

## Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H. P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

## Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organization entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title 'The Theosophical Society'.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organization.



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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## CONTENTS

The Open Door <i>Tim Boyd</i>	6
Remembering Joy Mills <i>Stephan A. Hoeller</i>	9
Tribute to Joy <i>Linda Oliveira</i>	13
Joy-ful Memories <i>Nelda Samarel</i>	15
Joy Mills: Remembrance <i>Annine Wycherley</i>	19
Encounters with Joy Mills <i>Anne Johnstone</i>	21
Reflections on Joy <i>Dorothy Bell</i>	23
In Tribute to Joy Mills <i>William Wilson Quinn</i>	25

*(continued)*

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**Cover:** Joy Mills (9 October 1920 – 29 December 2015) in her 20s and 90s. She held the positions of National President (NP) of the Theosophical Society in America for three terms, international Vice-President of the TS for two terms, and NP of the TS in Australia, among her many other responsibilities.

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## Contents

Joy in the Twilight Years <i>Elena Dovalsantos</i>	29
Thinking of Joy <i>Pablo Minniti</i>	32
Remembrances of Joy <i>Steve Walker</i>	33
Photo Inserts	35
Joy Mills: An Evolutionary Journey Cynthia Overweg	43
At the Feet of a Mentor: Fragments of an Ageless Joy <i>Dialogue with a Young Student</i>	47
Memories of Joy Mills <i>James W. Peterson</i>	51
The Joy Mills I Knew and Loved <i>Adelle Chabelski</i>	54
<b>SMALL GEMS</b> <i>Maria Parisen</i> <i>Beverly Champion</i> <i>Lakshmi Narayan</i> <i>Mary Jo Kokochak</i> <i>Brenda Knight</i> <i>Carol Nicholson</i>	56
A Sense of Direction <i>Joy Mills</i>	59
Convention Programme	61
International Directory	64

# THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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**The Theosophical Society** is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's Objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together men of goodwill, whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

**Theosophy** is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching man to know the Spirit as himself and the mind and body as his servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths, and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high, and to work perseveringly, is welcomed as a member, and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

# The Open Door

TIM BOYD

IN the years that I have been involved with the Theosophical Society (TS) I have attended sessions of many types with Joy Mills — lectures, workshops, conventions, planning meetings, board meetings, lunches, dinners, and breakfasts. In my early years in the TS I would be sitting in the audience listening and feeling challenged and inspired by the things she shared. As time passed I was introducing her at the occasional conference or meeting. And in later years we shared the podium together. Sometimes when talking about Joy and my relationship with her I would comment that having first met Joy in 1974, I necessarily fell into that category of one of her “newer” friends. It was inevitable that someone whose Theosophical life began in 1940 and whose travels on behalf of the TS took her to more than 50 countries would have friends and students of all ages scattered around the world.

My relationship with Joy began as a student and admirer. At the time of our initial meeting she was serving as president of the TS in America (TSA). My first visit to the summer national convention was her last year as president. In the large tent that was erected for each year’s gathering she gave her farewell

address as she departed to Adyar to serve as the international Vice-President for the newly elected John Coats. To a twenty-year-old neophyte to the theosophical movement she seemed iconic and out of reach.

The early 1970s, when I first came in contact with the TS, was a time just past the crest of a wave of great social unrest in the United States. The Vietnam War, civil rights, the hippie movement, and a wave of assassinations of visionary leaders had a profound impact on the youth of the nation. Not just outside the TSA, but inside as well, young people were actively advocating for change. Joy served as President throughout all this turbulence. During this time there was an active Young Theosophists (YT) group. Although I do not remember any of the specific issues that seemed so important at the time, I do remember a sense among some of the young members that the desired changes and appreciation for the contributions of youth were coming too slowly.

I remember Joy encouraging the YT group to develop their ideas and to work within the TSA, not to isolate ourselves. At one point she agreed for the YTs to present a kind of open house at the Olcott

## The Open Door

national headquarters. The afternoon's activities included such things as a "psychic fair" and a rock concert which some of the headquarters' staff described as "destroying the vibration of the Olcott center". It had to be a trying time for Joy, but somehow she had confidence that there was value in providing a forum for the YTs to express themselves. Throughout this period, Joy was firm, but fair.

By the time she returned to the US from her six-year stint in Adyar, I was beginning to become grounded in the teachings and the life of a Theosophist. The awe I had felt for her started to become replaced by a measure of understanding for the things Joy wrote and spoke about. And whether it was her freedom from the demands of her previous lofty and demanding positions, or my own growing comfort with Joy as a person, not merely a wise representative, I began to feel a sense of ease in her presence. From this point onward Joy became a multi-layered, ever deepening, fascinating person to me.

There is a saying that "we don't see things as they are; we see them as *we are*." Whatever level of our consciousness we are operating from, colors the world around us. A corollary experience is that there are people who, when we find ourselves around them, they bring out a different side of us. In their presence we feel enlarged. Somehow just being near them makes us feel like bigger people, and we see the world in a different way. These are the ones we seek out, the ones who, even thinking of them, lifts us up. Joy was like this.

With the passing of time my role within the TS was changing. Unlike many other fields of study, the life of the student of Theosophy seems to require action. The result was an increasing activity and greater responsibilities, until a time came when I was asked to join the national board of directors. This was new territory. Helping locally was fine, but this seemed like a quantum leap in commitment. Feeling a little overwhelmed, I did the obvious. I sought out Joy's advice. She had been in this exact situation, and could give counsel that was grounded in her own experience. Talking to her put things into perspective. The main thing she stressed was the beauty of "the work", the sacredness and privilege of being able to do that work at any level, but that greater responsibility also required greater dedication. She was so understanding and encouraging. I left her feeling a renewed commitment.

In H. P. Blavatsky's "Golden Stairs" there is a passage that speaks of the importance of being ready "to give and receive advice and instruction". Theoretical advice has value, but can never be the same as the counsel that comes from hard-won life experience. As the positions I was called upon to occupy within the TS changed, the number of people in the world who could advise, having actually served in those positions, narrowed down to just one — Joy. Only she had been TS in America Director, Vice-President, President, international Vice-President, and for a brief time following John Coats' death, though

## The Open Door

technically not president, she had taken on the role of head of the TS. At every step she was unfailing, unstinting, and truly loving in her counsel.

I share below a few pieces of her advice about the TS taken from conversation and correspondence. It speaks for itself.

“Bring to the office a true dedication and a commitment to the ideals that have guided the work through all the years!”

“. . . dedication to the Society and its mission . . . I feel, means everything! I feel certain the scope of the work has increased since I held that office (TSA president), but I also know, from experi-

ence, that you will be given the strength and inner fortitude to meet whatever challenges (and there will be many!) arise!”

“Blessings of the Great Ones be with you!”

“Sending you thoughts that you will know what it is right to do at this juncture.”

“I have been most fortunate, truly privileged, in being able to give myself to the work of the Society in whatever capacity I was called upon to serve. Not many have had so fortunate a life, and I am truly grateful. To use Clara Codd’s words, it has been truly a ‘rich life’.”

“Look for the open door.” ✧

We must, then, ask the serious questions: “Are we ready to move in a radically new direction? Are we, as individuals, prepared to undergo in ourselves that kind of transformation which will bring about a genuine transformation in the world — a transformation that will inevitably bring about a new vision?” Today, all other kinds of thought are out-moded; all other ways of thinking are unthinkable.

To explore such questions implies also a willingness to probe deep into our own natures. For, to understand ourselves is to understand the world of which we are so intimate a part. By our very nature we are world-creating; but we have become world-destroying — a fact which the present day ecological movement is making apparent.

Joy Mills

# Remembering Joy Mills

## Reflections on a life within the changing face of Theosophy

STEPHAN A. HOELLER

ON 29 December 2015 there passed from this earthly incarnational state one of the luminaries of the branch of the perennial esoteric tradition, known since the late nineteenth century as Theosophy. To this matrix of alternative spirituality, most of her long and productive life was dedicated. If one were to write a contemporary sequel to the book *Meetings with Remarkable Men (and Women)*, there would have to be included a long chapter dedicated to Joy Mills. Among her remarkable distinguishing marks one must include her ability to intuit the spiritual needs of our time and to recognize the desirability of a transvaluation of the theosophical worldview to respond to these needs. It is in view of this latter circumstance that this small essay has been written.

Joy Mills was trained as a school-teacher, and although her chosen career was replaced by her long service to the cause of Theosophy, she never quite lost her persona of a classroom teacher. She was not only a lecturer, but an instructor,

who moreover was capable of exercising discipline and authority. Her extensive contribution to the theosophical philosophy was the result of her great familiarity with her subject and of her clear and rigorous thinking. In an age where opinions tend to outnumber concepts and precepts, her ideas and ideals were formulated and expressed in clear and unambiguous terms, which were grounded in knowledge wedded to insight. Such were the qualities that enabled her to navigate the turbulent sea of spiritual, intellectual, and cultural change which rendered the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as among the most perilous of history.

In order to gain a better appreciation for Joy Mills, one needs to understand some of the challenges impinging upon the theosophical psycho-spiritual ambience during her lifetime.

By the middle of the twentieth century Theosophy was in a state of transition. The exciting and heady days of Dr Annie Besant and Bishop C. W. Leadbeater were

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## Remembering Joy Mills

over, owing to the demise of these pivotal figures. The once-expected World Teacher (J. Krishnamurti) was now an independent teacher, altogether on his own. A number of brilliant persons still carrying the torch lit in the Besant era were traveling over the world proclaiming the message. Ernest Wood, Geoffrey Hodson, C. Jinarājādāsa, Rukmini Devi and a few others came to the USA regularly and continued to inspire and inform. Among them, Joy Mills was particularly proud of having met Dr Henry T. Edge, a prominent member of the Point Loma Theosophical Society, and one of the very few people still living who had met H. P. Blavatsky in past years.

In fact, Blavatsky (HPB) was a somewhat distant shadow on the theosophical horizon in the second half of the twentieth century. Her *Secret Doctrine* was certainly present in all lodge libraries, and her *Voice of the Silence* served as a favorite meditation text, but the bulk of theosophical literature consisted of the many books of Besant and Leadbeater, and the teachings embraced by most of the members were found in these works. In many lodges, the credo consisted of a kind of trinity of doctrines, namely, Reincarnation, Karma, and Evolution; teachings that served as inspiring replacements for eternal heaven and hell taught by much of Western religion.

By the late nineteen fifties and sixties, the teachings which excited 19th century minds were waning in the public awareness, having lost the appeal of novelty. Also, numerous spiritual organizations

had sprung up duplicating these teachings, so that the theosophical versions were now merely part of a widespread set of common ideas. In addition, owing to the unavoidable attrition caused by deaths, the membership of the Theosophical Society (TS) was decreasing.

In the early years of our presence in the Theosophical Society, both Joy Mills and I frequently were the youngest in many a theosophical crowd, most members having joined in the exciting years of Besant, Leadbeater, and Krishnamurti; they were now in their declining years. There was also a certain, at times somewhat excessive, attachment of many members to the numerous Sanskrit terms found in much of our literature, which tended to strike visitors to our programs as somewhat odd. Through all these developments, Joy Mills remained a stalwart worker for the cause, fulfilling many functions both administrative and educational in the TS in American.

The changing times brought new developments as well as changes in leadership. The international Presidents Jinarājādāsa and N. Sri Ram, after having served Theosophy with distinction, departed the earthly realm, to be replaced by the charming and urbane figure of John B. S. Coats, who soon requested Joy Mills to come to India and become his Vice-President. To the great regret of many, President Coats suffered an untimely death, and Joy Mills returned from India to the United States. Shortly after her return, the present writer had a lengthy conversation with her in

## Remembering Joy Mills

California. It was evident that she had undergone a veritable sea change. She stated quite openly that she had come to the insight that contrary to the views of many theosophists, the approaches to the spirituality of India and other Eastern cultures were not superior to the approaches of the West, and that it would be beneficial for many theosophists if they explored avenues of Western esotericism, particularly the spiritually oriented psychology of the late C. G. Jung.

In the course of our conversation she also stated that the sources of much of HPB's work were based on the three interrelated ideologies of Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, and Gnosticism. These views expressed by Joy Mills were met with signal approval by the present writer. One needs to keep in mind that beginning with the Founders, who chose the name of the new Society by adopting the term coined by Ammonius Saccas, the founder of Neoplatonism, there have always been advocates of the Western esoteric tradition in the Theosophical Society. One of the most impressive statements in this regard was made by the theosophical author and lecturer, Dr Alvin B. Kuhn, when he stated, "We need not to go back *to* Blavatsky, but back *with* Blavatsky to Plato and the sages!" From the time of her return from India, Joy Mills, along with her close friend Virginia Hanson, became an avid reader of the writings of Jung, and of the then recently published Gnostic gospels from Nag Hammadi.

Joy Mills was not a vociferous advo-

cate of her convictions just noted. Often one had to read between the lines of her essays and catch the subtle messages woven into her lectures to discern the "new Joy" as contrasted with the one of yesteryear. Yet the signs were present for all to see. The present writer repeatedly heard her state in public that *The Secret Doctrine* was a myth, as against the notion that it was fact. Similarly, she stated openly that the "Stanzas of Dzyan" (of *The Secret Doctrine*), like all creation myths, had a depth-psychological meaning, in terms of the birth of consciousness. Informed by the insights of Jung, she agreed with the poet Goethe that "all things transitory but as symbols are meant".

Although circumspect and diplomatic in her utterances and writings, Joy was engaged in the transvaluation of the understanding of the theosophical philosophy in terms of myth, symbol, and metaphor. (When in 1982 my book *The Gnostic Jung* was published, she commented on it most favorably, and was fond of quoting the title of its Epilogue "The Once and Future Gnosis".) She was often distressed by the phenomenon of what her colleague, John Algeo, called "Theosophical Fundamentalism". When for a time she became the General Secretary of the Australian Section of the Society, she enjoyed the freewheeling and undogmatic spirit of that country, which of course was also present in the Australian theosophical membership. Her aforementioned close friend, Virginia Hanson, shared in much of Joy's orientation. Shortly before her death, Ms Hanson

## Remembering Joy Mills

(herself very much of an archetypal wise woman) confided to me that the spiritually most important book she ever read was *The Gospel of Philip*, from Nag Hammadi. When in 2009 the previously concealed “Red Book” (*Liber Novus*) of Jung appeared, Joy was the only person in the Krotona community in Ojai, to own a copy (in addition to the Krotona Library). She also studied it daily.

The present small essay, now nearing an end, is in the nature of a personal statement. This author, being Joy Mills’ junior by a decade, has lived through the same time period as she, as an active member (though never an official) of the Theosophical Society. During the latter decades of the twentieth century, in part with Joy’s help, this author toured as a lecturer for the Society in Australia and New Zealand, as well as parts of Europe. There as well as in the United States he found the Theosophical Society at a crossroads. On the one hand, the teachings once popular in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries are still present, but have lost their *lustre*. The so-called New Age adopted and also frequently bowdlerized the original message of Theosophy, and it is also now showing a great deal of wear and tear. Happily, a certain third force (a *tertium quid*) is making its appearance both within and outside the

theosophical fold. The internal component of this force consists in the discovery and publication of certain esoteric writings of H. P. Blavatsky, edited and elucidated by the valiant and expert theosophical historian Michael Gomes (*The Secret Doctrine Commentaries, The Unpublished 1889 Instructions*, 2010, and *Esoteric Instructions*, 2015). These writings indicate that HPB had a vital interest in promoting a certain kind of gnosis (not a popularized formulaic set of teachings, but a method of obtaining inner knowing).

One may deduce from these writings that HPB’s Theosophy was not intended as a belief system, but as a program of spiritual insight. This internal ambience has as its corollary an increasingly powerful movement in the culture (both academic and popular) that is based on the discovery in the late twentieth century of the Nag Hammadi Gnostic library. At this early part of the twenty-first century, Gnosis is in the air in many places. There are those of us in the Theosophical spiritual milieu who welcome this phenomenon. Joy Mills was one of these, and the present writer, in gratitude to her, participates in welcoming this spirit of the times, within which the changing face of Theosophy is destined to play an important role. ✧

**We are weaving the fabric of our lives “beneath the karmic eye”, unaware that the same law of karma not only binds us to the wheel of pleasure and pain, but can also set us free.**

Joy Mills

# Tribute to Joy

LINDA OLIVEIRA

ONE of the most well-known members of the Theosophical Society (TS) in recent decades has been Joy Mills, who passed peacefully on 29 December 2015 at her home in Ojai, California. Her fame may be due in part to the amount of travel she undertook globally for the TS. Joy mentioned at one stage that, apart from the then International President, Radha Burnier, she had travelled the most extensively throughout the TS world, visiting some fifty countries.

Having joined the Society on 15 August 1940, Joy eventually became the acting National President of the American Section of the TS from 1965 to 1966, and served as its elected National President from 1966 to 1974. During that time she founded Quest Books, a line of theosophically inspired books for the commercial, popular market. This finally ceased operations only in November last year. Joy served the TS further, this time as International Vice-President at Adyar from 1974 to 1979 under the then International President, John Coats. From 1980 until 1992 she became the founding Director of the Krotona School of Theo-



Joy Mills at the TS in America Summer Gathering, Olcott, 2005

sophy in Ojai, California. Later on, she was elected National President of the Australian Section of the Society, serving in that capacity from 1993 to 1996, and finally ‘retiring’ back to Ojai afterwards.

The T. Subba Row Medal, instituted in 1883, is awarded to members of the Society who have made outstanding contributions to theosophical literature and understanding. One of the first recipients of the Medal was H. P. Blavatsky.

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**Mrs Linda Oliveira** is a long-term member of the Theosophical Society, National President of the Australian Section, and former international Vice-President of the TS.

## Tribute to Joy

Joy Mills was a devoted student of HPB's teachings and expounded on them for many years through her books and lectures. In recognition of her valuable literary contributions, the General Council awarded her this prestigious Medal in 2010.

Through her books, Joy explored fundamental questions of existence in the light of the Wisdom Tradition. Her works included *Living in Wisdom: Lectures on The Secret Doctrine*, *From Inner to Outer Transformation: Lectures on The Voice of the Silence*, *One Hundred Years of Theosophy in America*, *Entering on the Sacred Way: A Psychological Commentary on Light on the Path*, *The Human Journey: Quest for Self-Transformation*, and *Reflections on an Ageless Wisdom: A Commentary on The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. At the time she was awarded the Subba Row medal, Joy also had to her credit twenty-two DVDs and seventy-three CDs containing her theosophical presentations over a period of many years. Numerous articles of hers have appeared in *The Theosophist* and other journals around the world. An online search of her name in the *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals* (Australian Section website) brought up a remarkable 663 records.

Apart from her achievements — and they were many — Joy was a great Theo-

sophical lecturer and teacher, and at these times she seemed to be in her element. Possessed of an infectious passion for the study of modern Theosophical classics, she had a deep understanding of them, accompanied by an open-minded spirit of enquiry. Her *Secret Doctrine* classes demonstrated this. For example, once during a class at Springbrook she represented an abstruse aspect of Cosmogogenesis in the form of a diagram. One student suggested a different kind of diagram for the same concept and she immediately said something to the effect of, 'Yes, you could look at it that way too!' Her view of Theosophy seemed to be always expanding, always reaching out more widely and more deeply. Whenever she taught, she would take those who had the good fortune to be in her classes on that journey for a while. At the same time, she was well acquainted with many contemporary publications of relevance to her explorations.

On a personal note, I benefited greatly in 1981 from an invitation by Joy to study and live at Krotona for the best part of a year while she was the School's Director. This early opportunity, along with Joy's encouragement, were two of the pivotal factors which resulted in my long-term commitment to the TS and the study of Theosophy. May she have a well-deserved rest. ✧

**The purpose of the Objects is clear, to remind us constantly of why we are here, not just as members of this Society, but as men and women walking the ways of humankind toward the gods.**

Joy Mills

# Joy-ful Memories

NELDA SAMAREL

**J**OY Mills is known throughout the theosophical world as an extraordinary student of the Ageless Wisdom tradition. Having authored numerous books and countless journal articles, she was an internationally sought-after teacher for almost the entirety of her seventy-five-year membership in the Theosophical Society (TS). Her accomplishments are astounding and she had a remarkable ability to excel in whatever she chose to undertake.

Her contributions to the Society are well known and include, in addition to her writing and teaching: her presidency of the Theosophical Society in America during a very difficult time in the history of the United States, when the civil rights movement was front and center; presidency of the TS in Australia, the only National President in the Society who was ever requested to come from another TS Section; international Vice-President of the Society; member of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy Board of Trustees, serving continuously for 35 years; longest standing continuously serving member of the Society's General Coun-

cil; and distinguished recipient of the T. Subba Row Medal for her outstanding contributions to theosophical literature. Much more can be (and has been) said about these accomplishments. In remembering Joy, rather than speak about those aspects of her life of which we all are aware — writer, speaker, mentor, administrator, and innovator — I would like to share some more personal, lesser known aspects of Joy's life, hoping that all who so loved and admired this great lady will come to better know and appreciate her.

Having enjoyed a twenty-six-year close friendship — the last sixteen years as next-door neighbors — Joy and I spent many hours together speaking about life's more serious matters, including life, death, theosophy, religion, and philosophy, as well as the many everyday topics friends normally would share: family, love, food, politics, and more. You name it and we covered it!

One of the very remarkable things about Joy was that she always strived to make the teachings a reality in her life. She would often recall earlier times and actions in her life, wondering whether

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## Joy-ful Memories

she could have done better. For example, she relived decisions made as National President of the Theosophical Society in America, questioning whether she had done the “right” thing, attempting to determine how she could have been more effective. She strived for insight into her own actions, hoping to learn and to grow from every experience, in the end always taking comfort in knowing that she had done her very best, whether it was in her writing, teaching, administrative work, or playing bridge or scrabble. She never did anything half-heartedly.

As an extraordinary student of the Ageless Wisdom, Joy shared much more than her academic understanding. She understood not only the complexities of the theosophical doctrine, but synthesized and assimilated the teachings, digesting and incorporating them into who she was. It was so much more than “doctrine” to her; for Joy it was a way of life, something for which to strive, a *living* Theosophy. It was only through “living the life”, as she loved to say, that she was able to inspire countless seekers worldwide.

Most of us saw Joy as a serious student in her role as teacher and mentor, but she also had her fun side. We spent many hours together at the TS international headquarters in Adyar shopping and often getting into our fair share of trouble together, then laughing uncontrollably about it afterwards. She enjoyed the afternoons we spent together in her room or in mine, discussing our earlier lives while eating lots of potato chips.

Although Joy enjoyed the lighter

moments in life such as concerts, dining out, watching her television game shows, and playing games with friends, her life was totally committed to the TS. This was a conscious commitment and not taken lightly. Not too many years after joining the Society, Joy received a marriage proposal from a gentleman friend and fellow member. Realizing that she could only serve one master well, she turned down the proposal in favor of devoting her life to the Society, maintaining her friendship with her would-be suitor until his death many years later. It is not possible to know how many of us benefited from this self-sacrificing decision. And when we think of the time in which Joy made this decision, it is even more remarkable. The 1940s was a time when women married and became wives and mothers to be supported by their husbands; the independent woman was an anomaly and had to be both confident and brave, characteristics that certainly describe Joy Mills.

Moving to Olcott, the national headquarters of the TS in America, to join the staff there in 1940, Joy knew she had found her spiritual home. In the mid-1940s she moved to Seattle to teach high school, living there with two close friends Vera Reichers and Gwen Garnsey, also members of the Society. While in Seattle, Joy continued to work for the TS there. After a few years she returned to Olcott, remaining a full-time worker for the Society for the rest of her life.

In her later years at Krotona, where Joy lived continuously from 1980 until

## *Joy-ful Memories*

her death in 2015, with the exception only of the three years she lived in Australia as National President of that Section, she was visited by countless Society members and nonmembers who appreciated her vast wisdom. Even in her waning years, she never refused a requested visit, always making herself available to seasoned and new seekers alike, to inspire, answer questions, assist with study, or to just chat. The range of her visitors was vast and included old friends, grandchildren of friends, high school students, TS officers seeking her wisdom, and Ojai neighbors who simply wanted to be in her presence.

Joy was a many-faceted woman. During the months following her transition to the higher life, I had the honor of going through her belongings, including not only her personal effects, but her lecture notes, files, and hundreds of books. Having no idea of her affinity for poetry, I was surprised to see the great number of such books, including works by well-known authors such as T. S. Elliott, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Edna St. Vincent Millay, along with some who were lesser known. Although none of the books were annotated or underlined, as was Joy's habit in her later years when reading anything of interest to her, it was obvious that the books were well read. One almost could feel the enjoyment that was derived in some past time from those well-worn pages. Although I learned that Joy enjoyed poetry, I had no idea that she, indeed, was a poet in her own right.

Never once, in all our years of conversation, did she ever mention the topic of poetry.

In a closet, tucked away with old photos and college textbooks, I found a book of handwritten poetry. One immediately could see that this was something very special. Originally a brown or rust-colored cloth cover and faded by seventy-five years of shelf life, it was meticulously covered with plastic, as would be expected of Joy. The cloth cover was embossed with a dove surrounded by an olive-branch circle. It was a book of blank pages, now brittle with the passage of time, of the type usually thought of for journals, diaries, or special notes given to her in 1941 as a Christmas gift from her dear college friend, Caroline Tess, later Caroline Ross.

Over the next several decades, Joy filled that cloth-covered journal with original poems. In going through other documents, I learned that she studied poetry in college. Following are two of her approximately 190 original poems:

### **New Year — 1944**

The morn was crystal — white and clear.

“More radiant than the sun am I” —

The frost lay still, on every branch  
A sphere of luminous, reflected light;

“Purer than the snow, subtler than the  
Aether is the self” — in silence came

The flight of mystic wings,

The VISION and the cry,

The burst of sound — the Seeker's Voice:

“I AM THAT SELF: THAT SELF AM I.”

## Joy-ful Memories

### Untitled July 1944

Love has no certain limits,  
Knows no confine —  
Else I should package  
This heart of mine.

No hand could hold it  
Nor hand deny  
A gift so simple:  
My heart and I.

Of all the dreams  
That may come true,  
This heart holds dearest  
These for you:

The joy of peace  
Bestowed by One  
Who guides and watches  
Till all is done;

The joy of beauty  
Present here  
In the heart that knows  
The Master near;

The joy of love  
Now found complete  
In the heart of Him  
In Whom all lovers meet.

Joy's poetry, spanning from 1939 to the 1990s, is being published by the Theosophical Publishing House in Wheaton,

Illinois, in a volume to be released in the spring of 2017.

It is of particular interest that among Joy's books was the classic by René Daumal, *Mount Analogue*, along with a biography of the author. According to Daumal, there are three great approaches to truth: philosophy, especially Plato's dialectic; the "initiation" of the occult tradition properly understood; and poetry as a means of achieving sacred knowledge. The complete works of Plato, along with several books of commentary, had a prominent place among Joy's books, and she always had a strong interest in ritual and the occult. The only part of Daumal's "truth trinity" that had not been evident in Joy's literature collection was the poetry. That is no longer so.

It was Joy's wish to pass peacefully in her own bed, at home in her beloved Krotona. Her wish was fulfilled. A short while after being made comfortable by her dear friends, Anne Johnstone and Mary Jo Kokochak, she drew her last breath at 10:35 am on 29 December 2015. She was asleep as she slipped quietly and uneventfully into the higher life.

My immense gratitude to have experienced the wisdom and friendship of this grand lady of Theosophy is shared by countless others. Let us carry forward all that we have gained from experiencing Joy Mills' presence. ✧

**We dare not become merely arm-chair theosophists, speculating about Parabrahman and pralaya, the nature of maya and the composition of the skandhas. Speculation must give way to knowledge; knowledge must be transmuted into compassion.**

Joy Mills

# Joy Mills: Remembrance

ANNINE WYCHERLEY

SEVERAL years ago Joy Mills told me how she and Virginia Hanson read books together. Virginia would read one page and Joy the next. Joy suggested we could do the same. Study together. We started and I realized the vast interest Joy had not only in Theosophy but philosophy, religion, science, psychology, healing, ritual, music, politics and games like bridge (along with Shirley Nicholson, Jane Evans and Zella Balsh), and tennis.

We decided to start with a Tibetan teaching, namely *Dzogchen* — “Great Perfection” — by H. H. the Dalai Lama, then went on to *Meditation on the Nature of the Mind*, by a professor in Santa Barbara — José Ignacio Cabezón. *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* by Sogyal Rinpoche was next. We started to read the big *Red Book* by C.G. Jung in March 2012, and after many months we decided to meet twice a week to increase the time to finish the book. (She would have loved Stephan Hoeller’s views on the illustrations). *The Secret Doctrine Dialogues* followed. It was like sitting in a class with HPB. Our most recent reading was *Isis Unveiled* Volume 1. By then I was mostly reading but Joy was closely

following and marking notes in her copy. We would stop and Joy would indicate reference points in HPB’s other writings.

I feel a deep gratitude to Joy for evoking a deeper enthusiasm for study and gaining more knowledge and practice of the Wisdom Teachings. Getting to know Joy as a friend started on two long road trips we took together, one to Indralaya, a Theosophical Society (TS) camp on Orcas Island, WA, and the other to “The Ozarks” TS camp in Arkansas.

Joy enjoyed travelling by car and she was the best GPS (Global Positioning System) anyone could wish for. We never got lost. I learned about the history of this country for she was a great historian. She loved this country with the big trees, the oceans, the lakes, the deserts and the majestic mountains and the ever-changing scenery. She loved Nature.

At Indralaya we met a Tibetan, Sogyal Rinpoche who especially wanted to meet Joy, for he knew of the name “Blavatsky” from an entry in one of the Dzogchen monasteries in Tibet and he was wondering if Joy too was able to do “miracles” and “magic” like HPB.

She told me about her trips to various

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## Joy Mills: Remembrance

countries, and having to eat different foods, and was very grateful for a homeopathic medicine to help her cope with the after-effects. On our trips she was very happy just eating simple food for breakfast, lunch and dinner. She loved having a strawberry waffle with maple syrup and cream, and a coffee late in the company of friends. She had a very good appetite.

She told me that many years ago she travelled with Virginia and two other TS members to Scotland and Ireland. There, in one of those places, she had a “remembrance” of a past incarnation. At times I would notice that she was aware of the invisible worlds by her expression, or there would be a special fragrance in the room.

She was a great ritualist. Performing

ceremonies with dignity and accuracy embodied the aspects of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

As a travelling lecturer she had to settle into any accommodation, sometimes delightful and sometimes challenging, as many can vouch for. Having told me many stories of these experiences she said that it would make for an interesting book. Had she ever thought of it? She said she had, and would call it (for fun), *The Beds I Have Slept In*. Catchy topic!

Joy Mills was independent but not based on rigidity and immobility. She always kept abreast of the times, and changed with it. She had an unswerving directive, the inner law of her being which determined her actions. (*I Ching* Hexagram 32 — Hêng / “Duration”) ✧

**The essence of friendliness is sympathy, even an empathy. In friendship, there is a predisposition to listen and to understand the other. This quality of friendliness goes to the very root of right relationship.**

**From friendliness to compassion is a natural movement of the heart. To be a friend to all that lives means that one is compassionate, caring, one to whom all life is precious. The one who is full of friendliness and sympathy naturally feels compassion for all who suffer. There needs to be an unqualified compassion, a natural flow outward. Once total friendliness and compassion flower, we begin to lose our sense of possessiveness.**

Joy Mills

# Encounters with Joy Mills

ANNE JOHNSTONE

MY first encounter with Joy was one of finding her rather formidable. During the 1980s, a TS member was introducing her during a national convention and he dared to analyse her philosophy. She quickly interjected and told him to “get on with the job in hand” or words to that effect. She was certainly not lacking in assertiveness!

At Krotona, I got to know Joy much better in the last seven to eight years of her life, when my relationship was more of a helper/nurse, overseer, sometime computer/printer technician, safety officer, and companion to appointments and shopping when needed. Our conversations often were about articles she had read in the latest magazines, newly published Quest Books, or gifts. She was an avid reader/crossword puzzle fan until about a week before she left us. Her competitive nature surfaced when she watched game shows on television with her caregivers or visitors — all to keep the brain supple! But what impressed me most was that she would write to well over 100 people each year during December, keeping track of everyone via

a card system, and she even continued correspondence with relatives of friends who had already passed on!

Joy fiercely maintained her independence even when her physical abilities started to wane. We were ‘firm’/honest with each other when we needed to be, and she was always grateful to the friends of Krotona and Ojai who helped to keep her in her own home. It was remarkable how people who were twenty, forty, and sixty years younger than Joy, continued regular visits for conversation, scheduled study, and general helpfulness. Joy kept track of her appointments/engagements, graciously accepted help and never discussed contents of conversations. My favorite time with Joy was during the evenings, when we could discuss any concerns, which were often injected with some humor.

Just a few weeks before she transitioned, it was obvious that Joy would need “live-in” help. She kept mentioning Mary Jo Kokochak’s name enough for us to know that this was the person Joy knew could be possibly available to help. When Mary Jo confirmed she would be able to

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## Encounters with Joy Mills

stay and help her, Joy and I had a conversation on what we had learned from our relationship over the last few years. I had learned how to attend to my own mother in a better way and felt I had done my best when she transitioned. Joy said that through this process together, and that of other people helping her, she had learned patience (or more patience). Mary Jo appeared a week later and their rapport was one of a loving relationship.

I am not one to talk about or dwell on phenomena, though this event was significant for me. During the night, Mary Jo and I were taking four-hour shifts to sit with Joy. I was with her during the early hours of the morning with a low light on. As I looked at her, it occurred to me that her face looked like a younger version of Joy, perhaps in her thirties or forties. (I have since learned that this is a fairly common occurrence, when the person ‘transcends’ in the happiest time of their life.) This incident lasted only for a short while, and I understand it is often a very temporary thing. But it was such

a privilege to witness this, and a gift that I will always remember. I am sure her constant zest for inquiry kept her alert for so long.

From a book given to Joy as a Christmas gift, I remember Mary Jo and I taking turns reading to her poems by Mary Oliver that she loved to listen to. The poems included themes about “The Journey”, “The Gift”, and “Love”. From the book *Felicity*, this is one of the poems read to Joy:

### Roses\*

Everyone now and again wonders about those questions that have no ready answers: First cause, God’s existence, what happens when the curtain goes down and nothing stops it, not kissing, not going to the mall, not the Super Bowl.

“Wild roses,” I said to them one morning: “Do you have the answers? And if you do, would you tell me?”

The roses laughed softly. “Forgive us”, they said, “but as you can see, we are just now entirely busy being roses.”

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\* Mary Oliver, *Felicity*, Penguin Press: New York, NY, 2015, ISBN 978-1-59420-676-4.  
See also: <http://philiphclark.com/mary-olivers-felicity>

**We have been given magnificent aims to set before ourselves. The purpose of the Objects is clear; to remind us constantly of why we are here, not just as members of this Society, but as men and women walking the ways of humankind toward the gods.**

Joy Mills

# Reflections on Joy

DOROTHY BELL

IN reflecting on Joy Mills' great service to the Theosophical Society (TS), one would say that strongly-held personal beliefs — combined with the desire of the soul — developed the necessary strength to sustain her dedication and sense of duty. Through her lectures and writings we experienced her great love of knowledge and Theosophy and the breadth and depth of her understanding of the Wisdom teachings. We observed in particular, her deepest admiration, appreciation, and respect for HPB and the Mahatma known as KH, and all their work in laying foundation teachings for the future of humanity. We also witnessed her ever-ready willingness to share her knowledge informally, in helping others understand the teachings that were complex, abstract, and unfamiliar — in particular, responses to those innumerable e-mail requests for assistance and guidance.

Her teaching had taken her around the globe to TS groups in different countries, cultures and continents. There were many stories she could tell about the hair-raising challenges encountered on arduous travel schedules, extreme climates, assorted modes of transportation and accommoda-

tion. She often joked about writing a book titled *The Beds I have Slept In*, as a TOS fundraiser. Such experiences obviously tested her courage, health and commitment. In recounting these stories and others from times of adversity and difficulty, an underlying acceptance of kārmic and dhārmic responsibility always seemed to quietly prevail — accompanied by an obligatory sense of humour.

She enjoyed telling stories about the earlier days and the initiatives of a dedicated band of workers in the American Section whose zeal and enthusiasm were even translated into rousing lyrics to the tune of *Onward Christian Soldiers*. However, their title was *Onward with Blavatsky!*

In a more serious vein, one story from a South American tour many, many years ago, gives some insight into her commitment to the “great work” in which she was engaged in the context of the Divine Plan. . . . While travelling through a section of the Andes, she experienced a powerful vision from — as she called it — the “way distant future”. She emphasized an overwhelming sense of “feeling-knowing” that came with the vision. What she saw was a glimpse of

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## Reflections on Joy

what could come to pass as consciousness expanded into new dimensions and a truly new humanity — embodying that new consciousness — came into being.

She knew that this new humanity referred to what we call the 7th ray or “racial” type in our present fourth “round”, and that this was the ultimate development of consciousness for this particular cycle in our evolution. This consciousness was not simply of wholeness or of oneness, but one infused with Wisdom, with knowingness, with true Love, with bliss, and with confidence. And what she brought away from this experience was a profound conviction that because there needed to be room for that kind of consciousness to come into existence — even millions of years in the “far distant future” — it was important now for seeds to be planted.

Joy often spoke of KH’s teaching about the development of a mind that could “embrace the universe”. The necessity to plant seeds now for their possible manifestation in a million years’ time — and possibly through ourselves in different vehicles and guises — confuses our brain consciousness. Our minds are programmed on Earth towards immediate outcomes or results in the near future or “in our lifetime”.

This experience contributed to Joy’s appreciation of the “time element” which operated “in and out of time” in the Divine Plan of the evolution of consciousness. In all probability, it also contributed significantly to her expanded sense of dhārmic duty. And even though the time

scales of the Divine Plan are mind-boggling, she was not concerned with time; she was concerned with consciousness and the critical condition of humanity in which we now live. Her work, from this perspective, was an opportunity to plant seeds for a “new continent of thought”, for a new and far distant humanity that she *knew* in every fibre of her being — not believed, or hoped, or prayed for — would come into existence ultimately. A loyal sense of duty derived from this centre.

She also saw the importance of where the seeds were being planted, and recognised the need to do everything possible to minimize the efforts of the weeds to take over. For even when the seeds of compassion and love, beauty and wisdom are planted, weeds may come up in their midst. She would often say, we are to be good gardeners — vigilant and discerning.

It can be said that Joy aligned her vision and work with the vision behind the establishment of the Society and its intended work — the transformation of consciousness and building a new continent of thought. The First Object of the Society implies transformation to a spiritual consciousness. The motto or mission of the Theosophical Order of Service embodies the Love that signifies a spiritual consciousness, centred in the compassionate Heart. It is our challenge to work towards planting seeds in our own unique ways and by being vigilant and discerning gardeners.

Thank you, Joy. You have so earned your freedom. ✧

# In Tribute to Joy Mills

WILLIAM WILSON QUINN

For, to work for mankind is grand, its recompense stretches beyond this brief dream of life into other births.<sup>1</sup>

Mahatma Morya

FOR over 75 consecutive years, Joy Mills was a member of the Theosophical Society (TS), having joined in 1940 at age twenty. For all but seven of those 75 years, she was either an exemplary employee and leader within the TS, or fully involved and occupied — in her “retirement” years — continuing the work she did during her tenure in executive positions of the TS in the United States, in India, and in Australia. These remarkable sums of years, 75 years of membership in the TS and 68 years of full-time and active service in the cause of the spiritual upliftment of humanity, speak forcefully to the fact that such service was the primary drive of her being, and that her work and the years she spent at it stand as a paradigm of selflessness.

This legacy was selfless because the TS is not an organization where one goes to work to become wealthy. Indeed, for anyone who has ever worked as an employee of the TS knows, the material

remuneration is somewhere on the level of what most monks and nuns earn in their respective religious vocations. The spiritual remuneration, however, is another matter; by the standard of spiritual currency, so to speak, whose ledger may only be recorded in *ākāśa*, Joy Mills was likely a millionaire many times over. Joy’s sizable contribution to this work is best understood in light of her extraordinary capabilities and talent as an innovative executive. Those who knew or worked with her will acknowledge that her talents at motivating her co-workers, managing operation systems, organizing new ventures, and problem-solving, would have allowed her to rise to the top executive levels of any major corporation or governmental entity. Yet she chose to devote her substantial talents to the spiritual upliftment of humanity, thereby forfeiting the many material comforts that those talents, applied to such other careers, would have afforded. It is in this context that the principle of sacrifice

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## In Tribute to Joy Mills

arises as a core component of the selflessness that was illustrated by the entire life of the being we knew as Joy Mills.

Joy was both a strong leader, and a kind, compassionate leader. In certain unenlightened models of leadership, whether corporate, governmental, or political, “strong” leaders are viewed as needing to be ruthless and indifferent to injustice resulting from their unilateral decisions that affect those who are being led. But that describes pseudo-strength, not real strength. Real strength, in the form of strong leadership, is characterized by being a model that others seek to emulate and being a person others willingly follow — one whose attributes are certainty, optimism, resoluteness, fairness, and unfailing energy, all working in tandem with empathy and compassion in situations where those are needed. Strong leadership does not occur, however, without strength of character. This, too, was yet another of Joy’s strengths — she was principled beyond reproach, fair to the level of the law of compensation (karma), courageous in the face of difficult challenges and adversity, and an exemplar of what the Pali Buddhist texts call *metta*, usually translated as loving-kindness.

These of Joy’s principal attributes — selflessness, sacrifice, strength, and courage — were among the basic tools that she had at hand to bring to her life’s mission. This mission was the same as that of those many teachers and bearers of light, greater and lesser, who preceded her, most notably H. P. Blavatsky. Joy’s

can be described as a life of complete devotion to the work of spiritual education, if not illumination, of humanity, and of propagating the immemorial and immutable primordial truths of the *philosophia perennis*. She was not only a deep student of the works of HPB, but also of the literary benefaction in the form of letters by Adepts of the spiritual hierarchy of humanity, about which she published several commentaries and studies. Joy’s devotion and fidelity to this mission were further aided by additional tools — her keen intellect and her skill as a writer. Based solely on the writings she selected to comment upon and elucidate — *The Secret Doctrine*, *Light on the Path*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* — it seemed clear that there was a reciprocity between the profound content of these works and Joy’s consciousness and Inner Person. It was as if, in her living and being, she was in many ways a breathing expression of the priestlike principles that those works convey, as they apply to one’s leading a spiritual life.

The preceding observations about Joy are those of a perceptive witness. As a young man in my mid-twenties, I arrived at Olcott in Wheaton, Illinois, in early 1973, directed by my supervisors to undertake various editorial responsibilities. Joy was, at that time, President of the TS in America, and I began work there under the direction and tutelage of two exceptional women — Joy and her beloved friend Virginia Hanson. While Virginia was my immediate supervisor

## In Tribute to Joy Mills

in editing work for both the monthly journal, then called *The American Theosophist*, and the Theosophical Publishing House, as President, Joy was the supervisor of us both. I soon realized, given this situation, that through my daily and close work engagement with Virginia, I was necessarily drawn into a closer relationship with Joy than would have occurred without Virginia's presence, and for that I am to this day grateful. Her friendship with Virginia gave me an opportunity to get to know Joy in a way that I otherwise might not have had.

Joy, like Virginia, became for me a tutor and a mentor, and reached out a hand to assist this young man toward living a life similar to the one she lived — one of unconditional devotion to the mission, the work, that the Adepts began through the auspices of HPB and Col Henry S. Olcott. Through discussions with Joy, often with Virginia, about the relationship of this mission and the Society's editorial policy, which intersected at nearly every level, my view of what I did was steadily clarified, and my knowledge of the core principles of *theosophia* grew exponentially in contrast to its growth before I arrived at Olcott. I observed in the context of these discussions, occurring regularly in her office or the editorial offices, or at meals in the dining hall at Olcott, the character and some of the characteristics of Joy that I still clearly recall.

In her explanations of often subtle esoteric principles, she was first and foremost clear: Joy knew her subject

thoroughly and her listener instinctively, and thus adjusted the level of her explanation accordingly, so there were few of any age or level of understanding who failed to understand her as she would teach or explain these principles to them. In addition to her clarity, she was patient and non-judgmental. She usually wore a smile, as well. If necessary, she would repeat herself, and even search for new and other examples and metaphors that might resonate with her listener until, finally, she could see in the mind of her listener the grasping of the idea or ideas she was conveying. She was, in short, kind and gentle in her approach, not just to people she supervised and taught, but to everyone with whom she came in contact for any reason.

While for Joy the TS was the organizational focus and primary vehicle of her life's work, I believe she would not support an account of her life or life's work that neglected to mention her strong and abiding devotion to Masonry. Joy was a member of an organization typically referred to as Co-Freemasonry. It is probably more accurate to say she was a leader in that organization as well, being a 33rd degree Mason. Yet again, Joy became for me a tutor and a mentor, until I was initiated myself into Co-Masonry in Sirius Lodge, "in the Orient" of the headquarters building at Olcott. During the year-and-a-half that Joy and I both lived and worked at Olcott, she would, as needed, assume her Masonic role and assist and teach those new to Masonry, and from that I was able to

## In Tribute to Joy Mills

benefit as much if not more than I did in my engagements with Joy acting exclusively in her TS capacity. This is because Masonry is a ritual and avowedly sacred institution. As a member of Sirius Lodge, watching Joy in these ritual roles provided a new dimension for me to understand who she was, and to understand the basis of her positive influence on those immediately around her. In open Lodge and full regalia, Joy was a magnificent Mason, and when she ruled the Lodge, she did it with a firm and flawless execution of ritual and a masterful understanding of the sacred, esoteric Masonic principles and symbols.

How does one *summarize* a tribute to Joy's virtues and her contributions to the upliftment of humanity? I believe if I were to begin a list of them here, Joy would have been the first to point to what she saw as her own deficiencies in an

attempt to avoid bringing any attention at all to her virtues and contributions, consistent with the spiritually profound principle of "self-naughting". Ironically, this would be yet another of Joy's virtues one could add to the list. Better, then, to let wiser men summarize by speaking to Joy's virtues and contributions. "Courage and fidelity, truthfulness and sincerity, always win our regard,"<sup>2</sup> wrote Koot Hoomi Lal Singh (KH), and by this standard Joy Mills would stand a far better chance than most to win the regard of KH, and probably his Brothers as well. Their blessings are also likely to be upon Joy because, after 68 productive years dedicated to the TS, she can certainly be acclaimed to have worked "for the cause". As to this cause for which Joy worked 68 years, KH said elsewhere, "Be true, sincere, and faithful. Work for the cause and our blessings will ever be upon you."<sup>3</sup>

### Endnotes

1. Jinarājadāsa, C., comp. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*. 2nd Series. Chicago: The Theosophical Press, 1926, p. 110, letter 51.
2. Jinarājadāsa, C., comp. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*. 1st Series (7th Ed.). Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 2011, p. 85, letter 41.
3. Jinarājadāsa, C., comp. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*. 2nd Series. Chicago: The Theosophical Press, 1926, p. 127, letter 64.

**The pivotal doctrine of the esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in the human being, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations.**

Joy Mills

# Joy In the Twilight Years

ELENA DOVALSANTOS

**J**OY Mills was a friend to so many all over the world. She was a friend to my family too. I first met Joy more than thirty years ago when she came to visit Manila as guest speaker for the Indo-Pacific Federation Conference. I saw her again years later on several visits to Krotona. We would always exchange hugs and friendly greetings but did not speak much. Never in my wildest dreams then did I think she would become friend and confidant in the twilight of her life.

Before my husband Pablo Minniti and I moved to Krotona in 2011, we were invited to join Partners in Theosophy — a mentoring program designed to support members to deepen their knowledge and become more effective in theosophical work. Pablo and I decided it was a golden opportunity to take on *The Secret Doctrine* (SD). Joy was assigned to be our mentor and this opened the door to a wonderful friendship.

After our move to Krotona, our project to develop a study course on Anthropogenesis went into full swing. As mentor it did not mean she taught us the SD or helped us to do the project. The study, plan-

ning, and effort were our responsibility. However, she welcomed our questions on the SD, often preceded by a lighthearted warning: “I will give you answers, but they may not be the correct answers.”

Sporadic visits with her became frequent visits and many hours spent in intimate conversation. She had said “Come anytime!”, and we did. She even gave me a key to the house to make it possible. It became evident she actually looked forward to our visits, as she enjoyed nothing greater than theosophical conversations, particularly on the SD. Sometimes I would walk into her house and she would be waiting to show me a book or something on a topic that had been going on in her head. Once it was about skandha-s. She said, “We don’t talk enough about skandha-s. . . .” Another time it was on Kashmir Shaivism: “You should read this book. It says everything is vibration . . .” When the book *The Secret Doctrine Commentaries* (republished as *The Secret Doctrine Dialogues*) first came out, she read me the section where H. P. Blavatsky said that “accidents are not . . . preordained”. She seemed

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## Joy In the Twilight Years

intrigued by that. Shortly after, she wrote an article for *Quest* magazine on “Entangled Karma”.

Joy was a mentor to generations of theosophists. I have heard so many say that Joy was their teacher, something she seemed to enjoy hearing. As I was getting ready for my first *SD* presentation, she advised: “Never be afraid that you do not know all the answers. No one can ever have all the answers. We’re all just students.” She was a gentle and patient teacher but could also be strict and direct where it mattered. In her last years, when she could no longer give classes, she continued her commitment to serve as much as she could, even if it was only to lend her presence to every class in Krotona. Even when she could hardly walk anymore, she was grateful for anyone who would take her in a wheelchair.

One teaching from Joy I would always remember was a frequent statement she made as she struggled in the final months: “Spiritual progress can only be made while in physical incarnation.” She always said she was ready to go anytime, often even wondering why she was still being kept in this world, but she refused to be bedridden and allow her body to have its way. For as long as she was still conscious, she forced herself to get up and out of bed: “I have no more energy and my legs can no longer support me but I just refuse to give in, you know?” That’s how willful and determined she was. Mostly, she was content, grateful for the peace in the last years that allowed

her to come to terms with the life that was. She spent most of her days reading in her favorite chair by the big picture window that had a sweeping view of the meadow below Krotona Hill. She always had books and magazines next to her. When her eyes got tired of reading, she did crossword puzzles or electronic games. Little wonder that her mind stayed clear and alert to the very end.

Everyone knows that Joy travelled the world most of her life, visiting and lecturing in about 65 countries. When told, “Joy, you’ve had a remarkable life”, she replied with a smile: “Yes, I managed to talk my way around the globe.” She not only loved traveling but she also loved driving, and when she could not drive anymore she delighted in being taken around. One favorite place was Solvang, a Danish town about an hour and a half’s drive from Krotona. And no trip to Solvang was complete without a stop at Ingeborg’s shop for a box of dark chocolate. Despite this occasional indulgence, she was very disciplined — “Moderation is the key”, she would say.

She received anyone who needed her. Anytime I walked into her living room, she would put down whatever she was reading and declare: “There she is!” She was a great listener and confidant but, oddly, never offered me advice either — as if to say I had to find my own way and decide for myself. I suppose for her to tell me what to do would have made it her karma, not mine.

Though she seldom spoke of her family she did lament being given away

## Joy In the Twilight Years

as a child. She was born Mary Joy Conger. Her mother died when she was young. Her father remarried but her stepmother was unkind to her so her father had her adopted by an uncle and aunt. That is how she got the last name “Mills”. She lost touch with her step-sister and had no other blood relatives. “Krotona is my family. This is my home.” Some people called her their spiritual mother, but I never sensed much of a maternal instinct in Joy, probably because of her past; however, a good friend to many she was. She loved to be hugged. She never spoke ill of anyone, and never encouraged conversation that criticized anybody. To her, “right action” meant being a “good friend”; speaking from the heart; and reaching out to those who may be lonely, suffering from a loss, looking for answers, or needing understanding; in short, practising genuine brotherhood.

Joy was not perfect, but she did everything in the best way she knew. Seventy-five years — practically her whole life — she gave in complete devotion to the Masters and their cause. One day she told me a story of how, at one particularly challenging time during her years in Wheaton, Virginia Hanson had tried to diffuse the situation by organizing an introspective art session where staff

members would paint something that represented themselves. Joy painted a chalice (the Holy Grail) superimposed on a cross at the top of a hill, flanked by two Masonic pillars (see below). She had it hanging above the door inside her walk-in closet, a private reminder to herself each morning of the life she had dedicated herself to.



In the original, the chalice is golden, the cross dark brown, the pillars orange, the grass green, and the sky is blue

Her first love was theosophy; next were her books and her friends. Asked what her Devachan would look like, she said: “I will have a very large library and all my friends with me.” There was a lightness and luminosity about her, and I was sorry whenever our sessions came to an end. We wish we could be in your Devachan, Joy. We love you and miss you!

**In the truest sense, this is what it means to be a theosophist: not simply a member of the Society, but an authentic theosophist, a knower and a lover of wisdom, of truth, of beauty. It is to seek, to ask the really big questions, the central questions of human existence, and never be satisfied with answers until we have probed, inquired, ever more deeply.**

Joy Mills

# Thinking of Joy

PABLO MINNITI

Weary after all the days she had  
already lived,  
With her frail hands, soft speech,  
And faraway gaze  
On the intricate paths of memory,  
Almost whispering, she said that  
she was ready  
To undertake the great journey  
And return to the source,  
Which is also awaiting our return.

Here at Krotona, time  
Slips by like a caress  
In an eternal dawn,  
Without beginning and without end.  
The birds' songs,  
The pink shades of the mountains at dusk,  
With their millennial silence,  
Are always revealing something to us.  
We are part of an unending dream.  
Our life is an arduous pilgrimage,  
To come to discover who we really are.

I keep thinking of Joy,  
With whom we shared  
Moments of happiness, or long silences.  
Repeatedly, she told us about  
*The Doctrine,*

Which upon traversing it, catapults us  
To unknown dimensions,  
Vast universes, Parabrahman,  
Pralayas, Manvantaras, Duration  
and Time,  
Dangma, Paramārtha, Anupādaka.  
The words are symbols we try to  
decipher.  
In this eternal voyage, we are leaving  
behind  
All that is not necessary.

In humble homage, I recall some of her  
words which continue to reverberate in  
my heart:

What is it to live theosophy?  
It is to sing with joy,  
To walk with the rhythm of the universe,  
To speak in tones of beauty,  
To work with love,  
To believe with confidence and faith  
Of the pure in heart . . .  
To live theosophy is to live completely;  
To live completely is to have synthesized  
The mind and the heart in the interest  
of the One Self,  
which is in all, and which is All.

(Joy Mills, "What Is It to Live Theosophy?"  
*The American Theosophist*, vol. 32, Dec. 1944)

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**Mr Pablo Minniti** is a long-term member of the TS in America. He resides and volunteers at Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Ojai, California.

# Remembrances of Joy

STEVE WALKER

I first met Joy in 2002 when I started frequent visits to Krotona. We had a few talks at her home about lots of things. Once in 2004 she asked whether I had been to India, and said she was going in the fall. I asked if she would like a travel companion; Joy said she usually traveled alone and added: "Sure, come along." In November, we left for India with a few days' stop in Singapore. India was a delight; so much color, spirit, and heart unlike anywhere that I had been. Joy and I walked around Adyar a lot and she gave me much information about the place. There were several great speakers that year, including Joy. We returned to America in January 2005.

I was fortunate to become a Krotona resident in the fall of 2005 with my cats Sam and Angel. I became the Krotona water, mechanical, and fixit guy, and drove people places. Joy and I continued talks here and there, and I always attended her lectures, whatever the topic. Boccali's Restaurant strawberry shortcake was her favorite and mine.

Joy appreciated classical music and I would take her to the Santa Barbara

Symphony often. In time, she could not make the trip. So I set up a home theatre at my place and would bring her down to watch symphony DVDs produced by Berlin Philharmonic with von Karajan. By that time my new cat, Atticus, liked to sit with her.

I became a volunteer at a nearby cat sanctuary in 2011, and Joy loved the cat stories that I brought her. Angelita (Angie), a young, beautiful, very intelligent lady cat came to me in January of that year. I would tell Joy the stories of Angie's tricks that she taught me and other physical feats. One night a couple of years later, I heard Angie scream and went to her; at three years old, she had passed on of possible heart attack. It was a real shock, to both of us. Joy and I talked about this loss and she helped me a lot. I started a journal about Angelita to remember her actions and how we felt. This kept going about three years and Angie's spirit was very present and helped me a lot. She is less present now.

Joy read the "Angelita Chronicles" and wrote a beautiful response, which is included below. I sat with Joy the day

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**Mr Steve Walker** is a retired Engineer who joined the TS in 1984, residing at Krotona as water manager since 2005. His first friends in theosophy were Nandini and Raghavan Iyer, and Bim and Mel Burckes.

## Remembrances of Joy

before she passed; and have the book she was reading.

How wonderful to know a truly great lady!

Dear Steve,

I do thank you; so deeply heartfelt for sharing with me your story of Angelita and the truly beautiful bond you have with her. Reading it, I was indeed moved to tears and felt so very honored that you would share the story with me. I treasure the trust this indicates, that you know I will understand the pain and will keep the story in confidence.

How often it has been said that time heals all pains, but I do not think that time does anything of that sort at all. We each find some path to easing pain, perhaps learning from the pain, perhaps just living with it knowing, in some inner way, that it is a part of being human. And perhaps in some life we move beyond the pain and realize that without that bond of true love, which is part of the pain, we would never know the depths of compassion, and love itself. I think so often of the statement in the book, *The Little Prince*, that you are responsible for what you have tamed, and truly it is so with the animal who has become a part of our life, and whom we have tamed, and with whom there is an abiding bond. I am convinced that when

an animal such as Angie enters our life, and we have that unique relationship of deep love and caring, when that animal enters into the human kingdom, then there is an inexplicable love relationship and one becomes always responsible for such a soul.

I do not mean to philosophize, for that too does not remove the heartache and the pain that comes from loss, for I am convinced that we each find a way to cope with the loss, though I feel also it is not by turning away from our fellow human beings, but by feeling regretful if others have not yet had that wonderful and beautiful experience of truly loving another “creature.” It is really love that heals, in one way or another, in one life or another.

So run my thoughts, and again I do thank you for sharing your story with me. I do feel privileged to have read it. And I thank you too, Steve, for all your kindness in helping me. I do so appreciate your friendship, knowing that words alone are not sufficient to express my gratitude. May this Christmas season bring you Peace, Love, Hope, and Faith — faith in the “rightness” of all things and events.

Let us hope that the coming year is kind to each of us.

Joy

21 December 2014

**Freedom is not a thing to be weighed and measured; it is a movement of the spirit, unimpeded, unhampered, without resistance, without barrier or obstruction to the flow of life itself.**

Joy Mills



Joy Mills in the 1960s, as Vice-President of the Theosophical Society in America from 1960-65 and as National President from 1966-74



Joy Mills teaching at West Seattle High School, 1949–50



Joy as international Vice-President under the presidency of John Coats, Adyar, in the late 1970s



Joy Mills (3rd from left) with John Coats (tallest) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1973



Joy teaching *The Secret Doctrine* as Director of the Krotona School of Theosophy in Ojai, California, 1980s



John Kern and Joy Mills at the Olcott national headquarters  
of the TS in America in Wheaton, Illinois, July 1983



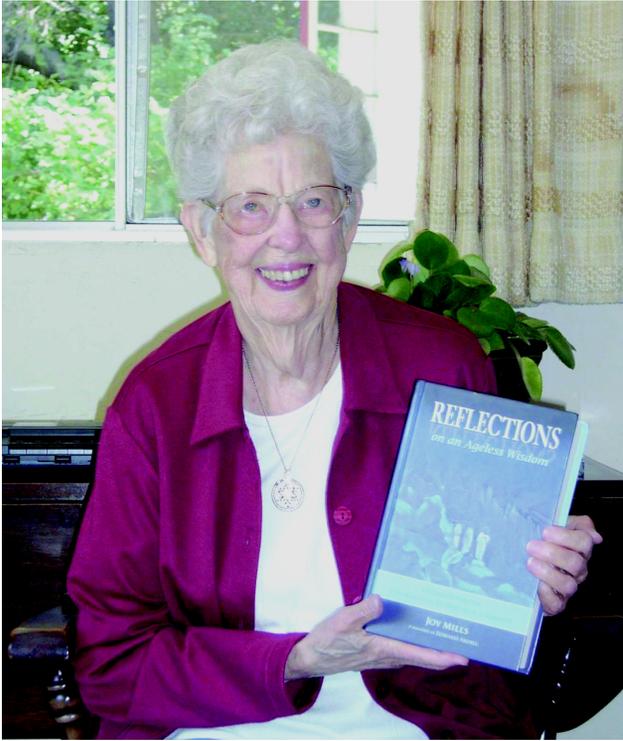
Joy and Radha Burnier international President of the TS from 1980 to 2013 in the mid-1980s



Joy Mills as General Secretary of the TS in Australia in the mid-1990s,  
with Beverley Champion, her successor



Group photo at Krotona Institute of Theosophy: Steve Walker, Anne Johnstone, Joy Mills,  
Rochelle Voirol, Shirley Nicholson, Annine Wycherley, and Lakshmi Narayan, 2007



Joy Mills with her magnum opus,  
*Reflections on an Ageless Wisdom —  
A Commentary on The Mahatma Letters  
to A. P. Sinnett*, 2010

Joy Mills with her T. Subba Row  
Medal, awarded in 2011, given  
to theosophical writers for works  
of outstanding merit





Krotona group at Olcott summer gathering. (*L to r, front row*): Maria Parisen and Joy Mills; (*2nd row*): Idarmis Rodriguez, Anne Johnstone, Elena Dovalsantos and Pablo Minniti; (*3rd row*): Adelle Chabelski and Tim Boyd, National President, TS in America, 2012



Joy with Guru Prasad (left), Director of Krotona School of Theosophy, Ojai, California, and Tim Boyd, January 2014



Joy Mills with Tim Boyd in January 2014 at Krotona School of Theosophy. (He was elected international President in April of the same year.)

# Joy Mills: An Evolutionary Journey

CYNTHIA OVERWEG

Respected and admired worldwide for her deep study and understanding of the Ageless Wisdom, Joy Mills was a beloved teacher and author. She was a member of the Theosophical Society for 75 years, and served as National President of the American and Australian Sections, as well as international Vice-President. The following article is woven from a series of weekly interviews the author had with Joy at the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in 2011.

Joy Mills was ninety-one years old when we sat down in her home at Krotona to discuss her life and formidable work as a teacher, writer, and world traveler in the service of the Theosophical Society. She began her reminiscences with a remarkable experience that took place in India in 1972. Joy recalled that as she traveled through the foothills of northern India, the breathtaking beauty of the Western Himalayas nearly overwhelmed her. The mountains were magically iridescent in the midday sun, and Joy felt a surge of excitement and gratitude as she observed the beauty of her surroundings.

“I was on my way to Dharamsala to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his residence-in-exile, and it was a great honor for the Theosophical Society.”

The rendezvous with His Holiness was the result of Joy’s idea to publish the Dalai Lama’s book, *The Opening of the Wisdom-Eye*, which had appeared only in south Asia. Traveling with her on this memorable journey was her good friend and colleague, Helen Zahara, who was senior editor of Quest Books. “We were able to get the rights to publish the Dalai Lama’s book, and since we already had a trip planned to Adyar, we wondered if we could meet with His Holiness”, Joy recalled. They made arrangements through the Office of Tibet in New York, flew to Delhi, took the train north, and hired a taxi to take them to Dharamsala.

When they arrived at the Dalai Lama’s home, they barely had a moment to gather their thoughts when his Holiness greeted them with what Joy described as “that wonderful smile”. Joy recalled that Helen spoke first: “Helen made the statement that H. P. Blavatsky had introduced the inner side of Buddhism to

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**Mrs Cynthia Overweg** is an educator and writer living and teaching at Krotona on the Perennial Wisdom linking together East and West. This is an updated version of the article in *Quest* magazine, spring of 2012.

## Joy Mills: An Evolutionary Journey

the Western world.” The Dalai Lama asked, “What did she write?” “*The Voice of the Silence*”, Helen answered.

Directing his next question to Joy, His Holiness asked, “What is the essence of *The Voice of the Silence*?” At first, Joy couldn’t think. She wondered how she could express the book in a brief way. “Well”, she said finally, “it discusses the Paramitas”, the six perfections of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Dalai Lama seemed genuinely excited. “Ah, then it is accurate. It is true.” Joy was thrilled to be able to introduce the Dalai Lama to HPB’s great little book. The meeting with His Holiness was one of her most cherished memories.

Joy was born in Lakewood, Ohio, in 1920. Her father was an engineer and her mother a schoolteacher. Joy’s mother, Mary Conger, died of a massive heart attack when Joy was just nine years old. Her father conveyed the sad news to Joy in one simple statement: “Mama has died.” Joy recalled that very little was said by her father about her mother’s death, and she did not fully understand what being dead actually meant. To Joy, it looked as though her mother was merely asleep. “I leaned over to kiss her cheek and she was cold. It was my first impression of the temporary nature of physical life”, Joy said. “It triggered a need in me to better understand what it means to be human. I’ve learned that if you stay with that question long enough, a much deeper question emerges — it’s at the root of our very existence: ‘Who am I?’”

Not long after her mother’s death, Joy had an experience of what that question points to when she visited the Ozark Mountains in Missouri. One morning she hiked into the woods, sensing a deep connection with Nature, and suddenly found herself standing before a towering tree. “I became aware of the power and life in that tree”, she said. “Then I became one with the tree. I could have slid right into it.” In that instant, Joy understood that the life in the tree and the life within her was the same life. “It’s what HPB called ‘direct beholding’, an insight which often comes unbidden, when seeing happens at a deeper level.”

In October 1929, five months after the death of Joy’s mother, a catastrophic stock market crash hit Wall Street. It ushered in the Great Depression and a decade of economic turmoil affecting millions of families. Joy’s father lost his job and spent most of his time looking for work. Overwhelmed by his circumstances and the demands of being a single parent, he placed Joy in a foster home. “I was boarded out to a family and saw my father only on weekends. It really hurt, but I’m grateful because it pushed me inward and forced me to ask a lot of questions about life. It fed my desire to understand why there is so much suffering in the world,” said Joy.

Years later, after she became a Theosophist and had discovered the Four Noble Truths of the Buddha, Joy said she realized that freedom from suffering requires a sustained inquiry into the nature of the conditioned mind and our

## Joy Mills: An Evolutionary Journey

habitual tendency to separate ourselves from others. “The more we realize the Oneness of all things, the more we realize that the only real genuine freedom is to be free from the desires of a separated self. HPB referred to it as the ‘obligatory pilgrimage of the soul’. This is our collective evolutionary journey”, said Joy.

In 1940, when Joy was a twenty-year-old college student, she was introduced to Theosophy by a friend and joined the Theosophical Society. “Theosophy made the world comprehensible to me. It fulfilled me in so many ways, and it opened a door to the unseen.”

A year later, Joy graduated from Milwaukee State Teachers College in Wisconsin with a degree in education and spent the summer working at national headquarters in Wheaton. After earning a Master’s Degree in education in 1942, she was invited to join the staff at Olcott by Sydney Cook, president of the American Section at the time. Her first job was to coordinate a correspondence course for new members. The following year, Cook asked her to teach classes in a number of cities in Michigan, where there were local branches of the Society. Joy said she realized she aspired to something greater than herself. “I had a mission, and these were my people, my friends. I was home”, she said.

When she studied *The Secret Doctrine* and other Theosophical literature, the principle of Oneness stood out—the Oneness she had experienced as a child with a tree in the Ozarks. “HPB always pointed to it. Everything is rooted in and

is derived from a source that is One, not multiple. It’s more than monistic, it’s nondual”, Joy said. As she became more familiar with the contributions of the Society’s Founders, her admiration of Henry Steel Olcott and H. P. Blavatsky grew: “Olcott’s work for the Buddhist cause is just incredible. He was responsible for the revival of Buddhism as a major cultural force in Southeast Asia, and he did that while he was president of the Society”, said Joy. “HPB brought an ancient teaching to the West, and people from all over the world and in all walks of life have been drawn to it.”

In 1966, Joy was overwhelmingly elected president of the American Section. It was a time of great public unrest, when the civil rights movement of the 1960s provoked violent clashes on the streets of America’s cities and awakened millions of people to a need for social justice and equality for African-Americans. Joy wrote editorials advocating a responsibility to stand up for brotherhood. “It was controversial, but while we can’t involve the Society in politics, we can speak up individually on matters of conscience, and that’s what I did”, Joy pointed out. “The Founders stood for human dignity and equality. Brotherhood has been an object of the Society from its beginning, and it states clearly that all peoples are brothers, or it means nothing at all.” During Joy’s tenure as president of the American Section, she launched Quest Books with the help of the Kern Foundation. As Quest publishing grew, she led a fundraising

## Joy Mills: An Evolutionary Journey

effort for the construction of a publications building to house its expansion. The building now bears her name.

In 1973, the Society's beloved international President, N. Sri Ram, passed away. When John Coats was elected to take up Sri Ram's position, he nominated Joy to become international Vice-President, and she went to live in Adyar for six years. "I love India and the adjustment to living there came easily", said Joy. In 1980, Joy was invited to become Director of the Krotona School of Theosophy in Ojai, California. "That really appealed to me because it meant getting back to what I loved most — education and teaching", Joy said.

She had been director of the school for twelve years when the search committee of the Australian Section asked her to run for National President, and she was elected by a wide margin. Joy returned to Krotona in 1996 as teacher and author. She lived and worked there until she passed away peacefully in her home on 29 December 2015. She was 95.

During her long and distinguished life, Joy traveled to sixty countries teaching

seminars and mentoring hundreds of Theosophical students. For decades, she taught classes at the School of the Wisdom in Adyar, Chennai, India, and throughout Europe, America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and South America. She authored several outstanding books, including *Reflections on an Ageless Wisdom: A Commentary on the Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* and *The One True Adventure: Theosophy and the Quest for Meaning*. In 2011, Joy was awarded the T. Subba Row Medal for her outstanding contribution to Theosophical literature.

During our last conversation at Krotona, Joy returned to the theme of Oneness and the evolutionary journey to a deeper understanding of what it means to be human. "The mind likes to separate 'me' from 'other'. We need to be aware of that because it brings us back to the fundamental question: 'Who am I?' And that question evolves as you evolve", said Joy. "As HPB said in so many different ways, once we have felt compassion for another living being, we have begun to awaken to the purpose and meaning of existence. And that is the essence of Theosophy."

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Mrs Overweg can be contacted by email via her website at: <[www.cynthiaoverweg.com](http://www.cynthiaoverweg.com)>. The complete article can also be accessed via this site.

**The price of freedom, "hard-bought" indeed, is to live with the burden of our choices, to endure the painful process of self-loosening of the bonds we have put upon ourselves, to accept joyfully and willingly total responsibility for our thoughts, feelings, and actions. Perhaps it is only such acceptance of the burden of freedom that makes us finally truly and fully human.**

Joy Mills

# At the Feet of a Mentor: Fragments of an Ageless Joy

## DIALOGUE WITH A YOUNG STUDENT

**J**OY Mills' signature marks the golden pages of our modern Theosophical history with many honors: as a scholar, educator, lecturer, writer, and mentor; as a friend. Along with her spiritual practice and Theosophical duties, she gave herself fully to guide and advise friends and students in earnest. She would always welcome those who wished to probe more deeply into the occult teachings and history of our Theosophical Movement. Some could feel at times a change in atmosphere, a *quiet presence* that would permeate her living room with brightness while certain topics were discussed. After such an inspiring and accomplished life, she left the earthly realm at last in silent gratitude to greater beginnings. However, her gentle footsteps will remain imprinted upon the Path as those of *one who tried to live "Theosophy"* and help others to discover the magnificent glory and fullest meaning of this word.

**Essential Qualifications of a Facilitator Questioner.** You have said that the facilitator, not the teacher, had to realize on his / her own this Oneness of Life, that this feeling must come intuitively, out of their heart-mind union, out of their own perception; and that they must find this center of resources within themselves. Otherwise, it is something imposed and not realized, not born anew, out of their own understanding. And you said: "When you truly realize it, something really happens." And I wonder . . . how are we going to apply these ageless teachings to the society of today?

**Joy.** This is our real challenge!

### **The Need for a Genuine Transformation in Consciousness**

**J.** The real challenge is how we can bring about a genuine transformation in consciousness in today's world. Yet, until that inner transformation takes place, the world will not be different! There will still be violence, poverty, and all the evils that are attacking our world as a result of human greed. Isn't it? Everyone wants more money, more this or that. Greed has taken over our forests, polluted our rivers and oceans, destroyed the natural beauty of the earth. The remedy is not in external things but in the change in awareness, in consciousness that is our challenge!

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**Fragments of a dialogue** between Joy Mills and one of her young fellow students, recorded on 27 January 2014, which embodies a unique spirit of teaching, living, and serving, a cornerstone upon which to build the future generation of Theosophical workers.

**Q.** And how can we impart Theosophical teachings to the youth, for example, and to new members of the Theosophical Society (TS)? How can we portray the ageless teachings of Theosophy in a new way that appeals particularly to the younger generation?

**J.** I don't have an easy answer or some magical formula to say: "Well, do this." Yet, look at Vic Hao Chin, who is going to participate in the Education Conference this summer at "Olcott". He has established schools in the Philippines based on these principles of altruism, generosity, a new way of looking at the world. If he can do it, you can do it! I don't have the energy now, but you do!

**Q.** I think we all can do it, because it is the impulse of the Masters working through all of us. **J.** Well, that is true! But you can't wait for others to come along, and then find individuals who will work with you to bring this about! We weren't told that it was going to be easy. But everything pointed out in *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Mahatma Letters*, all of the directives, point to the need for a new consciousness, a new awareness, so it's coming! **Q.** It is coming; but it is very difficult, actually. **J.** It is! But consider that the Masters have been working for centuries to bring this about!

**Q.** Right. Now what is left up to us is to implement those teachings through what you have just said. And we are still asking them to give us more! **J.** But They have given us the basics. They don't need to give us more! Now, what are we doing with them? How are we living?

### Living the Teachings

**Q.** The last time Radhaji [former President Radha Burnier] visited the "Olcott" Center, we talked about human regeneration. So I asked her similar questions and she answered as you have. But she pointed out two things: that we had done great work in disseminating theosophical teachings, and what was left to do was *to live the teachings*. **J.** That's right!

**Q.** And Radhaji pointed into the distance and said: "That is the future." (There were children playing on our grounds far behind me). And she said once again: "That is the future." Perhaps she wanted to point at the most immediate and fundamental key to this regeneration: that it starts at that level. . . .

**J.** I will do what I can. I will support *any* effort that can bring about this change, this new awareness. It is interesting how *Time* magazine, which is generally very conservative, has a long article and the cover of this week's issue on "Mindfulness". To be mindful, to be aware that every action we take, every thought we think, every feeling that arises has consequences! That is a basic principle, isn't it? To remind people that the more they reach out to possess anything, be it money or whatever it is, the more they deprive others to live the simple life. This doesn't mean not having books, not having the technology that we have, but using it for the benefit of others!

### An Open Mind, an Eager Intellect

**Q.** I like what you just said about simplicity Joy, because many of us think that

## At the Feet of a Mentor

the theosophical path is about accumulating intellectual concepts or ideas, and the more we know, the better theosophists we become! **J.** What are we doing with what we already know? It is alright to study; I continue to read to deepen and broaden my understanding. There is nothing wrong with gaining more knowledge, but use it wisely! So you can say to people, “How mindful are you of what you are doing?”

**Q.** So how could we study and yet keep our minds open? **J.** Well, we get an idea and we think that is the final end. But do we really keep our minds open for new ideas and insights? The principles of theosophy don't change, nor does the Oneness of existence. But we suddenly see it in a new way; we suddenly understand it in a deeper way.

**Q.** Could you also see this happening with the Laws of Nature? Are Principles and Laws interchangeably connected?

**J.** Oh yes! **Q.** I see it now.

### Do What You Can!

**J.** I can't go out and do some things that I used to be able to do, but I can sit here and think. I can't read for as long a period of time because my eyes get very tired, so I sit and send out thoughts of goodwill. So I try to be of service just in being quiet, and sitting, and being mindful of what is going on around me. So you do what you can! And if I have any extra money I support other groups that are working for the benefit of all sentient beings.

**Q.** How did you cultivate this enthusiasm for Life? That is what is keeping

you alive! **J.** That's right! **Q.** That is the secret, isn't it? **J.** Yes! (Laughing) I could sit back and feel sorry for myself, that I can't read as long as I used to, I can't travel, I can't get out there and give talks, and so on! I could sit here and bemoan my situation, be sad and unhappy; but I'm not! Because that would be very selfish!

### The Masters Never Cease

**Q.** Do the Masters really travel? **J.** No, they don't! **Q.** They are above us! Watching and inspiring us! **J.** Yes, but They *Inspire*! **Q.** In a certain way you are closer to them than we are. **J.** Well, I'm not sure of that. . . . **Q.** In the sense that it is our duty, as we grow older, to appreciate the beauty of this age. What you are describing is a way to connect with how the Masters operate; from a higher plane of consciousness. **J.** And They never cease!

**Q.** But They are not seen physically, unless in extraordinary circumstances. **J.** If we are quiet (pause), and go deep within, we can feel their Presence, because their Presence is here. . . (Silence) **Q.** What I mean is that at this stage you are being as useful to the Masters as anyone else, even more so. **J.** Well, I don't know. **Q.** Because? **J.** Because those who understand the Masters, who really devote themselves to the work of the Masters, understand that the Masters are, all the time, working for humanity. **Q.** I mean that they have reached the heights from which They can mentally and spiritually work and guide, and not

## At the Feet of a Mentor

through their physical bodies any longer.

**J.** Oh yes!

**Q.** At this moment,, of course, you are still in your body, not being able to move about as much; yet, you are mentally active, serving from the higher planes! This is how we, by correspondence, can relate to their way of operating in the world. **J.** Well this is true! And I had my mentors who helped me to understand that what I was thinking and feeling was important; that I could focus, and therefore train myself in meditation techniques. I will always remember one of the founders of Krotona, Marie Poutz. She was an amazing person, and she taught me a great deal. So I had those mentors that were wonderful people. Clara Codd! We don't read much of her any more, which is too bad because she wrote some beautiful books; her last one was *Trust Yourself to Life!* Clara taught me a great deal! In fact, she was the one who said to me: "Joy, you must work for the Theosophical Society." And I said: "But I have to earn a living, I have to." And Clara said: "No, you work for the Society and the living will come, it will work out." And that's what she did! She gave herself wholly to the work. An amazing person! Beautiful person! These were people that really influenced me.

**Q.** And so have you influenced us!

**J.** So if I can pass that on, that is my duty, to pass it on to the younger generations, to you! **Q.** Not many of us have the blessing of having these sorts of mentors.

**J.** My appreciation is in terms of what I can pass on. Not in any sense that I'm different or better than anyone else because I knew these people; so many of them, Sri Ram, so many marvelous people! It is the greatest privilege to be able to live here at Krotona and to be able to contribute, with thoughts at least, to the maintenance of this spiritual center. When I first came here on a lecture tour in 1945, my first tour on the West coast, I thought: "Oh, to be able to live at Krotona! I'll never be able to live here, to retire and live here, and contribute to the community." Yet, here I am!

**Q.** That makes me think about the kinds of visions we have, and why some of them are never fulfilled. But this vision that you had was not a selfish one, and these kinds of visions do materialize!

**J.** Yes, they do! **Q.** What we are living right now was once the vision of our Founders, of our Masters. We are in fact living their vision! They sacrificed their lives for this, and for what is yet to come. This has been also your vision, Joy. How fortunate are you to be able to see it with your own eyes!

**Q.** What do you think of this year's Partners Program? **Joy.** I think that, by far, this is the best Partners Program we have had. The preparations! The enthusiasm! The quality of the projects!

I think I'm ready to go. I've been ready to go for a long time. I'm not afraid of death; but something is keeping me here. Maybe there is something I still have to learn. (Joyful laughter) ✧

# Memories of Joy Mills

JAMES W. PETERSON

JOY MILLS was mentor and advisor to hundreds, probably thousands, of spiritual seekers. She was that to me, and also, she was my “spiritual mother”. In the East there is such a concept. A spiritual mother helps and nurtures the soul that is awakened to spiritual realities, teaching the skills necessary to navigate the inner worlds. For fifty years Joy played that role for me.

As a high school senior in Chicago, I learned of the Theosophical Society (TS) through a book about the astral plane. Noting that the headquarters were in Wheaton, a short 45-minute drive from my home, I rode my motor scooter out to Olcott one Saturday in the spring. It was March 1967 and I had just turned 18. Spiritual awakenings often occur between the ages of 18 and 21, when an incarnate being is said to have reached the psychological point where he left his last incarnation.

Joy was my catalyst. When I arrived at Olcott, I was immediately taken up to meet Joy in her presidential office. I was escorted by none other than her best friend, Virginia Hanson. Within five



minutes of my arrival, I was in the presence of Joy and Virginia! We chatted about life issues and Theosophy and I asked Joy questions about the spiritual worlds. I felt immediately at home. I had been reunited with “my people”. She told me recently that when she joined the Society in 1941, people would come to her and ask, “Are you a Besant or a Leadbeater?” This means, of course, are you more drawn to the occult writings of

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**Mr James W. Peterson** is a long-term member of the TS, Quest Books author, and was a close friend of Joy Mills for almost fifty years.

## Memories of Joy Mills

C. W. Leadbeater, or to the more philosophical books of Dr Annie Besant? Joy had me pegged as a “Leadbeater” right away, and she insisted I check out of the library the book *A Textbook of Theosophy* by CWL.

*In our hour or so together*, Joy Mills changed my life. She opened up vast vistas for me of shiny inner realms, filled with radiant Masters, heavenly states, devas, and even fairies. And she explained that the universe was governed by the twin laws of destiny: reincarnation and karma. Even though I was not clairvoyant, the world Joy helped me see would change my vision forever. Life was transformed.

I went off to the University of California at Berkeley that fall and continued my theosophical studies. The following summer Joy offered me a job as groundskeeper at Olcott. That summer was very special. N. Sri Ram was with us. But more importantly, I got to live and work with my new friend, Joy. There I saw her humorous side as she joked with companions over dinner, and her serious side as she worked tirelessly on so many varied tasks for her beloved Society.

Joy also encouraged me to write. She had me submit two articles to *The American Theosophist*. The first was “Man’s Absolute Relation to the Absolute”. And the second was “Meditation, an Ancient Remedy for a Modern Disease”. She always encouraged the meditative life and I was a quick convert. I have meditated every day since the fall of 1967. This writing interest encouraged

by Joy, ultimately led to the publication of my Quest book, *The Secret Life of Kids*.

In 1970 I learned a new side to Joy. I became a Sufi student in Meher Baba’s Sufism Reoriented group, and Joy, rather than being upset I was leaving my theosophical focus, was happy for me that I had found my own “Gnostic” community. In fact, in her later years she loved presenting me with new books she had found on Sufism. She once wrote to me, “I never thought you abandoned Theosophy, you simply added the teacher and a teaching. I have always felt you are a true theosophist, walking the spiritual path in your own unique manner. Each of us walks the way in accordance with an inner calling. All that matters is that we follow that Inner Voice.”

In 1975 I went on the first of three trips to Adyar. Joy had just been appointed the international Vice-President. I was really looking forward to seeing her in India. But since she was out on a lecture tour of the subcontinent, I had to resign myself to the company of my old Liberal Catholic Church friend, John Coats! Many years later Joy admitted to me that it was very hard for her to live in India. The heat and humidity were oppressive, after all, there are three temperatures in Chennai: hot, hotter and hottest!

Later, when Joy retired to her beloved Krotona, my wife and I made yearly trips to Ojai to see her. And, almost more delightfully, she became my faithful and regular correspondent. We exchanged letters several times a year during the final 20 years of her life. She always

## Memories of Joy Mills

offered words of encouragement and advice, sprinkled with theosophical wisdom. One topic she discussed was her magnum opus, her final book on the Mahatma Letters:

I am grateful that my book has been published, perhaps to be helpful to students. I am really quite pleased with its appearance, beautifully done with the lovely cover — a Roerich painting, a theme that is most appropriate. So far, reviews have been kind and friends enthusiastic. When people ask, “What next?” I respond that for the present at least, no further writing. This year has also marked 70 years of membership in the Theosophical Society, with all the opportunities that has given me.

She often would write poignant remarks about her life:

I begin to feel like the Eveready Bunny, which goes on and on and on! The doctor is convinced I will live to be 100, but I am not interested in setting any record, and willing to go on as long as my mind is reasonably clear.

Some days, I do feel like the last leaf on the tree, as one after another . . . dear friends around the world slip onwards to the next great adventure just beyond our physical sight. Well, there must be a reason to continue, and I accept each day as it comes. So, all is well and as it should be.

And in another letter:

I think of all that I have to be grateful for — so rich a life, as Clara Codd titled

her autobiography. It has indeed been a rich life, in so many ways, even if not in terms of money, but rich in travel, and friends, in doing the work that I wanted to do. . . . A rich life, indeed, for which I am truly grateful. And I do treasure our friendship, Jim.

Joy once told me that the theosophical friendship she treasured most in her life was with Clara Codd.

Once she discussed the coming together of East and West:

You are right that it was the Theosophical Society that initiated the East-West dialogue, and while others, including Meher Baba, picked up the theme, this cross-fertilization of culture was central to HPB’s work and she deserves a great deal of credit for all she attempted.

In the same letter she mentions the winter solstice:

I hope you both are well and enjoying the Winter Solstice, a very special time of year when it is said that the veil between the realm of physicality and the unseen realms of the Real is more transparent, so that influences from the inner worlds may reach humanity and aid us all in our soul journeys. May you both have beautiful holidays, restful, filled with magical moments, and may the coming year hold Peace, Light, and Love for you and all mankind.

Joy was a magnificent teacher, a great theosophical friend, and a wonderful spiritual mother! May we all celebrate her life then, and in the future. ✧

# The Joy Mills I Knew and Loved

ADELLE CHABELSKI

THERE are times in our lives when we meet someone, and we love them instantly. They are in our lives for a short time, but we know that the crossing of our paths has changed us and our lives forever. Joy Mills was such a person in my life. What I learned from and shared with her will remain with me and further the purpose of my life.

In her last two years, Joy said on several occasions: “I’m afraid I’m not a very good conversationalist anymore.” She did not realize that what she would say at any given moment, no matter where we were, her commenting on something would add insight, inform, or point to a higher truth. She lived her life this way, it became her nature to bring more light to any subject and interject hope and optimism into many conversations or discussions. Yet, she was not a Pollyanna, nor did I ever see her being sentimental. Nor did she shy away from difficult subjects and questions, or hide from the harsh realities of life, which she had seen in her long and active life around the world; she traveled to more than fifty countries, seeing crushing poverty,

bigotry, and suffering, with her own eyes.

Having lived through many epic and historical moments, Joy could address the significance and recall details of those events, as if they happened yesterday. During the civil rights unrest, she was President of the Theosophical Society in America (TS) and spoke out publicly against the suffering she was witnessing then, and in the years that led up to the protests. We take this for granted now, but at the time she was criticized by some for doing this.

Joy and I shared periodicals and magazines, and often enjoyed discussing articles and books we read with together. I was often surprised by how good her memory was of an article or book she had read even decades earlier, and how she retained the essence of something she read only once, long ago. She was always well informed and interested in things that mattered for humanity as a whole. In her company, no act of kindness ever went unnoticed; she was grateful and appreciated the smallest gesture of attention and affection. She did not take anything for granted that others did for her.

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**Ms Adelle Chabelski** is President of the Ojai Valley TS Lodge and part of the faculty at the Krotona School of Theosophy. She is also a translator, writer, and human rights advocate.

## The Joy Mills I Knew and Loved

Her life was dedicated service to the TS, and to teaching. All her energy and drive was for the benefit of humanity. She tirelessly studied and taught Theosophy, and dedicated her life to the one cause she thought could raise humanity, one by one, to a more understanding and loving heart. The “individual is healed and made whole, caring so much because all things are dear that we cannot wound or harm or injure, so does the world grow whole and brotherhood becomes the natural relationship that prevails”.

Through her teaching, writing, and social interaction, Joy tried to awaken the conscience of caring. We had similar concerns and shared a love of books, which came for both of us in early childhood, when we recognized books were our friends. From this flowed our regular discourse, and perhaps our friendship. We often talked about what was needed to awaken consciousness. Even in her nineties and with all her experience, it was hard for her to understand and accept man’s inhumanity to man — especially children, and also animals. To her, a person of charity was “one to whom all beings are dear”.

Joy understood that our lives must ultimately reflect who we are and what

we truly know. Her life reflected compassion in the deepest sense, and she tried to plant that love in the hearts of human beings. She lived her life from an inner wisdom. She taught that when a conscience of concern is born, it leads to right action, and that humanity begins in the individual man or woman. With the many lectures and classes she gave, one of the underlying themes was to encourage us to take our own evolution in hand (as she had) through a life of study, reflection, meditation, and service. She said that humanity begins with each individual, and believed that if we lift humanity with every action we do, the human spirit will triumph.

Those of us who knew and loved Joy, as well as those who did not have the opportunity to meet her, can rejoice in the reality that we have her lectures, writings, books, and articles, which contain what mattered to her most about life and Theosophy. She was very much loved. We are grateful for her presence amongst us and for the light she brought. She is missed, but she continues to give us inspiration and courage on our own journeys, which she taught were not just in space or time, but in our hearts. You are a force for the Good, Joy! ✧

**But words are precious and often fragile vehicles not only for thought but for the aspirations of the heart; they can convey not only mundane meanings that get us about in the world and relate us to each other, but also the hunger of the soul and the beauty of the spirit in their reaching out to that moreness which remains forever indefinable and therefore unspeakable**

“O Hidden Life . . .” Joy Mills

# SMALL GEMS

## **Maria Parisen**

The deep purposes of a spiritual soul often become clearer during the advanced years, when the rhythm of life slows. During the ten years before her passing, Joy Mills energized and inspired community simply through her presence — which was at once both benevolent and challenging. Seldom in the Theosophical Society are we gifted with a leader of such inner strength. What Joy shared especially through Krotona was an undivided spirit. Fully available and focused, she adapted to the changes in her body reluctantly but

with common sense and humor. She participated in all Krotona School's classes, mentored Partners in Theosophy projects, enjoyed theosophical study with high school students, delighted in deeper studies with friends, and rarely missed a Krotona Night gathering. At the same time, and well into her 90s, Joy fulfilled her leadership roles in Krotona with gratitude, trusting in sincere inquiry and collective action. As colleague, teacher, fellow-student, and friend, Joy renewed our faith in the healing power of a humanity united in love. ✧

## **Beverley Champion**

To use her preferred terminology, Joy Mills passed to the “other shore” on 29 December 2015 at the age of 95.

Joy was a communicator, a scholar, author and teacher of Theosophy, and a deep student of *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. From the age of 28, she devoted her life to theosophical work.

Owing to her deep knowledge and understanding of the tenets of Theosophy, Joy was in constant demand as a theosophical lecturer and, over many years, she travelled the world in this capacity. Joy served the Theosophical Society (TS) in many ways, including as international Vice-President under President John Coats. She inaugurated the first Australian School of Theosophy in the early 1990s in Adelaide, and taught at

the Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre in Springbrook, Queensland, following her election in 1993 as the National President of the TS in Australia. She also taught at the School of the Wisdom in Adyar, India, and expanded the course of studies at the Krotona School of Theosophy in Ojai, California, when she became its Director.

She was an innovator and inspired members to follow her lead in letting the world know that such a thing as Theosophy exists. She will be greatly missed but we celebrate her fruitful life, well lived.

Personally, Joy Mills was my mentor and valued friend and I feel privileged to have known her and to have had the opportunity to work with her.

We do not say farewell to Joy, but rather, fare forward! ✧

**Lakshmi Narayan**

Joy Mills has been the greatest influence in my life, since I first met her in 1978 at the international headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Chennai, India. She was international Vice-President under John Coats and I was working at the Adyar Library. Then I connected with her in 1987 in Wheaton, Illinois, at the headquarters of the TS in America, when she was National President and I was working in the Olcott Library. In 1992 I moved to the Krotona Institute of

Theosophy, again, as their Librarian, and Joy was Director of the Krotona School of Theosophy.

It is very hard to describe Joy Mills in all her varied roles and facets. So to put it in a nutshell, she was asked to give her view of what to consider “responsibility” to be, and she said: “Man has learned to fly in the air like the birds, he has learned to swim in the ocean like the fishes. Now let him stand on the earth like a human being.” Much Love, Joy, and Beauty to Joy!! ✧

**Mary Jo Kokochak**

It was December 2015 and the International Convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar and Convention of the Australian Section were just around the corner. Joy Mills’ thoughts were with the members and she wanted to maintain her link with them and with the Society she loved. With eyes closed she silently formed messages of inspiration and greetings and dictated. “How’s that?” she asked. It was perfect.

On December 25 we gathered in Joy’s home at Krotona to celebrate the holiday. A friend had given her a box of delicious chocolates and after dinner Joy selected a piece then offered the box to us. We each made our choice and nibbled away, but not content with one we reached for more. “Now, just one piece!” Joy chided us in her mock stern voice. We smiled. She was still with us; although frail and tired the familiar

self-control and discipline were strong.

The next day we read poetry, and listened to classical music. Later, I read to her from a recent book by Ed Abdill, *Masters of Wisdom*, in which he quotes the First Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*: “An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable Principle on which all speculation is impossible.” Eyes closed in meditation, Joy slowly and quietly repeated the words over and over “An Omnipresent . . . Eternal . . . Boundless . . . Principle” trying to sense as deeply as she could something of the mystery and meaning.

Three days later, on December 29, Joy was freed from her body and passed peacefully to a higher life. I still treasure the note she had written to me three months earlier, when my husband passed away: “We know that life goes on and is eternal, death is only a change of form.” ✧

**Brenda Knight**

Joy Mills was a unique and powerful woman. I feel blessed that she was in my life. She was a great role model for the ageing. Her mind was sharp and her attitude always uplifting. She is the reason that I joined the Theosophical Society. After my retirement I attended my first class at Krotona School with Joy as the teacher. This was my introduction to the School and Theosophy. What a life-changing experience!

Although I did not fully understand what Joy was talking about, she had such a profound presence that I knew I wanted to learn more. I was so inspired by listening to her classes on the Mahatma Letters, that my husband and I made a special trip to the London Library, where

**Carol Nicholson**

I went to see Joy one morning about five days before she left her physical body. She was working on greetings for the Australian Section Convention and said she would like to finish the letter before we chatted. Mary Jo Kokochak was sitting across from her and had been taking dictation. After a pensive minute or so, she raised her head and came out with three complete and beautifully constructed sentences. I wish I could remember what they were, because they so concisely and eloquently conveyed her warm wishes and hopes to those in the Australian Section. She did not hesitate or falter when she spoke.

Then two more sentences of beauty and proportion arose from Joy's lips and

the letters are kept. What an amazing experience!

Over the years I was able to spend many special times with Joy. We studied, shopped, dined, and had cookies and tea together. We would talk about our travels and all the places where she had enjoyed tea. She had travelled all over the world teaching classes and filling leadership roles with a variety of Theosophical groups. I often thought that "Joy" was such a perfect name for her. She was full of the joy of living, learning, and of leaving a legacy. Her love of Theosophy was contagious, as she loved to share her extensive knowledge and understanding of theosophy. Joy was my spiritual mother, and I miss her as do so many others. ✧

the letter was finished, after which we had a chance for a brief visit. At that point her youthful energy was winding down, but her mind never lost its clarity, and her ability to make you feel good about yourself just being in her presence was still there. She truly was an ambassador of joy and her light is missed by all of us here at Krotona.

Besides an enormous library of Theosophy and spiritually based books, Joy also liked a good mystery novel and continued doing crossword puzzles almost to the end. She once told me that she did crosswords to keep her mind elastic. I don't know if it was the crosswords or decades of deep study of *The Secret Doctrine*, but something sure kept her mind sharp till the end! ✧

# A Sense of Direction

JOY MILLS

ANYONE who travels around the world, even to a limited extent, must inevitably meet the challenge of keeping a sense of direction. In which direction is one moving? We may become accustomed to thinking, for example, that India is east while the United States of America is west. Recently, however, returning to India from Australia, I found it was necessary to fly west, and if one wishes to disembark on the west coast of the United States, one must fly east from India. Perhaps no better illustration of how different a view one may hold of a geographical area can be offered than the fact that during all the years I was resident in my homeland of the United States I was taught that the countries of Israel, Syria, Jordan, and so on, may be designated the “Middle East”. Now resident in India, I find that same geographical area referred to in all the news media as “West Asia”. When east can so easily become west and west, east, depending on where one stands, how are we to maintain a sense of direction?

The matter may be further complicated by our conditioning. Again, to illustrate, let us suppose that an Australian and an American meet on some distant planet; they know only which direction is north and which is south, but do not

know at what latitude they are situated. Desiring to warm themselves, they debate whether to move northwards or southwards. The Australian will naturally advise going north, whereas the American will hold out for a southward trek.

On planet Earth, logic and a study of the globe will quickly resolve our dilemma. But does not all this play on the four points of the compass raise a basic need — the need to realize that east, west, north, and south are to a large extent dependent on the place where one stands, and that such divisions of our world are, ultimately, as superficial and arbitrary as the categorizing of peoples into stereotypes of ethnic, religious, social, and similar groupings? A true sense of direction may have less to do with whether a certain area of the globe lies in the west or in the east than with whether one is moving along an axis that brings one into alignment with the one direction that matters: the direction of the liberation of the human spirit and the unification of the human race.

It is just such a sense of direction that is most urgently needed in the world today. In fact, without that kind of sense, it matters little whether one travels east or west, north or south, as wherever one travels one is only aware of the

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Excerpts from an article in *The Theosophist*, May 1976.

## A Sense of Direction

differences which divide humanity and the power struggles which threaten to annihilate us all. A true sense of direction, in other words, is dependent on an awareness of movement in a totally other dimension. Essentially it is a movement which is no-movement, for the dimension in which we must learn to orient ourselves is the dimensionless realm of love, compassion, understanding, out of which true brotherhood arises.

### Theosophical Education

The gaining of a true sense of direction which helps us to orient ourselves wherever we may find ourselves in the world is the aim of theosophical education. For theosophical education is simply that kind of education which elicits in the individual an awareness of the essential nature of his being and the consequent realization that such a nature is in no way different from the essential nature of all other living things. Whatever fosters that awareness, whatever encourages that realization, whatever awakens that inner sense of the direction in which the human spirit must move to achieve its own fulfilment, whatever nurtures compassionate concern for all life, whatever aids in the flowering of true love, that must be of the nature of theosophical education. All of our studies should lead us in that direction; they should conspire to draw from us the expression of those qualities which together comprise our humanness. Theosophical education, then, is not simply education about theosophy, although it may include that; it is, rather, the continuing pursuit of a unified vision of man and the universe, the kind

of vision revealed by the theosophical perspective. . . .

A curriculum is but the form into which it may be hoped a certain life-essence may be poured. That life-essence is of the very nature of a spiritual understanding, the evocation in each — student and faculty alike — of that spirit of Theosophy which should infuse all our studies. The Platonic ideal of realizing “the good, the beautiful, and the true” should be our aim. The outcome of our studies should be a deepening realization of the fundamental unity of existence, a realization that is ultimately Self-realization.

Quite obviously, then, theosophical education is a life-long endeavour. . . . Those who question the value of such an enterprise, taking into account the slow pace at which evolution proceeds and arguing therefore that our concern should be with the immediate problems of economics and politics, and that consequently we have no time to indulge ourselves in the pursuit of spiritual ideals, may be reminded of a little story from which an apt analogy may be drawn. It is told of a King of Persia that on a certain occasion he saw a beautiful tree in flower and requested his gardener to secure some seeds for planting such a tree in his own garden. When the gardener informed him that the tree he had seen had taken 200 years to reach its present beauty, the king replied, “Then we have no time to lose. Plant the seeds today.” So, if we are to impart to the world a sense of direction that will move humankind along the road to brotherhood, we have no time to lose. . . . ✧

**ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIRST INTERNATIONAL  
CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**

**Adyar**

*Theme: “Beyond Illusion: A Call to Unity”*

31 December 2016 to 5 January 2017

**TENTATIVE PROGRAMME**

**Friday, 30 December**

8.00 am General Council Meeting  
2.00 pm General Council Meeting

**Saturday, 31 December**

8.00 am Prayers of the Religions  
OPENING OF THE CONVENTION  
Mr Tim Boyd, *International President, Adyar*  
3.30 pm Reception  
5.00 pm BESANT LECTURE  
“Learnings of Life”  
Dr C. Rajasekhar, *I.F.S., Ambassador*  
7.30 pm Ritual of the Mystic Star

**Sunday, 1 January**

8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation  
SHORT LECTURES  
“Living from the Still Centre”  
Mrs Linda Oliveira, *Australia*  
“Light, More Light”  
Prof. R. C. Tampi, *India*  
9.30 am INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — I  
5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE  
“The Religions of the Future”  
Mr Vicente Hao Chin, Jr., *Philippines*  
7.30 pm “Shringara Vivekam — Understanding through  
Jayadeva’s Ashtapadis”  
*A presentation in classical Bharatanatyam*

## Convention Programme

### Monday, 2 January

- 8.00 am Devotional Meeting  
Ms Chandrika Mehta, *India*
- 10.00 am SHORT LECTURES  
“Transformation in a Transitional Age”  
Ms Carolyn Dorrance, *ULT, California, USA*  
“The Fundamental Identity of All Souls with the  
Universal Over-Soul”  
Mr Esteban Langlois, *Argentina*
- 3.00 pm SYMPOSIUM  
“Beyond Illusion”  
Three speakers
- 5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE  
“Unity Calls — How Do We Answer?”  
Mr Barend Voorham, *Point Loma, The Netherlands*
- 7.30 pm Violin concert  
Mr Ganesh and Mr Kumaresh

### Tuesday, 3 January

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation  
SYMPOSIUM  
“A Call to Unity”  
Three speakers
- 9.30 am INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — II  
“Self-Preparation: An Important Aspect for Theosophical Work”  
Mr O. P. Aneja, Mrs Nandita Singh, Mr P. P. Sarangi
- 3.00 pm THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE  
“A Path to Unity”  
Mrs Nancy Secrest (Chair) with Mrs Ananya Sri Ram Rajan,  
*USA*, and Mr K. Sivaprasad, *India*
- 5.00 pm THEOSOPHY-SCIENCE LECTURE  
“Beyond the Brain: The Unifying Force of Consciousness”  
Mrs Sangeetha Menon, Ph. D., *Professor and Head of National  
Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore*
- 7.30 pm “Renovation Update”  
Mr Tim Boyd, *International President, Adyar*,  
and Mr Michiel Haas, *the Netherlands*  
“Flora and Fauna of Adyar”, Video

## Convention Programme

### Wednesday, 4 January

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation  
SHORT LECTURES  
“To Dare to Move Beyond Oneself”  
Ms Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, *France*  
“To See the Self as a Passing Guest”  
Mr Pedro Oliveira, *Australia*
- 9.30 am GLOBAL RHYTHMS CHOIR  
Children’s Choir, director Mr Srinivas Krishnan,  
*Founding Member of LEAP*
- 3.00 pm QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
Mr Tim Boyd, Mrs Linda Oliveira, Mr Vicente Hao Chin Jr.,  
Mr Barend Voorham, Ms Carolyn Dorrance
- 5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE  
“The Effect of the Future”  
Mr Tim Boyd, *International President, Adyar*
- 7.30 pm Cultural Programme

### Thursday, 5 January

- 8.00 am Prayers of the Religions  
CLOSING OF THE CONVENTION  
Mr Tim Boyd, *International President, Adyar*
- 9.30 am Admission of New Members

### Other Activities

EXHIBITION, ADYAR MUSEUM: “Mughal and Rajput Miniature Paintings”

PHOTO-EXHIBITION, ADYAR LIBRARY: “Flora and Fauna of Adyar”,  
Prof. A. Chandrasekaran

STALLS of Olcott Education Society and Besant Welfare Centre near the Enquiry Office

VISIT to Social Welfare Centre — Cultural Activities and Exhibition

VISIT to Olcott Memorial School — Cultural Activities and Exhibition

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Date refers to the date of formation

\* Regional Association

† Presidential Agency

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