



REIKI AUSTRALIA
In Touch

Tribute to Rev. Beth Gray

By Scott Howlett

Reiki master Beth Gray passed away peacefully in her home in San Carlos on 13th May 2008, aged 90. She was one of 22 masters trained by Hawayo Takata. Beth travelled from the United States to introduce Reiki to thousands of Australians during 1980s and 1990s. The following tribute has been prepared by member Scott Howlett, one of her students.

When I thought about where to start writing about Rev Beth Gray, or Beth as she was fondly referred to by the many Australians - and others right around the world - whose lives she changed forever, I had the Internet open and thought "Why not google her name?" I think Beth would have loved this.

When I first met Beth in 1988 at a resort at The Entrance, NSW and completed Reiki 1 along with over 60 other people, the fax machine had only just been introduced into the workplace. Mobile phones were undreamed of and the Internet - what was that? Now, by entering "Rev Beth Gray" into the Google search engine, there are 390,000 entries. Truly remarkable. I started to read some of these entries and only just scratched the surface. But they all spoke of Beth in very warm and loving terms. I read words such as "gentle", "radiant", "powerful presence", "knowing", "blessed", "twinkling eyes" and my heart responded to each word, a new memory breaking through into my awareness from the precious few moments that I spent with her on her visits to Australia and then when I visited her at her home in San Francisco twice in 2000. When I read the words "eyes that penetrated you" a shiver went through my body. The same shiver that raced up my spine at the moment when Beth initiated me into Reiki 2.



Beth Gray in 1999 at The Reiki Alliance Conference, Texas.

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In writing about Beth I can only speak of her from these memories that I have. I cannot talk about her life before 1988, apart from repeating what others have said or written about her or the few things that I remember that she talked about in her seminars. I do remember a person who was larger than life, who loved brightly coloured clothes, who adored big hats, who was incredibly passionate about Reiki and who taught Reiki with determination that we get it "right". Some people railed at her almost schoolmistress style of teaching, evoking for many, no doubt, unfortunate experiences they may have had when they were at school themselves. I welcomed her thoroughness, her precision and her deep desire to make sure that we "got it".

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*Phyllis Furumoto Events
September - November*

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*Marta Getty 'Healing the
Family Tree with Reiki'
September*

She knew, as only a deeply spiritual person knows, that the transmission of Reiki through her teachings and through attention to detail was ultimately the best way to serve each of her students in their spiritual path. Even if it meant that sometimes we didn't like her.

Beth always instilled in her teachings a deep humility for being able to teach this wonderful gift and impressed on her students that Reiki is always outside ego. This was one of the most powerful lessons that I gained from being one of Beth's students. It has served me extremely well to this day, not just in my Reiki practice but in all aspects of my life. I might not always have been successful in following this, but it is a goal that I always strive towards. Beth always taught that we are not the healer when we give a Reiki treatment, that we are merely the conduit for the energy, that whatever happens is always for the highest good. Again, this is a principle that I have found has helped me through some of the most difficult times of my life.

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I have three very powerful memories of Beth that stand out for me. The first was during my Reiki 1 seminar. On the Sunday morning, after having woken up feeling extremely confused, emotional and not wanting to go on with the course - for no apparent reason - I dragged myself along to the seminar, not without some fear. What was happening? I sat towards the back, probably in the hope that I could hide away. Beth had a habit of asking everyone how they were feeling and as she got closer and closer to me I could feel my emotions rising, my tears building. And then it happened - she looked at me through the crowd with her piercing eyes and demanded to know what was wrong. How could she know anything was wrong? At that moment I didn't like her. But I was caught in the floodlight of her love and concern. The second was at my Reiki 2 seminar in 1989 when she asked the students to give her Reiki. To place my humble hands onto such a person was beyond words. To think that she believed in our ability so much to ask us to give her Reiki when I was still just a student was a most empowering experience. And the third was at the end of that same Reiki 2 seminar, after she had presented each of us with our certificates, a big warm embrace and a single pink rose - her favourite. She then thanked us for providing her with the opportunity to pass on this gift of Reiki and as she bowed to us, tears rolled down her face. At that moment I am sure that there was a golden glow of light that encircled her and she appeared - to me - angelic. That memory is still true and strong.

When I again saw Beth at her home, in February and August of 2000, I was amazed at how sharp her mind was. She challenged my beliefs yet again about the ability of someone who had suffered such a catastrophic physical blow as a stroke, to still be just as sharp and quick in the mind as she had always been. And instead of me honouring her, she got in first and honoured my visit by wearing an Australian jumper. Cheekily she was wearing one from the time Australia won the America's Cup! She had also worked out where she wanted us to go to lunch at a nearby restaurant and she joyfully led the way in her wheelchair.



Scott visiting with Beth in February 2000

At that time I was on my way to do workshops in Idaho with Phyllis Lei Furumoto and Paul Mitchell, Phyllis having recently accepted me as one of her Master candidates. After the first workshop in February I was somewhat conflicted as I still felt so strongly the connection with Beth as my Master. During my second visit in August, as I was saying goodbye to Beth, there was a moment where she turned suddenly and kissed me and I immediately felt that at a spiritual and energetic level she had handed me over to Phyllis. What a true gift. I have a photo of Beth and I on my altar at home that was taken shortly before this moment. We are not looking at the camera but into each other's eyes - she knew what was about to happen when I did not.

When I heard from Jan Pritchard that Beth had started the process of transition to her next life on 13 May 2008 I had a moment of sadness to realise that I would not see Beth again in this life. But this was immediately replaced by a great sense of honour that Beth came into my life all those years ago from halfway around the world, activated my journey on my spiritual path which is still and will always be unfolding, and unlocked this gift that we know simply as Reiki. Beth always implored us to "keep it simple sweetheart". Her energy, the Universal energy of healing and love, will always live on in our hearts and our hands.