Lee Roloff
8/15/1927-10/5/2015

When I became president of the Chicago Institute in September, I had not thought that that one of my tasks would be to invite us as an Institute, and especially as an analytic society, to reflect upon how we remember our colleagues publicly on the occasion of their death. We remember Lee here in three ways – a short obituary Murray Stein wrote to inform members of the International Association of Analytical Psychology of his friend’s passing, a fuller obituary offered from the context of Northwestern University, where Lee had such a tremendous influence on so many, and the text of a lifetime achievement award this Institute gave to him in 2011.

To these I add my personal thanksgiving for Lee. I was fortunate to have analyzed with him, an undertaking that was the pivotal experience of my life. When we began, I noticed that he had in his office reproductions of the four “Voyage of Life” paintings of Thomas Cole. I had (and still have) those same reproductions in my office, having viewed the originals many times at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. We spoke about them several times during my analysis, especially the painting titled “Manhood.” Lee delighted in bringing to my attention the phallic-shaped shaft of light in that picture, knowing that one of my analytic tasks was to find that light in myself.

Now, I think of Cole’s final painting, “Old Age” with its wonderful detail of the angel leading him home, and, on behalf of all his fellow analysts in this Society, give thanks for a life that contributed so much to so many of us and to this Institute.

Lee Roloff (1927-2015) died at his home in Seattle, Washington on October 6, 2015. He is survived by two sons and several grandchildren. Born in San Diego, California, he was a child of the sun and blessed with a sanguine and optimistic disposition. He taught at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas before taking up a full professorship at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. He was the recipient of many awards for excellence in teaching. As a professor in the Performing Arts at Northwestern, he was the mentor of many students who went on to distinguished careers in the world of theater.

Lee was one of the first graduates of the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts (1978) and a founding member of the Chicago Society of Jungian Analysts (CSJA), which was accepted as an IAAP Member Group in 1980. He was a training and supervising analyst at the CSJA until his move to Seattle in the late '90's, where he assumed a similar role in the Jungian groups located in the Pacific Northwest.

In his later years, Lee declared his retirement frequently, but students and analysands always managed to persuade him to remain active as an analyst and teacher, and he invariably acceded gracefully and with a not so hidden sense of pleasure to their requests until his sudden and unexpected final departure just months after his 88th birthday.

We, his friends and colleagues in North America and in his beloved South Africa, deeply grieve his passing, but we will keep him present to us in our loving memories of his vivid personality, his wit and elegance, and his generous service to the Jungian community.

With gratitude,

Murray Stein

Steve Martz
President, C.G. Jung Institute of Chicago
Obituary notice from Lee's former student, Judy Hamera:

Dear NU and Performance Studies Friends,

First, I apologize for using FB to inform any of you who do not yet know of the sad news of Lee Roloff's death last Tuesday. He was my beloved dissertation advisor and friend. Today I wrote an obituary and sent it to the National Communication Association, to his disciplinary home, to CRTNet, its listserv, and to the Northwestern U Archive that holds his personal papers. As he was an NU alum, I will send it to the Alumni Association as well. The current obituary—clearly lovingly written by his fellow Jungian analyst Murray Stein—has some errors. I wanted to correct them, as well as publicly commemorate Dr. Roloff's scholarly and creative achievements. The text is below. If you have any suggestions of other places I should send this, please let me know. Thank you in advance at this sad time.

Leland (“Lee”) H. Roloff (b. 1927), Professor Emeritus of Interpretation and Performance Studies at Northwestern University, passed away at his home in Seattle, WA on Tuesday, October 8, 2015. He received his B.A. in Speech from San Diego State University, an M.A. In Literature from Northwestern, and his PhD in Communication (Interpretation) from University of Southern California under the direction of Janet Bolton. After teaching at Occidental College and Southern Methodist University, Lee Roloff joined the Interpretation faculty at Northwestern in 1968, offering courses in the analysis and performance of literature, particularly poetry. He was especially well known for creating and teaching courses in performance art, challenging students to produce multimedia, imagistic pieces that moved lyrically, disrupting conventional narrative. His classes were famous for inspiring students to think deeply about the affective and imaginal work of performance, and for pushing beyond convention to generate more compelling and exacting expression. A formidable performer and critic, he combined playfulness and gravitas in equal measure. His textbook, The Perception and Evocation of Literature (1973) articulated his commitment to performance that evokes rather than denotes, and to close critical reading that attended to the affective as well as stylistic dimensions of literary texts. In midlife he trained as a Jungian analyst, receiving his diploma in Analytical Psychology in 1978, and who provided pivotal support to June Singer and leadership in the development of both the Public and Analytic Training Programs while serving as the public face of Jungian psychology in Chicago with his thoughtful and eloquent words;

• Whose dedication to the life of psyche informed his role as a mentor deeply affected and inspired their lives; public lectures, all of whom continue to recount how his caring and committed service to the Chicago Society of Jungian Analysts and to the C.G. Jung Institute of Chicago:

• Whose illustrative academic career as professor at Northwestern University spanned forty years during which he taught Performance Art, Archetypal and Psychological Approaches to Literature, Literature in the Therapeutic Setting and seminars in creativity, creative imagination and the performance of psyche in culture while authored articles on these topics as well as the book, “The Perception and Evocation of Literature”.

• Whose career included his practice as a detective psychoanalyst working with artists and other professionals seeking an expanded sense of creativity and individuation, teaching the fundamentals of archetypal psychology and its approach to myth, fairy tales and dream analysis as a training analyst for over twenty-five years, and lecturing nationally and internationally on these topics—including an extensive stay in South Africa where he fostered the study of Jung.

• Whose career included his life as a poet, playwright and performer, including a play about Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O’Keeffe commissioned by the Art Institute of Chicago, and who created and nurtured for years “The Play Talks” at Steppenwolf Theater;

• Whose dedication to the life of psyche informed his role as a spiritual and intellectual mentor to numerous students at Northwestern University and to candidates in the Analyst Training Program, as well as to people who were lucky enough to hear his public lectures, all of whom continue to recount how his caring and creative gifts as a mentor deeply affected and inspired their lives;

• Whose uninhibited enthusiasm for life found expression not only in his analytic, academic and artistic lives but in his private life through caring for his two sons, Peter and Kent, and creating happiness together with his life partner, Bill.
Winter Words

At
Eighty

Words are less facile now
Weighted as they are by recollections.
In the summer and spring of life
Words were carelessly flung.
But now, words are wintery
And more akin to the intricacies
Of snowflakes
Than a summer’s meadow.

Having outlived all family members,
I approach the Season of the Final Interlude
With a carol of my own . . .

Hark! Listen to the wind and rain
And recall, if you can, a world without pain,
A world that is innocent of warring stain.

Look! See the sunset’s reddening glow
And ponder day’s ending and know

The sameness of sunset’s light and winter’s snow.

--Lee Roloff 2007
SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX

I really must get a safety-deposit box
by noon, tomorrow.
Then sun high
and bright, I will put some dark parts
into a box.

Turning in the key,
And nodding to the greyed lady,
I'll put some old contracts away,
Debits you might say,
That were never paid in full.
And, a little jewelry.

"Are you the sole depositor?"
The crone mumbles.
"Quite."
All falls into the box and keys click.
"Is that all?" she asks, wisping away
stray hairs.
"All."
And up and out
Of vaults into a one o'clock day.

[Past noon, you might say,
a bit cooler, a change of season
in early fall.
I can bank on this.]

SIMPLE SPEECH

is a slip of speech
undressing intentions
allowing me
a scintilla's nakedness
in my own presence

is Freud's cancer of the mouth
and the scream of corpses
in the bog at night

is a dream's most simple
plight of climbing
or descending
rickety stairs at night

is Hellen Keller standing
at the water pump
having words ripple
through the fingers of her mind

is what congeals
and cannot be forgotten
From The Poigns
Of the Holidays, 2013

All too well known are the poigns
Of the Holidays,
The poignancies that range from
Pin pricks to emotional stabbings
Of the heart and memories.
The poign of loss when for the first time
A parent is not present,
Or a loved one is separated,
Or the children’s laughter now gone.
Or consider the poign of recognition
That nothing is the same
(As it was for what seems a brief time)
That Holidays are now memories
Haunted by music so specific to the
moment.
The Holidays cannot be greeted with
Happy Poigns of the Season, or
Happy Stabbings to the Holiday Heart
But the final greeting is always
You are greatly loved just as you are.

--Lee Roloff