

## Mary Ritter's Tribute

I will remember Reinald, the next door neighbor no less. How does that happen? That we as newlyweds were so fortunate to have bought our first home at 2112 Park Lane Highland Park. July 1973. The universe? Random luck? Karma? We didn't know how our lives would be changed enriched beyond wild dreams by the neighbors next door. Reinald. His calmness, caring, thoughtful ways.

I'll always remember Reinald's elegant, regal stature , soft melodic voice. His laughter. Chivalry. Politeness with grace. Honest. Forthright.

Reinald. Just a few months after our move, would our first child have been born in the front seat of that blue '65 VW bug on that gorgeous snowy wintry evening in 1974 if not for Reinald and Betty? My husband Tom in his labor-induced excitement and haste backed our tiny light weight car right into a snow bank at the bottom of the Park Lane hill, where it sat, stuck in heaps of fluffy white. Wheels skidding. Unmoving. Reinald and Betty to the rescue, pushing the little car up the icy hill. The baby came very fast. they did more pushing than I did, as it turned out. Thank God for our neighbors. Thank goodness for new friends.

Reinald. Godfather to our three sons. A spiritual role simply through his human connection.

I remember Reinald, as teacher, mentor, neighborhood ghouel at Halloween. He and Tom competed in that arena! Reinald did more elaborate decorations. So I'd say he won, but who was keeping score.

Reinald. Playmate to our sons. Teaching them to catch and throw baseballs. Exploring together, guiding them in filmmaking, insects, cultures around the world, diversity, even back then, in the 70's. Mentoring many. Listening to all.

I remember Reinald. In the middle of a dark December cold evening when the power was out on Park Lane, you helped carry the uncooked food for our upcoming dinner party to your house, to simmer on your gas stove, and bake in your oven. And then back again. Often rescuing us, from one crazy life situation, then another.

Reinald: Did you know how many of our family and friends who have met you over the years, became smitten by you as well? Your instant genuine interest in others, your gentle inquisitiveness that pulled even strangers toward you. Just last week, old friends who haven't lived in Illinois in over 40 years. They remembered you fondly, how you made them feel. A gift. A gift of yourself. Listening. Reflecting back. Attentive to others. Young and old. BFF's and new ones too.

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Reinald. Married 82 years. A Perennial Partnership with Betty. Role models. Love models, philosophical contemporaries, persuade and convince, agree to disagree.

I will remember Reinald. Navy stories. TV and filmmaker skills, hall of famer. Bagpipe player. Sculptor. Jeweler. Garden cultivator.

I'm going to read a favorite of Tom's, an old Shaker Hymn. He'd want to share it today.

'Tis the gift to be simple, It's a gift to be free,  
'Tis the gift to come down where you ought to be,  
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,  
Will be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gained,  
To bow and to bend, we will not be ashamed,  
To turn, turn, will be our delight,  
Till by turning, turning we come round right

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