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Tributes Honoring the Memory
of
Gardner Murphy

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Additional Tributes to Gardner Murphy From Colleagues and Friends¹

Charles T. Tart, Dept. of Psychology, University of California,
Davis:

Gardner Murphy's passing is a great loss to parapsychology for he was a rarity in our field, a creative and solid contributor in our specialty who was also a creative and solid contributor in the much wider field of general psychology.

In the spring of 1963, just before completing my graduate work at the University of North Carolina, I spent a couple of days with Gardner at the Menninger Foundation, where he was then the Director of Research. I was considering taking a post-doctoral fellowship with him, trying to combine my interests in parapsychology with my wide interests in the areas we now call altered states of consciousness. In our wide-ranging discussions, I was constantly amazed at the breadth and depth of Gardner's knowledge, whether we were touching on hypnotic practices in other cultures, respiration rhythms in people's legs and the best plethysmographic techniques for measuring them, or ideas for enhancing psi performance. He could grapple in detail with the nuts-and-bolts details of problems, right in there with the technical specialists, and then step back and relate the problems to a wider perspective that shed new light on the specifics and suggested new directions. In a time dominated more and more by specialists, whose actions often create new and unforeseen problems, this rare breadth was a vital and refreshing example to me and others.

I was also impressed, at this visit and in subsequent contacts with Gardner, with his practicality. Intellectuals who can say the right things are common, but those who can translate them into practical application are rare. Indeed, it was his practicality and his concern for my long-term career (as well as my long-term contributions to parapsychology) that was influential in my decision to take my post-doctoral work at Stanford in a more respectable "establishment" atmosphere. I never got to spend the long periods of time with Gardner that I would have liked, but he was a continual model for me.

There was one other quality of Gardner's that is not as easy to write about, and yet harmonized with his other traits in a way that made him a fine person, a quality which I can best express by saying that Gardner was a gentleman. His intellectual brilliance and

¹ The tributes in this section are presented in the order in which they were received.—*Ed.*

his practicality were backed up by qualities of courtesy, reliability, and honesty, and by a genuine concern and respect for others that we would all do well to emulate.

John Palmer, John F. Kennedy University:

I knew Gardner Murphy primarily by his writings and his reputation. I met him face to face on only two occasions, and we never exchanged more than a few words. My most lasting remembrance of him will be a letter he sent me several years ago. I had mailed him a preliminary draft of a theoretical paper I had written on out-of-body experiences. Not more than a few days later I received from him a note, obviously written with a wavering hand, encouraging me to continue developing my ideas. It made my day!

Gardner Murphy's writings in parapsychology were extensive, important, and of high scholastic quality. I was perhaps most impressed by his excellent paper on the problem of repeatability in parapsychology (48) and his eminently sensible series of papers on the survival problem (8, 9, 11).

Beyond his writings, the characteristics that come most readily to mind when I think of Gardner Murphy are his fair-mindedness, his civility, and his tolerance of opposing viewpoints. I think we can pay no greater tribute to his memory than to follow the personal example which he set for all of us.

R. A. McConnell, Dept. of Biological Sciences, University of Pittsburgh:

It is doubtful that I spent altogether more than an hour in conversation with Gardner Murphy, and yet he gave much more than that to problems that I sent for his consideration. His creative influence spread throughout the field of parapsychology. He will be remembered as a leader of pioneers.

It may be wondered how Gardner Murphy achieved eminence independently in psychology and in parapsychology. In part, this was possible because of his conception of parapsychology as a field dependent upon, but entirely separate from, psychology. From his writings it is clear that he accepted psychology upon its own terms, as the science that "studies contact with the world of physical stimulation through the sense organs" (61, p. 29). Although he took the position that "psychical research comprises events which are more than psychological," he rejected all forms of dualism. He characterized psi phenomena as "transpatial, transtemporal and transpersonal," but would not say more, save that he saw no hope for quick theoretical understanding.