

Florence Winston's Eulogy for Muriel - March 23, 1996

A Bright Particular Star

Muriel was "a bright particular star." She possessed a rare life force - curious, reaching out, to know, to understand, to become. And become she did. She was a master in her field of Theatre as a director of children's theatre, and a teacher of theatre. At a time when children's theatre was executed in cartoon fashion, Muriel's productions were splendid. They possessed eloquence, mystery, Poetry, charm - and were experiences for both young and old. She poured herself into these productions with great passion - her energy was amazing. The visual aspects of the production were exquisite; for Muriel was a gifted artist. Her drawings and water colors were enchanting.

I had the good fortune to perform in her production of *The Glass Slipper*, written by the English playwright Eleanor Fargeon. It was a joyous time! She also directed my one-person show *Woman - A Theatrical Portrait*, which was performed in many theatres in New York, including The Vivian Beaumont at Lincoln Center and throughout the country. Here, once again, Muriel displayed unparalleled taste, support for the actor, and sensitive comprehension of the plays.

I will always remember Muriel's loyalty to me during a time of great catastrophe in my life when my beloved husband Leonard died suddenly at a very young age. Muriel and Sid were strongly supportive and caring. She included me in every event in their lives for years and years. I visited them at Bennington College during summers - also in summer places like Bridgehampton. In Europe we arranged to meet in Florence where Sid had a Fulbright and they lived in Sienna.

Above all, it was Muriel's pursuit of Truth that I admired. In her work and in her life she set high standards. Until her last days, she confided to me of her desire to accept what could not be helped or changed. "How are you Muriel?" I would question on the phone. She answered with a smile in her voice. "I think I'm somewhat better" referring to the traumas from the distant past that haunted her.

Muriel was noble. She rarely complained. She did not have a shred of self-pity about her illness. She simply told you what the difficulty was. "Breathing is Hard" and she would laugh softly.

The pillar in Muriel's life was Sidney. She loved him. She appreciated him. She understood and worshipped him. During these last months when Sidney cared for her during her illness, Muriel told me over and over again "Sidney has been superb!" The words came from the depths of her soul. Sidney stayed by her side night and day.

Muriel was a mentor to a few of her former students. Among the students that she treasured were the beautiful Margaret Gruen. Muriel nurtured Margaret, and Margaret responded with a rare devotion and love. Muriel's niece Dena occupied a special place in Muriel's heart.

Muriel cast a glow upon this planet. Her dignity, Intelligence, humor and depth brought light to all those who were fortunate to be in her orbit. A part of Muriel remains in all of us. She was "a bright particular star."