

## **Creating Co-existence by Fonda Dubb**

In these times of turmoil, confusion and bloodshed, I feel compelled to tell a heart-warming story.

My late husband Mark, an architect, had drawn up plans for a house to be built in Lev HaPark. The client gave the go-ahead the day Mark passed away (such is fate).



Several months later I received a call from the client to say the builder was giving a roof-wetting, as the house was now complete and would like to invite him and the architect's family for a celebration.

Achmed, a registered builder, had never met Mark, but had followed the drawings painstakingly and said he felt he knew him, as the plans were so well detailed and honestly designed.

Achmed brought tables and chairs, tablecloths and cutlery from Afula where he lived together with the most delicious food. He was continually running out to buy more chips and cold drinks.

This wonderful gesture was to honour Mark, a man he had never met..

I wonder what Mark would have thought if he'd been alive to witness this outpouring of gratitude by Achmed. He was such a modest man. How he would have reacted, is truly a difficult question

Mark always believed and practiced 'The Ethics of the Fathers' and modesty was one of them. When he passed on, I was amazed at the number of letters I received from friends thanking him for supporting them when they needed help and how much time he gave them listening to their problems. A beautiful tribute was written about Mark by his colleague, Philip Fishel which was printed in the ESRA magazine. Many of my close friends and family keep the magazine in a cupboard close to their bed where it's easily accessible. The tribute by Phillip describes the Mark I knew.

Sitting and writing this under a shady tree in the Home for the Aged where I live in Eilat, I cannot but help shed tears of grief. After all, love and grief are one.

How happy he would be, knowing that in this beautiful garden with its green lawn and chirping birds, my love for him is everywhere. I truly believe that Nature connects us.

I know there are many Achmeds. What a pity that we don't have the opportunity to know our neighbours - surely this would create co-existence for us all?

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### **A word about me:**

I started writing when I was going through adolescence. I filled four large diaries. That was my escapism. I poured my heart out into those diaries. A place where I could go without any disturbance or confrontation. My 'private' place. My sanctuary.

I studied both tap dancing and ballet and continued at UCT ballet school under excellent teachers. I taught ballet in a volunteering position for 'Child Welfare' to Coloureds for ten years before returning to Pietersburg, my hometown, where I was invited to teach cooking and housekeeping by 'Women Power', an organization to empower Black women. This I did for ten years.

I brought my diaries with me when we made Aliyah in 1987 when my husband Mark was allowed to read them for the first time. Mark, a gentle and caring man, was so distressed by what he read, that he wrote to my father. That letter and the reply from my father, was the beginning of a new relationship between him and me.

In Israel I changed my career from ballet to catering which I loved. I couldn't speak Afrikaans in my home town Pietersburg, so it made sense that I couldn't speak Hebrew in Israel! I'm not a linguist.

Food which I loved seemed a better option. Without my beloved husband, whose Hebrew was perfect, I would never have been able to run 'Fonda's Catering' which is still running today, under our son, Nicky's management.

In Eilat, where I now live after retiring, I started writing for the ESRA magazine and then the TELFED as the Eilat representative.

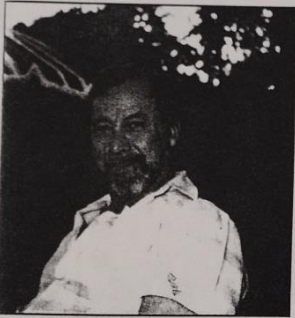
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## IN MEMORIAM

# My Dear Friend - Harold Mark Dubb

Philip Fishel



Living and working as an architect in Raanana I recall having heard Mark's name mentioned often in many circles by many people. It was Robbie Franco who put us together, having continually nagged me to call him, to see if we could help each other in the way that things get done in

our small town. When we finally met at Lady D's Cafe in Raanana, it was the beginning of a friendship that would change my life.

Mark and I were both working at home out of our spare bedrooms in a world where work overlapped with our domestic lives. Soon after we met we decided to set up our offices together in a space that Mark had found in the industrial area. It was 1993. In the three years that we lived, worked and played together, laughed and cried together, I learned many things from Mark. I saw qualities that were often concealed from others in his everyday life. I consider myself one of the gifted few who had him to myself at close quarters, even for such a short time. I saw his kindness and infinite patience with everything and everyone. In the height of my youthful ranting about something he would always calm me, make me see the clarity of the moment and the essence of the issue. He would endure silently my arrogant tirades on topics, listening to every word. His council was always wise with the perspective of time and maturity and it put the context of my youthful and egocentric thoughts into the reality of the day and the realm of my own

humbler limitations as a simple human being.

I remember our endless chats at our conference table, a sheet of 10'x4' laminated plywood on a trestle base made from my immigration packing crate, looking out over the country club as we drank coffee and contemplated our lives and the state of our beloved country. He told me of his life in South Africa, the office where he had worked and the work that he had done. He showed me pictures of the house where he had lived and related stories of college and his years in Israel including his life in the army. And there was his beloved Fon, always at his side in every memory and tale. He told it as it happened and he brought it to life with simplicity, clarity and honesty. As we shared more time together he taught me the lessons of life and the importance of perspective in whatever we do and whomever we meet. He was passionate about many things, and his love of architecture and *yiddishkeit* manifested itself in a way that I shall remember and cherish.

Mark was many things to me. He was a father, a friend, a colleague and an advisor, an assistant and helper and a sounding board for the ever-continuing emission of my ideas. He was always there when I needed him, with his words, his thoughts and his ideas. He healed many a wound and solved many a problem. I remember the sense of relief when I heard his key in the office door when I was alone working late at night. I felt safer and stronger when he was there at my side.

I recently read a book called "Tuesdays with Maury" written by a journalist on the passing of his old college professor after a long fight with Lou Gherig's disease. Each Tuesday the old student would visit with his ailing mentor and discuss some subject with him at great length. Near the end of his short but incredibly moving book, the student asks his mentor what he will do when he is no longer there to exchange ideas with him. The answer is simple and very moving. He is told that their relationship will continue, only from now on the student will talk and the teacher will listen. Mark, you have now been gone one year, but you are still with me

as you are with us all. We have entered a new phase of our relationship. My hope is that when I need to talk with you, you will continue to listen as you have always done in the past.

Babetunde Olatunji said: "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery and today is a gift. That is why they call it the present." Mark's time on this earth was a rare gift that we will all cherish. Mark the husband, Mark the father and grandfather, Mark the brother, Mark the relative and Mark the friend touched us all with his humility, his kindness, his charity, his selflessness, his humour, his love of life and fellow man. He used to tell me that he was an easy going fellow provided that everyone did what he said. I only had the benefit of his close friendship for four short years, but in that time he taught me so much that it is difficult to comprehend how it happened. But this was Mark. Mark the man, always behind the scenes having an effect without fuss or fanfare in his own special quiet way. When I moved out of our office to a new location in 1996, he helped me in my move and he let me go in the same way that we came together. With help, with kindness and with friendship. For Mark, there was no other way.

He taught me the tools of life. He taught them quietly and by example. He was the perfect teacher. He taught me to love *Torah*, to love life and to love my fellow man. I have come to learn through him that friendship must never be taken for granted. It is the gift of gifts. It strengthens me in my days. It is the armour that I take into battle so far away from home. I am grateful to him for this gift. It is a testament to him as the man that he was and the things that he so fervently believed in.

Mark touched my life in a way that he has touched countless others. I thank G-d for the gift of our time together and I shall continue to miss him greatly.

I will close with words from the poet Kahlil Gibran:

"When you part from your friend, you grieve not;

For that which you love most in him may be clearer in his absence, as the mountain to the climber is clearer from the plain." ■