Guruji was a remarkable man who touched us all in some special and meaningful way. We know, care for and support each other as a community because his yogic teachings have filled our hearts and joined us in a common purpose. We feel so blessed to have known and learned from him for such a long time and it has been our privilege to have served him in the three ways one can serve a guru: financial support, carrying the teachings and physical support. In our case, we also have our marriage to thank Guruji for since we found each other in yoga, courted in India and after Yoga ’90 I proposed to Mary at the Center. Faeq told us that Guruji would be so happy to hear that two of his practitioners were getting married so he dragged the two of us in front of Guruji where we received Guruji's blessings for our marriage. Through Guruji's marriage to Ramamani he gave us Geetaji & Prashantji - what a gift! Each soaked through-and-through with yoga yet each distinct, their own person, true to themselves and natural. Seeing the three of them, it gave us the courage to be natural as well, to follow our Svadharma and not to be carbon copies. Through their example we could understand what the Gita says: "It is better to follow ones own dharma however imperfectly than to follow the dharma of another however perfect" (3:35).

Guruji's mastery & dynamism brought him many ‘spiritual children” and we were showered with these talented and inspired teachers. I will always be grateful for my teacher Bonnie Anthony. She introduced me not just to Guruji's brilliant teachings but she also embodied his teachings; she showed me that the acquisition of great knowledge can live harmoniously with great humility and purity; she allowed me to see how hard she strove to accurately bring back the teachings from India to us all with her precise notes and diligent, repeated practice. Through her example, I saw that one must work hard to realize the teachings and that others will benefit only to that degree that we are able to realize the teachings ourselves. I know Mary feels a similar debt to Mary Dunn. {Mary}—for my part, Mary Dunn both taught and embodied the joy of transformation, that a life in yoga is a work of art and can be artfully lived.

Later, we were blessed to continue learning from his emissaries: Manouso, Faeq and Neeta who traveled far and wide spreading the message each in their own unique way sharing not just what they were taught but what they had understood through their own practices. We are grateful not only for their teachings but also for being the examples of what a kindled spirit is: someone who, close to the flame of Guruji, was transformed by it and able to bring that spark across the ocean to us all.

As Geetaji says ‘Nothing was hidden, from the time he began to practice, to his illness and death.’ Guruji practiced in the hall so we could all learn how to practice through his example. From him we learned what practice should be: vibrant, intelligent, sensitive, experimental, penetrating, constant, honest, shared, balanced and changing through the years as he changed, matured & aged.

We spent hours together with our colleagues/friends and him working together on projects, studying, listening to Guruji being interviewed and to whatever else might be on his mind that he would express to us from time to time so that we might come to know a yogi’s mind and habits. In the process we forged strong friendships and global communities full of purpose - we became a sangha. And when the time came for us to take the reins, making archives, associations and conventions, we remembered his example: Guruji would set a time for the tasks of his life: letter writing, study, book writing, interviews etc. and then he would leave the library behind at the appointed time. So we saw how he successfully organized his life around yoga and not yoga around his life and this helped us organize our lives around yoga as well.

Guruji was so kind. We heartily enjoyed the chai that he would send down for us to boost our flagging energies after a long day of practice and projects. One time after he had worked quite hard on a backbend practice, he was about to leave the practice room when he saw me struggling to catch the rope in Chakrabandhasana. He was no longer young in years by that time and even though tired from the practice, he did not fail to trouble himself to hand me the rope so that I could catch it. I was so touched by his kindness, humility & humanity. Small acts, immense meanings. We learned to be kind through his kindness and thoughtful through his thoughtfulness in these and so many other small and large ways.

Everywhere we turn we are surrounded by his bounty in the form of our friends, community, health, livelihood, marriage, teachers, books, videos, stories, memories and examples. He has permeated our lives in every corner and we feel such deep gratitude that we still have so much of him with us and still so much of him yet to realize through our practice.

In his light,

Eddy Marks & Mary Obendorfer