated with our new insights into homeopathy, courtesy of George Vithoulkas. It was rather easier to develop friendships then as there was plenty of time to be together.

Sojourns away from study, with David, were always great fun and usually adventurous. David was an avid naturalist, skilled whitewater rafting guide, ardent ocean kayaker, and knowledgeable birder. I recall a camping trip to Yosemite – hiking with him was an education in itself, as he'd unerringly name the birds we would come across or make other observations about the natural world around us.

We both shared a passion for volleyball back then, though David, being 6'4" was decidedly an A-leaguer while I, alas, was strictly B league. Still, we could share our individual exploits on the court, and, as Roger Morrison mentioned in his obituary, at Esalen, during a month-long seminar with George Vithoulkas, I learned that his spike was something

fearsome. Skilled though he was, he always welcomed others less capable to join us – just one illustration of the humility so characteristic of him.

One of my most memorable experiences was that of taking a week-long kayaking trip with him and some other homeopathic colleagues to Baja, California to view the spawning season of the grey whale, an annual event in the Gulf of California. Being new to kayaking then, I managed to capsiz my kayak in some choppy seas some distance from shore. I recall my great relief when David, without any hesitation, proceeded to slide the kayak onto the bow of his, turn it over and, balancing it carefully, tip it back and forth until all the water was removed; then, after securing it beside his own kayak, he instructed me how to insert myself back in the cockpit. Needless to say, after that, I never doubted David's capabilities.

That trip provided memories that will last forever, the most memorable being the night we camped on a very small island right in the middle of a narrow strait. In the middle of that night I awoke to hear grey whales slowly, steadily breathing on either side of the island as they rested just yards from our encampment. A very magical night. David knew how to plan a trip!

Despite the warmth that emanated from him, David could be a rather private person, his deepest thoughts and feelings kept secure within (at least with me); he had a need for solitude, which replenished him. Solitude in nature, deepened through spiritual practice and interests, invigorated him. I'd often see him 'escape' in the evening after a conference day, eschewing company for quiet time alone.

Of course, David is most renowned for his work on computer-based homeopathic information systems and rightfully so. I recall his very earliest days of excitement, visiting his apartment and being introduced to his very first 'tinkerings' with the creation of a computerized repertory program on his old Apple MacIntosh Classic computer. Back then it seemed more of a curiosity for him. It's really amazing and impressive how, from those most humble beginnings, he created such sophisticated, fluid, and complex programs while retaining such a high degree of user-friendliness. It's as if David's own easy-going personal style were translated into programming language; and, just as the case with David himself, the ease with which one could operate the programs belied the underlying complexity.

His creativity, innovativeness, relaxed intelligence, industry, and daring adventurousness were truly inspiring, and will ever remain so. His comfortable manner, wit, and attentiveness made him a wonderful person to befriend. And

I'm so grateful to have had both his friendship and to have benefited from his inspiring work.

I find myself thinking almost constantly of him these days, wishing it were possible to embark together on one last adventure. He feels so close that it's hard to imagine him gone. Of course, David, as Kristin's remembrance attests, knew, as death approached, that another adventure awaited him. So, I find it comforting to imagine him as he might himself—kayaking alone at sunrise, paddling toward a brilliant ocean horizon iridescent with the glow of a rising sun, alive with wonderment . . .

George Guess, MD, DHT

## A Favorite Poem of David's

### Wild Geese

By Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good. You do not have to walk on  
your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

## Rustum Roy, PhD: July 3, 1924 - August 26, 2010

It is with a heavy heart that I convey to you that Rustum Roy, PhD., professor emeritus in material sciences at Penn State University, has passed away at 86 years of age.

Dr. Roy was a highly regarded professor of material sciences who had an appreciation for alternative medicine and homeopathic medicine. Dr. Roy created the Material Sciences Lab at Penn State, and this laboratory and his department at Penn State has consistently been recognized as one of the best in the world.

One personal story with Dr. Roy comes immediately to mind:

Just after Dr. Roy published one of his important articles on homeopathy, he participated in a press conference sponsored by the National Center for Homeopathy. One of the reporters at this press conference was from the respected scientific magazine, "The New Scientist." This reporter initially startled all of us by asserting that he previously worked and wrote for "Nature" magazine, but then he noted that in order to get that job one of the editors at "Nature" posed a difficult technical question to him for which he was required to read one of Dr.



Roy's articles. The reporter noted that Dr. Roy solved a very complex question in a sophisticated fashion, and because this reporter was able to convey Dr. Roy's wisdom to his interviewer at "Nature," he got the job.

This reporter told Dr. Roy that he had followed his career ever since and has been consistently impressed by his scholarship and inventive thinking. The reporter wrote an impressively positive article about homeopathy and the work of Dr. Rustum Roy, entitled "Water: The Quantum Elixir" (<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg19025461.200-water-the-quantum-elixir.html> or <http://www.proxywhore.com/invboard/index.php?showtopic=48470>)

For those of us involved in homeopathy, it is impressive that the editors at "Nature" had enough respect for Dr. Roy that they used some of his work in material sciences to determine whether to employ science writers. (Sadly but predictably, the editors at "Nature" have changed their attitudes towards Dr. Roy ever since he expressed special appreciation and respect for homeopathic medicine, once again proving the problems inherent in fundamentalism

of various sorts, including scientific fundamentalism.)

Despite Dr. Roy's advancing age, he maintained strong and sharp intellectual capacities to the very end.

Evidence of his mental acuity is the fact that for the past couple of years he has co-hosted a truly excellent internet radio show with Huffington Post blogger Alison Rose Levy called "Whole Person Healing Via Body Mind Spirit" (<http://www.voiceamerica.com/voiceamerica/vshow.aspx?sid=1601>). The list of guests that he and Alison interviewed on this show represent a who's who in "whole person healing."

As a materials scientist, he understood that it is not simply necessary to understand the chemical composition of a substance but to understand its structure. He commonly noted that the strongest mineral in the world is the diamond, which is made of pure carbon. He then also noted that the

weakest mineral in the world is graphite, which is also made out of pure carbon. His lesson here is that the structure of a substance is critical. Dr. Roy then asserted that the bubbles and nano-bubbles that occur from the shaking of double-distilled water changes the water pressure in glass vials to attain 10,000 atm (atmospheres). Making a homeopathic medicine in this highly pressurized water is not the same as using simple water.

Dr. Roy was known to call people who deny the wide variety of scientific evidence for homeopathy to be "homeophobes." He laughed at their ignorance about homeopathy and about real science, though he was saddened by their extreme arrogance.

Dana Ullman, MPH

## In Memoriam: Dr. Alfons Geukens

### 30 September 1944 -18 October 2010

I remember very clearly the day that I met Alfons Geukens for the first time. It was October 1983 and I had heard that he was looking for colleagues for a newly established homeopathic practice. I was living on the other side of the country and phoned him one evening for a meeting some-time in the near future.

"Could you come over here tonight?" he replied.

I was immediately struck by his urge for action, and I took my car and made the 200 km drive to Hechtel, where he was living.

From the first encounter I liked him. Brimming with enthusiasm, he told me about his ambition to create a clinical training centre for homeopathy after the model of his teacher, George Vithoukas. I saw that he meant every word of it. He had erected a brand new building with six consultation rooms, a treatment room and a nice reception space. And above all, homeopathy was practised here on a daily basis: chronic pathology, acute diseases, and twenty-four hour coverage, with doctors participating in a rotating on-call schedule. This was exactly what I had been dreaming of - a practical training in homeopathic medicine.

I started a few weeks later with my training. I could follow all consultations with Alfons and learned a lot in

a short time. In the constant stream of patients he made the homeopathic *materia medica* come alive. He showed me the characteristic signs of a homeopathic medicine: the fanning of the nostrils in a *Lycopodium* bronchopneumonia, the "small spot pain" in the *Kali bichromicum* migraine, the loquaciousness of *Lachesis*, the dark red lips of *Sulphur*.

He showed me how to see patterns in symptoms, how to observe a patient, and for the first time I could see the sometimes astonishing results of homeopathy. I believe this was one of his major contributions to homeopathy: to bring it back into daily clinical practice, as it was practiced in the times of Kent. His strength was not in elaborate psychological analyses, but in very concrete "bedside" therapy. He always stressed the importance of a good clinical examination and fluent acute prescribing.

He knew a lot about serious pathology, with his experience in tropical medicine, obtained first in Haïti, where he worked as a nurse, and later in a small hospital in the Congo interior, as a medical doctor. After two years he returned to Belgium and settled down as a family physician near his native village. There, he came in contact with homeopathy



through a patient of his. Immediately he saw the great possibilities of this kind of medicine and set off on a quest for more knowledge. That's how he met George Vithoukas, who had a vision: to spread homeopathy through Europe by creating clinical training centers. With his innate enthusiasm, Alfons wanted to be part of this great vision.

In the summer of 1983 the center had materialized and immediately there was a team of five physicians and one lay-homeopath. From then on things moved rapidly - every year a few more colleagues arrived; there was an influx of patients; seminars were organized.

It grew explosively fast. We had too little space. No problem: one morning we found out that Alfons had hired some machines that broke a hole in one of the walls so that a whole new wing could be built, including a large seminar hall. Then some dark clouds started to mount. The team was now so big and the urge for expansion of Alfons's teaching so great, that tensions in the group resulted. Some conflicts could not be reconciled and there were some painful separations. I, myself, left the center in 1990.

Alfons was a born teacher who could inspire people, but he had difficulty in the daily interactions with colleagues.

He had the greatest difficulty in listening to others' opinions. He hardly knew how to relax and to enjoy life. I remember during seminars on Alonnisos that, while we went to the beach to relax, Alfons stayed in his room to study. Only when there was music did he seem to relax and enjoy himself. He had a crushing sense of duty.



Perhaps the shadow side of Alfons had something to do with his tragic personal history. He lost his father a few weeks before he was born, in the last days of the Second World War. The German forces, while withdrawing, inflicted on the Belgian populace great violence and terror, especially in the region of Hechtel where thirty-six people were

shot, one of the victims being his father. Coincidentally or not, Alfons lived and worked in the Twaalf Septemberstraat in Hechtel, named after the day of liberation of his village.

Alfons was an inspiring father for a whole generation of homeopaths. He trained more than fifty physicians and made hundreds of students enthusiastic for this beautiful form of medicine. Let us be grateful for his life and continue his work.

May he rest in peace.

Dr. Henk Van Hootegem  
Belgium 