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***Our Turn***

**(Editor's Note: On September 9, 2003, just a few days after the third-year anniversary of the tragic murder of UA Professor John Locke, a memorial garden—crafted on the eastside of Kimpel Hall—was dedicated by the University community. Following are the remarks—in the order of presentation—offered to the University community at the dedication.)**

# The John Locke Memorial Garden—Intersecting the Mundane & Spiritual Worlds

Bob Smith

Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

The University of Arkansas

Welcome to this important event in the life of our university. I am grateful for all who are here today. Also, I want to acknowledge our community's members who are most responsible for making this day and this dedication possible, including Peggy Maddox, Kirsten Day, Jim Gamble, Mark Cory, Noah Shumate, Pat Slattery, Mike Walker, and Don Bobbitt. It is also accurate to say that the entire UA community helped to inspire and sustain a successful effort to memorialize Professor John Locke.

Akin to his 17th-18th Century namesake and one of the founders of the Western Enlightenment, the UA's John Locke will be remembered—as one whom:

- Sought truth and understanding
- Loved students

- Cared deeply about what E. O. Wilson calls *Consilience* or integrated understanding
- Inspired scholarship among his students, colleagues, and friends

It was a little over two years ago that we broke ground—August 27, 2001 to be precise—for what has turned out to be a beautiful place on our campus. This is a place for peaceful reflection—a place to develop new friendships—a place to share ideas with old friends and colleagues, and a place of asymmetry with a distinctly East Asian look and feel to it.

John Locke's friends and colleagues have shared with me their view that he would have been proud and happy with this peaceful garden. And, with his love of East Asian culture, perhaps Professor Locke might have had the occasion—as I have had—to admire Chinese scroll paintings. My favorites are those depicting mountains with many paths to the top. To me, these mountainous scenes symbolize the many paths to enlightenment. And, the many paths to tolerance and enlightenment were recurring themes in Professor Locke's life. Thus, I believe that the 17th-18th Century Enlightenment's John Locke and our John Locke would be pleased with our reflections today.

As so often is my practice, I would like to end my remarks with a reference to necktie art. Today, I am wearing a tie with artwork created by Jerry Garcia. Many people know that the deceased lead guitarist of the **Grateful Dead** was an accomplished musical artist. But, probably fewer people know that he was also an accomplished visual artist who worked in a variety of media including airbrush, digital, line drawings, ink, multi-media, and watercolors.

The necktie I am wearing today—titled **Blue Mountain**—was chosen because it evokes a memory of the great 20th Century composer Alan Hovhaness, (1911-2000) and his 2nd Symphony—**Mysterious Mountain**.

Referring to the theme of his haunting symphony, Hovhaness noted, "Mountains are natural meeting places for the mundane and spiritual worlds."

This garden will be—for all time—a memorial place honoring our Professor John Locke and "a meeting place for the mundane and spiritual worlds." Indeed, this garden is and will be place for the intersections of the everyday and inspired lives of all members of our wonderful university community.

Thank you once again for joining us for this important event in the life of our university.

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## John Locke—A Man of Thought & Contemplation

Don Bobbitt
Dean, Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
The University of Arkansas

I wish I had known John Locke better. I saw him on campus numerous times, but I never really had the opportunity to get to know him. In the years following his death, I learned much about what kind of teacher, mentor, and human being he was. I learned it from the sorrow and praise of his many colleagues and students.

Dr. Locke embodied what we mean by the term "comparative literature." He embraced the various literatures, philosophies, and cultures of the world. He was fluent in several languages and could speak as easily about waltzing as he could about the Noh plays of Japan, the nature of language itself, or Western philosophy. He believed that the Koran, the Bible, and the Tao Te Ching were all books of wisdom, worth our time and attention.

He was gentle in both his words and deeds, and always emphasized the importance of understanding one another through discussion and dialogue. His kindness and his deep compassion are both sorely needed in our world today—and sorely missed.

He was also known for the way he noticed people. He noticed how they felt, how they were doing in their lives, and took time to sit and talk with anyone who dropped by his office. He was never too busy for a student, never too rushed for a good conversation. He smiled warmly, laughed loudly, and enjoyed life immensely.

This tranquil garden is a fitting tribute to a life lived with thought and contemplation. A former student of his said, "I learned much of what is best about myself from John Locke—to observe, listen, do the small, powerful thing, be here now, listen to the music, and follow the beat."

I would like to share with you a short poem Dr. Locke wrote. It reflects his spirit, grace, and love of dancing.

**Save the Last Dance for Me**

Finding in you no other,
I took a turn with you.
Our selves as one,
we saw and spoke our truths.
We danced the dance of life.

I am holding those times gaily
during the last moments of our light.

The best way for all of us to honor Dr. Locke would be to hold our times gaily as well—and dance as often as we can.

If I did have that chance for a longer conversation with Dr. Locke, I would be sure to say, "Thank you, for touching so many lives so profoundly. Thank you for your devotion to this campus, your students, and your friends. Thank you for teaching not just by words, but by example."

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## John Locke and the Shamanic Journey

Jim Gamble
Doctoral Candidate in Comparative Literature
Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
The University of Arkansas

There are many people to thank today. I'd like to add my thanks to my students here at The University of Arkansas, with a special thanks to my students in **Literature of the Quest** and **Patterns of Mythology**. You have been extraordinarily patient and compassionate in helping me on my journey.

Here is a poem from the 13th Century Persian mystical poet, Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi. It involves a man named Majnun and a dog belonging to Majnun's beloved, Layla. The translation is by John Moyne and Coleman Barks. The word *hajji* refers to a pilgrim on the sacred journey that Moslems must take once in their life, if they are able, to Mecca. The Kaaba is the central shrine of Islam.

> Majnun saw Layla's dog and began kissing it,
> running around like a hajji circling the Kaaba,

bowing to its paws, holding its head, scratching
its stomach, giving it sweets and rosewater.

"You idiot," said someone passing by.
"Dogs lick their privates and sniff
excrement on the road. This is *insane*,
the intimate way you treat that dog."

"Look through my eyes," said the lover.
"See the loyalty, how he guards the house
of my Friend, how he's so glad to see us.

Whatever we feel, grief, the simple delight
of being out in the sun, he feels
that with us completely.

Don't look too much at surface actions.
Discover the lion, the rose of his real nature.
Friend, this dog is a garden gate into the invisible."

Anyone preoccupied with pointing out what's wrong
misses the unseen. Look at his face!

John Locke taught us, among many other things having to do with a variety of belief systems, that there is wisdom to be gained from animals. At least once in every course I took from John, he would tap rhythmically on the desk or lectern, and say, "Close your eyes. I am going to take you on a shamanic journey. Though your feet are rooted in the here and now

on the second floor of Kimpel Hall, let your active imagination take you down to the ground floor and out to the street. You turn left and walk toward the building that houses the University of Arkansas Press. In the woods behind the Press, you meet an animal. I cannot tell you what your animal is, because the animal is specific to you. I *can* say that the animal has a piece of wisdom to tell you. And it is wisdom that you need to know."

I often have had occasion to remember those shamanic journeys, and what the animals said. Last spring, a wolf presented me with that well-known Zen koan: what is the sound of one hand—filling out a request for a dissertation deadline extension. (My thanks to Mark Cory, Brian Wilkie, and Pat Koskie at the Graduate School for helping me attain enlightenment on that one.)

Much of religion and mythology teaches that life and death are but two stages in a continuous, never-ending cycle. But though we try to be philosophical, we still grieve for lost loved ones, as Rumi grieved for his friend Shams, and as Gilgamesh grieved for Enkidu. And so we have grieved for John Locke. I hope, too, that some day we can find it in our hearts to grieve for Jim Kelley. Though we cannot excuse what he did, neither can we imagine the depth of pain and despair that drove him to what was, at least for this life, a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

More recently, of course, we have grieved for Jim Whitehead. When I learned last month that Jim had died of a heart attack, my first thoughts were not of animals, but rather of Jim's family, and football, and what it would be like gathering in Jim's basement at 517 East Lafayette to watch the Razorbacks on TV without him. John Locke and Jim Whitehead certainly were different when they were different, but they were the same when they were the same—compassionate, generous teachers, who spent a

fair amount of time counseling me and others when we had heart troubles of our own. Each man taught me important lessons—among them, the need to pay attention.

Late one afternoon three weeks ago today, with still an hour left until the official beginning of calling hours with Jim Whitehead's family, I came here to Kimpel Hall. I did not think much about what might be waiting for me in the woods behind the Arkansas Press. Instead, I came here to this garden—to these rocks, these bushes and trees, these secluded pathways and open spaces, and to this running water—a place infused with the spirit of John Locke, and in an odd way reminiscent of my spiritual home in Canada.

Suddenly, out into the open there darted a sleek, brown rabbit. As quickly as the rabbit appeared, he stopped. He sat up on his hindquarters, then drew his forepaws together in front of his face and began to wash. He washed his nose, his cheeks, his whiskers, pausing from time to time to moisten his forepaws with his tongue. He tilted his head to the side, and, one by one, washed his ears, drawing each down in front of his face, stroking from the back of each ear's base all along the length to the wispy tip. When the rabbit stopped washing, he straightened his head, dropped down on all fours, and looked at me. I looked the rabbit full in the face. Then, as if through an invisible garden gate, the rabbit darted back into the bush.

I will not tell you what I saw in the rabbit's face. But I *can* tell you that what I saw then, and what I see now, is something I need to know. And I can tell you that the rabbit is wise.

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# The John Locke Memorial Garden—Its Genesis & Completion

Mark Cory
Professor & Director, Comparative Literature Program
Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
The University of Arkansas

I'm very proud of you at this moment, and I know that John Locke would be just as proud. Of the many, many students affected by John's death, I know you (Jim Gamble) were among those closest to him.

Some of those other students close to John have been mentioned briefly, but I want this morning to fill in the story of this garden a little because the remarkable thing about this project is that it was conceived by John's students and brought to fruition by their determination, their enthusiasm, even their physical labor.

On that terrible first day of classes three years ago when the best most of us who knew John and worked with him could do was to walk around in a daze or sit in stunned silence, three of these students had a vision of something positive, something which could be salvaged out of a senseless act of violence, something that could serve as a memorial to their gentle teacher. Peggy Maddox, Kirsten Day and Noah Shumate imagined a tranquil garden, fashioned in the oriental style they knew John Locke loved. Noah Shumate, trained as a landscape architect, drew a design, and Peggy and Kirsten produced a brochure describing the project and seeking donations for its construction.

Provost Smith, I'm afraid they didn't ask permission first, and perhaps it's just as well they didn't, since the number of hurdles to clear for something of this magnitude can be daunting. But at every level Peggy and Kirsten found sympathetic ears and the hurdles fell away one by one. The campus community responded with private donations from faculty, staff

and students, and even the larger Fayetteville community joined in the campaign.

During the first year of the campaign, this small team received two crucial allies. The first was a former student of John's who came forward and said in a quiet way, "I read about the garden project and I'd like to help." And help he did! Mike Walker, Fayetteville resident and landscape professional specializing in water features, has since provided extraordinary amounts of time, equipment, labor and expertise to the completion of the garden. And since neither Noah, Kirsten nor Peggy could be with us today, I'm very happy that Mike and his wife Beverly could join us for this dedication.

The second ally was Jay Huneycutt, associate director of contract services for the Physical Plant. Jay worked with Mike to make sure that the design would be satisfactory to the University, pointing out little details such as the fact that there is a classroom beneath the garden pool, and then helping solve this and other technical issues we had not anticipated.

Through the efforts of this team, we were able to break ground in a ceremony many of you attended on the first anniversary of John Locke's death. But in the second year came the sober realization once bids were let that our funding was not sufficient to install the garden in its entirety. We resolved to do as much as we could with the funds available, but the product would have been little more than a token garden, rather than the lovely completed space you see today.

It was last year, then, that the project attracted two additional key allies, when Dean Don Bobbitt and Provost Bob Smith committed funds necessary to see the entire garden completed in time for this third anniversary. On behalf of all those who had hoped for this happy outcome, I want to thank Provost Smith and Dean Bobbitt.

The last chapter in the story took place this summer, when over a period of several weeks students, faculty and staff from Comparative Literature and the departments of English and Foreign Languages pitched in with sweat equity to dig the basin, mound the earthen berm, and haul rock. John Locke's colleague, Pat Slattery, donated these lovely native boulders from his farm and hosted several rock-gathering parties, while Mike Walker carefully positioned each stone for maximum aesthetic effect. In the final weeks before this third anniversary, workers from the Physical Plant arranged all the trees and plants, and the water began to cascade into the pool you see before you, signaling the completion of the project.

It has been a gratifying project for all those involved, one that brought members of the larger community together with faculty, students, and staff from our university. We who were here know this story, but we realize that the time will come when all those who knew John Locke will have gone. It's up to us now to repeat the story of the Locke Memorial Garden, so that the effort to transform an act of ugly violence into a place of tranquil beauty becomes part of the lore of our campus. Please come now and enjoy your garden . . .