

A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF
KVETA VACLAVIK- BOND



1st May 1922 to 31st Dec 2001

British Humanist Association Officiant: Annette Furley

Order of Ceremony

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A HUMANIST CELEBRATION OF
THE LIFE OF
KVETA VACLAVIK-BOND AT
HENDON CREMATORIUM ON
SATURDAY 12th JANUARY 2002

MUSIC
Polka

INTRODUCTION
Officiant Annette

We are meeting here today to honour the life of Kveta Bond. A person for whom we had the greatest respect and affection and who so many of you have referred to as your best friend. My name is Annette Furley, a Humanist Officiant and I have been asked by Kveta's children to conduct today's ceremony on their behalf. I did not know Kveta but after spending some time with her family feel that I have been able to get an impression of the sort of person that she was.

This is a Humanist ceremony in line with Kveta's view of life. It is an opportunity to say goodbye to her, but it is more than that, it is a celebration of the life and personality that were hers. Inevitably you will find the world a poorer place without Kveta, but it will always be a richer place because she was once in it.

So the joy of having a mother, a grandmother, great grandmother and a friend may indeed be lost, but the importance of having had that relationship, the comfort of its memories, is never lost. There has never been and there never will be anyone in the world like Kveta and she will live on in your memories and remain a part of your family.

Boris Pasternak wrote " However far back you go in your memory, it is always in some external, active manifestation of yourself that you come across your identity, in the work of your hands, in your family, in other people, this is what you are. This is what your consciousness has breathed and lived on, and enjoyed throughout your life, your immortality, your life in others. This will be you, the real you, that enters the future and becomes part of it."

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

Kveta asked that Vanessa sing two songs at her funeral. Vanessa has chosen this one because her mother often came to hear her sing on stage and this is one of the songs she heard and loved -- "Somewhere Over The Rainbow"

SONG

Vanessa Bond (sings)

When all the world is a hopeless jumble
And the raindrops tumble all around,
Heaven opens a magic lane.
When all the clouds darken up the skyway
There's a rainbow highway to be found
Leading from your window pane.
To a place behind the sun.
Just a step beyond the rainbow.

Somewhere over the rainbow
Way up high,
There's a land that I heard of
Once in a lullaby.

Somewhere over the rainbow
Skies are blue
And the dreams that you dare to dream
Really do come true.

Some day I'll wish upon a star
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me.
Where troubles melt like lemon drops
Away above the chimney tops,
That's where you'll find me.

Somewhere over the rainbow
Blue birds fly,
Birds fly over the rainbow
Why then oh why can't I?

If happy little bluebirds fly
Beyond the rainbow, Why, oh, why, can't I?

TRIBUTE

Officiant Annette

Kveta was born on 1st May 1922 in London to Charles and Anna. She was one of three children with one sister Lidka and one brother George. Most of her childhood was spent in England but at the age of 13 she chose to go to Czechoslovakia which helped her to speak the language fluently. She stayed there for a year.

While at school she learnt some secretarial skills, but didn't use these until later as, on leaving, she trained to become a Nurse. She practiced as a Nurse for a few years including some time during the War and only left when she married. Later in her life she became a PA and a Secretary, working for a time at Harrods, then as a Legal secretary and then for Phoenix and SunAlliance, where she stayed until she retired.

In 1942 Kveta married Geoffrey in Caxton Hall Registry Office and they stayed together until the early 1960's. She later met and then lived with George. Family was important to Kveta and altogether she was to have three children Geoffrey, Vanessa and Nick, five grandchildren, Joanne, Jamie, Imogen, James and Sophie, and two great grandchildren Alexander and Alyssia. She was clearly very proud of them all.

Kveta had many interests: when she was younger she was very sporty, good at swimming and tennis. She was such a good swimmer that she was asked to open Kingsbury swimming pool by diving off the high board. She loved music, particularly Waltz's and Polka's, and in fact was quite musical herself, able to play the piano, although she was shy about doing so. She liked to read – Agatha Christie was her favourite, and she loved to garden. She was a great hostess and always had an open house sharing with everyone her excellent cooking (Czech sometimes), often rustling up something wonderful from nothing.

Kveta also loved the sun and to travel all over the world. She would go on holidays as many as three times a year to places like Hawaii, Dubai, Bali, Kuwait and the States and of course to Czechoslovakia. I am told she was a great card player and loved the slot machines, but probably her favourite pastime was to go shopping at Brent Cross.

GEOFF

But now lets hear something of the type of person that Kveta was. Her son Geoff would like to share some of his memories with you and pay tribute to his mother.

KEYNOTE TRIBUTE **Geoff Bond**

“Wonderful tributes have poured in for Kveta and you have all been very generous with your charitable contributions – thank you.

To set the tone I will draw on some of these tributes -- and don't be disappointed if yours is not mentioned -- they are selected (and much abbreviated) more to paint a picture than anything else.

Old school friend Marjorie Grimes said:

“Our closeness never wavered... she was a very loyal friend ... her enjoyment of life will be sorely missed...”

Her ex son-in-law Mitch said:

“How often have I sat in her kitchen to chat, smoke and drink endless cups of tea till the small hours...”

Her last boss, David Randall said:

“She was always cheerful and radiated a really warm, kind and sincere personality ... and there was her total and unfailing loyalty... She *never* had a day off for illness even when she was really sick...”

Cousin Carol Bond said:

“In my eyes, she was indestructible. She was always welcoming and we always stayed much longer than we intended...”

Old school friends Alan and Trudi Turner said:

“... she was full of life and she enjoyed her life... she would have hated to linger...”

Hubert and Myrtle Powell said:

“Kveta was always a staunch advocate of her homeland. She passed on her national pride to her offspring.”

Grandson Jamie Bond said:

“No matter what generation, she affected us all and was loved by every age group...”

Granddaughter Imogen said:

“...Nanny always sent beautiful cards and small gifts for all occasions. She loved to compete with me to see who was tallest...”

(I'm sure Imogen spoke for all the children in Nanny Kveta's life there)

And let us not forget the Czech connection. Kveta was a daughter of Czech émigrés. She tirelessly maintained contact with the Czech branch of the family – even during the most difficult times of the Cold War. It was a time when those populations had a desperate need of moral and practical support – and she was there with it.

I remember, in the 1960's, tramping with her, the streets of seediest London to find apothecaries who would supply prescription drugs over the counter, no questions asked. These were to be smuggled in, on a rare and hazardous trip behind the Iron Curtain, to needy relatives with a kidney disease or some other disorder.

So this is what Czech cousin Jana Pekarkova has to say:

“She was a window on democracy for all of us... The things you take for granted were of huge interest for us... she was a loving and caring person for all of us during those dark communist years...”

Now please do not be disappointed if I have not mentioned your personal tribute but they do speak for many of you – and there is good news. We are preparing a memorial album and the tributes will all be there, together with a record of this ceremony. It will also be posted on our website “www.family-bond.com”. There is still time to make your tribute known to us if you so wish.

So here we have painted a picture of a woman who was, yes, short, gregarious, hospitable, loyal, patriotic, loved by all and generous to a fault.

Now let me add my own perspective as her eldest child. What I appreciate most about Kveta is this:
She never loaded us up with guilt trips, never manipulated our feelings, never transmitted any anxieties or neuroses. She never nagged over trifles – always kept calm and kept things in perspective. It was a childhood free of mental (and physical) oppression.

She was *stoical*. She never complained. Never drained our energy by moaning. She bore adversity and setbacks without any outward sign of distress.

She never failed to praise where it was merited. She had a wonderful gift of making us all feel good about ourselves. In her presence we felt energized. Criticism, such as it was, was always done in a positive and confidence-building way. There was never a hint of maliciousness or gossip.

Now as the great philosopher Joseph Campbell said:
“The perfect human being is uninteresting. It is the imperfections of life that are lovable...”

Let us open a window on Kveta’s quirkiness – because that is what made her so attractive.

How many of you have discovered, with surprise, her real age? [You don’t have to raise your hands! Just nod knowingly...] She was 79 – older than many knew, yet too young to pass away... “She should have died hereafter.”

She regarded it as nobody's business but her own to know her age. She tied the authorities in knots. The passport people got it wrong, the National Insurance people couldn't work it out, her employers had no clue.

Let me tell you a story. I was stationed in France and faxed my 50th birthday party invitation to Kveta at her place of work. She rang me in panic a few minutes later: "How could you do that to me! -- Do you realize what you've done? All faxes get copied to all the departmental heads. They will put two and two together – how could I have a fifty year old son when they think I am under the retiring age of 60!"

Somehow she intercepted all the faxes, the employer remained blissfully ignorant, and this seventy-year-old continued in her job. But she could only carry this off because she seemed so much younger – her attitude was so young – like a skittish young girl. It is this aspect that made her appealing to all age groups.

But that was only one dimension of her attractiveness. We all know her as someone who always took great care over her grooming and always dressed in style. Right to the last she would be flirtatious and coquettish.

Kveta was a rebel. She had an instinct to be "contrary" – to flout rules, to do the unorthodox. With her surprising 'take' on life, she often laid herself open to teasing and joshing. She loved it. She would riposte with a flick of the head, a cheeky grin and a protest of fake indignation.

She once said to me, "I have no ambition". Now in one way this was true. She did not have Macbeth's "...vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself....".

And yet she did have her own, very deeply buried, purposes. These she would pursue relentlessly and if your purpose was on a collision course with hers – well, you just bounced off.

So she was nobody's doormat either. She knew what she wanted, she was very much her own person.

As the poet Henley said,
 “It matters not how strait the gate,
 How charged with punishments the scroll,
 I am the master of my fate,
 I am the captain of my soul.”

So Kveta was a very *secret* person. Your confidences were safe with her. She suffered her troubles and illnesses in silence. She had a horror of exposing any *vulnerability*. So in the deepest sense, I don't think *anyone* really knew her completely.

When I think back, there are many gifts that she gave me. I'll just mention two of them, almost at random. First of all, in spite of being an inveterate smoker herself, she somehow instilled in me a total aversion to smoking. With that one 'vaccination' she maximized my life chances – and saved me a lot of money too!

And the second gift I'll illustrate with an anecdote. Kveta often came to stay with us when I was stationed in Kuwait. One day, after seeing her off at the airport, a Kuwaiti came up to me and said, “You must be Russian!” I said, “No – but what on earth do you mean?” and he said, “The English don't know how to say goodbye like that!”

And that opened my eyes to something I had taken for granted – Kveta's highly demonstrative expressions of affection. I think we all have an idea of her wonderful, unconditional bear-hugs.

[turn to coffin] So Mum, thank you for all the hugs you have given me in my life – and above all, thank you for teaching me how to hug...

READING

Officiant Annette:

We are now going to listen to a tape on which we will hear Kveta's son Nick reading a poem. This poem was on a card recently sent by Kveta. You will hear why Nick felt that it was an appropriate tribute to his mum. “You're such an inspiration”.

POEM
Nick (recording):

“A life is measured by the joy one brings to others.
There are people who know
The true meaning of caring
And give of themselves
In the spirit of sharing
As they live life with
Love in their hearts.

There are people who smile
With each passage, each season,
Who understand change
Has a purpose and a reason.
And they carry that hope
In their hearts.

There are people who value
The simplest of treasures
And recognise beauty and worth
In small pleasures
While they hold lasting joy
In their hearts.

The example of your life
Is so inspiring to me
Because of the way
You lived each day
In peace and harmony.”

ALWAYS
Officiant Annette

Vanessa will now sing a second song, as requested by her mother,
and therefore, in her honour. "If Always Were A Place"

SONG
Vanessa (sings):

I know within most minds,
Always relates to time,
But what if always were a place?
Where love judged right or wrong,
That may be weak or strong,
Could live forever in this space.

I long to take you there.
To a world that we can share.
Where a love like ours belongs,
But for now we must be strong.

If always were a place I'd take you there.
Where we could love eternally.
If always were a place I'd take you there
And hold you there with me.

All my life I've searched for you
And now at last you're here.

If always were a place I'd take you there,
Where we could love eternally.
If always were a place I'd take you there,
To hold you there with me.

GOODBYE
Officiant Annette

Although her coffin will remain with us, we will now say our final good-byes to the physical existence that was Kveta, with love with honour and with respect.

All living things are subject to death; it is the basis of our growth. Through evolution, in the course of millions upon millions of deaths, humanity has evolved. We carry this inheritance. All of us who accept the unity and completeness of the natural order, and believe that to die means the end of the conscious personality, look death in the face with honesty, with dignity and with calm.

And so death has come to our friend and loved one Kveta, but she will not be forgotten and her life will continue in the thoughts and deeds of those she loved

It is in sorrow but without fear and knowing that she is eternally at peace, that we say our final goodbye to Kveta.

CLOSING
Officiant Annette

We have been remembering Kveta with love and respect. I hope that you have gained some comfort from sharing in today's celebration of her life. We will remember Kveta as an enormously generous person who cared a great deal for those around her and in return was loved by so many people. Let us now return to our homes resolved that we who live on will use our lives more fully for having shared it with Kveta.

As we leave please feel free to say your final goodbye to her.

MUSIC
Polka

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Thank you for visiting this tribute to Kveta. We will continue to augment it over the next few weeks. Do you have any good photos of Kveta or do wish to add your tribute? Please get in contact with me, Geoff Bond: dzef@aol.com -- Thank you.

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