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Mid America Dharma News

Mid America Dharma Celebrates the Completed Life of Virginia "Ginny" Lee Townsend Morgan March 20, 1948 - August 30, 2011

Ginny Morgan, a former president of Mid America Dharma, died on Tuesday, August 30, 2011 at the age of 63 after many years of battling cancer. Ginny became President of the Board of MAD in January 1997 and served in that capacity for many years.

Ginny had a big vision for Mid America Dharma, imagining that in time it might become a Midwestern version of IMS or Spirit Rock. In other words she saw it as an organization with a retreat center serving the central part of the US while helping to seed the Dharma throughout this part of the country. While circumstances limited her ability to complete this vision, she did play a very significant role in the growth of the Dharma in the Midwest and especially in Missouri.

During the 1990's Ginny served as a cook, and many times as retreat registrar and retreat manager for our retreats. She also played a major role in recruiting teachers from Spirit Rock, IMS and other centers to travel to the Midwest to offer retreats.

After completing Community Dharma Leader training as well as training by Matthew Flickstein, in 2001 Ginny began leading our New Year retreat each year. Her love for the Dharma and enthusiasm for sharing it with others led to this being our most popular retreat year after year.

With her support, 11 people were accepted into the Community Dharma Leader Program over the last 14 years. They, along with many others who Ginny encouraged, have gone on, in various ways, to help plant the seeds of the Dharma here in the Midwest just as Ginny imagined.

The Buddha, as his final unbinding approached, said to his beloved assistant Ananda, "Enough, Ananda, do not weep and wail! Have I not already told you that all things that are pleasant and delightful are changeable, subject to separation and becoming other? So how could it be, Ananda—since whatever is born, become, compounded is subject to decay— how could it be that it should not pass away?" DN 16.5.14 (II.145).

Although our friend Ginny has now passed on, her love for the Dharma and her vision of the Dharma flowering in the Midwest will continue to grow for years to come.

Mid America Dharma's Mission

Since you're reading this newsletter, you're probably aware that Mid America Dharma has a mission to sponsor Insight Meditation retreats. But are you aware that retreats are only part of our mission? From the time it was incorporated in the mid-1990's Mid America Dharma has also worked to support the development and spread of the practice of Insight Meditation throughout the Midwest.

One emphasis has been supporting the growth of sangha leaders and teachers. Over the last 14 years MAD has offered tuition scholarships to 11 people to help them attend the Spirit Rock/IMS sponsored 2.5 year-long Community Dharma Leader Training Program. These individuals have played important roles in the development of community sanghas in Little Rock, AR, Lawrence, KS, Columbia, Kansas City, Rolla and St. Louis, MO. During this same time, MAD also co-sponsored 7 teacher trainings led by Matthew Flickstein. People from throughout the Midwest, and other areas of the country, attended these trainings which both deepened their personal practices and gave them skills to help their sanghas grow. A number of these individuals were also supported by our tuition scholarships.

Believing that the Dharma will spread through a spirit of cooperation rather than competition, Mid America Dharma has had a long-standing commitment to using our newsletter and website to offer information about Midwestern practice groups and retreats offered by other groups as well as our own.

We've also recently become involved with the emerging nationwide InterSangha Organization. We have high hopes that this will let us continue learning from others about successes and failures in growing the Dharma, share what we've learned with others, and advocate for the needs of sanghas and their members everywhere between the two coasts.

Our ability to offer these services and development activities is made possible by your donations and any surpluses left over after paying retreat expenses. We thank you for your continuing support for these efforts.

Sinzen Young's June retreat focus

Definition of the practice: Mindfulness is a non-sectarian, non-denominational practice that develops concentration, insight and compassion. This retreat is suitable for those who would like an introduction to mindfulness as well as for experienced practitioners.

This is a silent retreat with sitting and walking meditation, as well as sessions of mindful movement.

Instruction is through lecture, guided practice, private interviews, and group discussions.

Under Shinzen's guidance, you will have a chance to learn and practice two distinct ways for working with your thoughts and emotions:

- Focus In. This involves learning how to untangle the strands of subjective experience: mental image, mental talk, and emotional body sensations.
- Nurture Positive. This technique works with the same elements but instead of passively observing, one actively creates positive content in one's thoughts and emotions.

These two methods form a natural complement to each other. Focus In deconstructs the self back to its spiritual Source. Nurture Positive reconstructs a new and better self.

Editorial Note:

Shinzen Young has been leading retreats for Mid America Dharma and its predecessor since the 1980s. We appreciate his willingness to return again to the Midwest and offer his teachings. The continuity of a teacher returning to meet with our sangha is deeply appreciated.

Mid America Dharma Retreats

Robert Brumet



Robert Brumet has practiced Insight Meditation since 1988. He leads a local sangha and since 1995 has conducted meditation retreats throughout North America. In January 2000 he graduated from the Community Dharma Leader training program sponsored by Spirit Rock Meditation Center. Robert is one of the founding members of Mid-America Dharma. Brumet is an ordained Unity minister and is the author of three books on spiritual development. He teaches at Unity Institute and Seminary near Lee's Summit MO.

Feb 3-5, 2012

Sanctuary of Hope, Kansas City, KS

Fee range: \$60-\$90 Registration is opens Nov 3 and closes Jan 26

Bridget Rolens and Jon Yaffe



Bridget Rolens & Jon Yaffe **Bridget Rolens** has practiced Insight Meditation since 1997. Recognized by the Spirit Rock Teachers Council as a Community Dharma Leader, she co-leads the St. Louis Insight Meditation Group. As Vice-president of MAD, she has been instrumental in bringing nationally-known teachers to the Midwest and has managed numerous retreats. In 2007 she completed Matthew Flickstein's *Teaching as a Form of Practice* program. She is also program facilitator for Masterpeace Studio's Mind-Body Stress Reduction (MBSR) program in Crestwood, MO.

Jon Yaffe has practiced Insight Meditation since 1999 and has been a co-leader of the St. Louis Insight Meditation Group since 2006. A student of Matthew Flickstein, he has completed two of his programs: *Teaching as a Form of Practice* and *The Two Year Training*. He has been on the Board of Directors of MAD since 2005, currently serving as President as well as Registration Coordinator.

March 23-25 (non-residential)

Mercy Center, St. Louis, MO

Fee range: \$60-\$90, Registration opens Dec 23; closes March 15.

Shinzen Young



Shinzen Young is a multilingual American who began his meditation career in 1970 when he ordained as a Shingon monk in Japan. For the last 25 years, he has served as a translator for Joshu Sasaki Roshi, a revered senior Zen teacher. Shinzen has over three decades of experience teaching meditation. His integrative approach incorporates findings from math and science with the spiritual practices of the Western contemplative tradition and the three Buddhist vehicles: Theravada Mindfulness, Mahayana Zen, and Tantric Shingon practice.

June 27 – July 1

Conception Abbey

Fee range: \$280-\$420, Registration Opens Mar 27, Deadline is June 4, late registration surcharge applies until June 11, when registration closes

Robert Brumet’s Winter Retreat

Insight Meditation aims to free the mind from the distortions of self-centeredness, negativity and confusion. Through intensive practice of moment-to-moment investigation of the body-mind process, the mind gradually sees more clearly into the nature of itself. Such clear seeing leads to freedom from the attachments and misconceptions that cause our suffering, and allows us to open to a path of wisdom and compassion.

Retreat Description

In this retreat we will emphasize mindfulness in our everyday life experiences- particularly those in which we may experience conflict or suffering. Seeing clearly into the mind’s reactive nature in the midst of difficult situations is a key to liberation. We then can see more deeply that our suffering is the result of an unskillful response to life’s conditions rather than being inherent in the conditions of life itself. Seeing life as a constantly changing process, one begins to accept pleasure and pain, fear and joy, and all aspects of life with increasing balance, equanimity, and freedom.

Annual Board Meeting, Election of Officers

Mid America Dharma has an annual board meeting every January, the date will be posted on our web page and Facebook. Please join us as we continue the work of supporting the Dharma in the Midwest.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED

**Would you like to serve the dharma?
Do you have skills at formatting newsletters
or on-line articles?**

Mid America Dharma is seeking someone to spend time twice a year pulling together our newsletter . You ask teachers to present short articles and then collect pictures and bios for the twice a year Mid America Dharma publication. This is our primary means to accomplish our mission of serving the Dharma in the Midwest.

Please contact Marnie Hammer at marniehammer@att.net or 816-523-5061



Join Us on Facebook!
Mid America Dharma has a Facebook page! In an effort to reach more of our Sangha, Mid America Dharma will now be posting retreats and events on Facebook. The page also has a discussion board for issues such as ride sharing and community events. If you have a Facebook account simply type “Mid America Dharma” in your search bar and become a fan of our page. We welcome your comments and questions - feel free to drop us a message now and then!

Mid America Dharma Upcoming Retreats

Feb. 3-5, 2012.....Non-Residential Retreat with Robert Brumet, Kansas City, KS
Mar. 23-25, 2012.....Non-Residential Retreat with Bridget Rolens and Jon Yaffe, St. Louis, MO
June 27-July 1, 2012..... Residential Retreat with Shinzen Young, Conception, MO
August 22-26, 2012.....Residential Retreat Shaila Catherine, St. Louis, MO
Oct 5-7, 2012.....Non-residential retreat Will Kabat-Zinn, St. Louis, MO

The New Years Retreat has been cancelled for 2011-2012

For the latest information on retreats and a full listing of Midwestern Buddhist groups please visit our website:
www.midamericadharm.org

Mid America Dharma

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