

Tributes
and
Remembrances

Stephen W. Lacey
1943 – 2000

A NOTE ON THIS COLLECTION

The following tributes and remembrances of Stephen Lacey are grouped under four headings: “Classmates and Mentors,” “Colleagues and Friends,” “Students,” and the “Memorial Service on May 6.” Each grouping except the last has a generally chronological order, with an alphabetical listing by name within that order. In addition, a selection of these tributes and remembrances with a topical and thematic order and accompanying literary quotations, entitled *Tea and Madeleines, Gin and Tonics*, has been published in a limited edition by the Department of English. This selection has been edited by Amber Friedrichs '00, Shannon Paul '00, and Matt Rhoades '00. *Tea and Madeleines, Gin and Tonics* features illustrations by Rob Hunsiker '02 and was produced in consultation with Professor Leslie Hankins and with the assistance of Elizabeth ‘Peka’ Poyer '01. The epigraphs on the following page, one of which may or may not have been written by William Shakespeare, are among the quotations included in that publication. The concluding document in this collection is the commencement address given by Stephen Lacey, as faculty speaker, to the Class of 1989.

Dennis Damon Moore
Dean of the College
5/6/00

I always agreed with maman that I could have done only one thing in life but a thing which we both valued so much that it is saying a lot: namely, an excellent professor.

--Marcel Proust, Remembrance of Things
Past

We are never allowed to forget that courage and compassion, truth and renewal, are the price and gift of survival—that survival in the context of loss may lead to a unique and even eloquent management of the self.

--Stephen Lacey, in his “Foreword” to
Richard
McIntyre’s *Mortal Men*

Who herein hast forever happy prov’d:
In *life* thou liv’dst, in *death* thou died’st *belov’d*.

--W.S., “A Funeral Elegy”

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I. Classmates/Mentors

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**Janet Gillespie
Decorah, Iowa**

Stephen was my best friend during our years at Grant High School in Portland, Ore. We grew up; we became professors in separate parts of the U.S.; I moved to Iowa; Stephen and I found one another again. The qualities that had saved my life in high school were even stronger in him, especially his delight in combining the sublime with the ridiculous. He taught me so much, that life, i.e. Shakespeare, is an adventure, that one should always cheat when playing bridge, and that “in the infinitude of time and space, my dear, there are only shades of gray.” Stephen, I love you, and I miss you.

Howard J. Happ '64

I suggested to Galen Lacey, whom I have known as a friend for a quarter-century, that somewhere in the Memorial Service certain of Shakespeare's Sonnets be read. They have always seemed to me analogous in many ways to the Psalms, which are a great part of the Requiem Office and Eucharist that I intend to observe and celebrate simultaneously with the obsequies in King Chapel. And they were very dear to Stephen, who made them not only dear but profoundly meaningful to me. This, of course, seems to me what his vocation was: to search and engage in dialogue with texts in pursuit of some apprehension of meaning in our human existence.

Years ago, when he left teaching at Santa Barbara, I put it this way ...

“Will Shakespeare's precious metal he alloyed ...
with Freud,
In chains of lectures, magically wrought
To bind our prejudice, and free our thought;
To teach the love of literature; his goal:
That each might search with insight his own soul.”

Stephen was not at all optimistic that earnest and honest engagement with the words of a text would necessarily yield a harvest of meaning, or of comfort, certainly.

“He spared not sentiment, whene'er he spoke:
He held the glass to Nature--and it broke!”

When I learned of Stephen's death late on Monday afternoon, March 27, I Sat down to the reading of my Evening Office, a custom honored often in the breach. The Second Lesson was from St. John's Gospel, and the text that spoke to me then was, “Jesus went up into the temple and taught ... ‘My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.’”(7:14,16a). What a claim about teaching! And if, as at least one scholar claims, the community for which this Gospel was written was highly sectarian, occult, exclusive, then Jesus would seem to exemplify Stephen's most common characterization of religion: “superstitious twaddle.” If, on the other hand, we read the Gospel from the point of view

of Origen, who, after all, was probably primarily responsible for its inclusion in the Christian Canon, then it would seem to affirm that the Word which was made flesh in the Teacher is one with, and draws life, light and meaning from the Word by which the world was made. Stephen held little faith in the discovery of such a transcendent word, but he certainly was such a transcendent teacher!

Two of the sonnets he loved most were those dealing with death, and neither happily nor hopefully. Strangely, they have the numbers of our respective years of graduation, 64 and 65. No less relevant to the occasion so sadly before us, is 71—oddly, again, the year in which Stephen and I resumed in California the friendship we had begun in Iowa:

“No longer mourn for me, when I am dead, than you shall hear the surly, sullen bell ..., etc.” What Stephen loved about that sonnet was the irony it shared with so many of the others, but in this case, particularly, its manifest insincerity. Stephen can rest assured: his friends, colleagues and students (and knowing him pretty much dissolved those distinctions) will keep on mourning him all their lives.

John Klaus '64 Former Professor of Music

Stephen Lacey and I were good friends for almost 39 years, and colleagues for almost 15. I don't know how to deal with Steve's death—I certainly haven't done it yet, and I don't know if I ever can. I have, however, spent a lot of time since his death remembering Steve. All of the memories are rich, and many are, like Steve himself, creative and funny.

When Steve Lacey arrived at Cornell in the fall of 1961, nobody knew quite what to make of him. He stood out amongst other first-year students by dint of his sheer Falstaffian girth, but it was not his size alone that set him apart.

Steve brought with him from Oregon a stereo mounted in a mahogany cabinet and a large collection of pre-Romantic phonograph records. Within days, upperclassmen notable more for their athletic prowess than their academic credentials stood, sometimes three deep, before Steve's open, second-floor Merner door as sounds of Monteverdi or Carissimi wafted out at less-than-discreet decibels and Lacey, ensconced with menthol cigarette in hand, held court. So astounded were these onlookers that Steve was virtually immune from freshman hazing, a barbaric practice that prevailed in those days.

It took less than two weeks for the Lacey Salon to become a Cornell legend. It was a lifestyle Steve was to follow the rest of his life. I remember vividly an evening during Steve's sophomore year. His room was filled with people. His stereo played early Baroque music. Steve worked simultaneously on three papers for three different classes, carried on at least four separate conversations, and intervened in perhaps two others. This continued well past the shank of the evening. Yet the papers were miraculously finished (some brilliantly), the conversations were lively, and we were all informed about the music.

Steve sometimes reviewed Cornell music performances, but he was also very busy with classwork. *The Cornellian* once assigned him the task of reviewing a faculty recital. Steve was busy, but he knew the recitalist's performance abilities and style very

well from past experience. Without attending the recital he wrote a remarkably accurate review—an exercise that turned into a minor cause celebre when the recitalist in question learned of Steve's ruse.

On another occasion the Men's Honor Residence, housed then in Guild Hall, decided to honor its advisors and sponsors with a spring dinner. Steve, of course, was the chef. He decided upon his own special version of Beef Stroganoff as the main course. His recipe required copious quantities of wine as an important ingredient, and Cornell was a completely dry campus, at least in theory. Steve solved the conundrum by carrying the huge vat of simmering ingredients across the street to alumnus Jim McCutcheon's house, where several gallons of red wine were added, and the concoction simmered until the alcohol had evaporated. It was a dinner to remember!

Steve was tuned into many information networks as a student, both among students and among faculty members. One spring weekend afternoon in Steve's junior year, he rushed into the front door shouting "Scan-DAHL! R-r-r-ru-MOHR! WHY weren't the Smiths invited to the Joneses' dinner party [two longtime faculty couples]? WHAT senior **** major is sleeping with her professor? WHY didn't Professor X get tenure?" There was an immediate sound of 40 pairs of feet descending to the dorm's lounge to listen breathlessly to the latest gossip. Then, as later, he was uncannily accurate.

While we were both in graduate school, Steve in Buffalo and I in Chicago, I was lucky enough to be assistant conductor of the American premiere performances of the first extant opera, Jacopo Peri's 1601 *Euridice*. After performances in Chicago, we took a road trip to Buffalo. Steve had arranged a lavish party for the whole cast, orchestra, and crew, a party that followed the obligatory institutional reception right after the performance. Not only were we Chicago visitors regally entertained, but so were several dozen of Steve's Buffalo colleagues and professors. It was Lacey Salon East, with no alcohol restrictions.

During his years in California, Steve and I talked by phone, but when he came east again to teach at Howard, I was teaching on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and we saw each other regularly. Two years after he moved back to Mount Vernon, I joined him at Cornell. Among my most enduring memories, of course, are our joint trips to England, but there are others as well. I helped several generations of student Shakespeare play directors with music for those productions, even on occasion writing pseudo-Elizabethan ditties as required. When the Cornell Recorder Ensemble was active, we often provided live music for the performances.

And, of course, there were the countless more informal occasions, whether at Steve's house or at mine, occasions which often gave us the opportunity to unwind and chat about times old and new.

As virtually everyone has mentioned, Steve was larger than life in mind, spirit, skill, and compassion. In one way or another he touched almost everyone with whom he came into contact, and no one who knew him will ever forget him—I know I won't!

And that, perhaps, is his legacy. A teacher can hope to inspire a small percentage of his or her students enough that the students will themselves share the sheer joy and excitement of the subject matter with a yet younger generation of humans. That student-teacher link is precious and sacred, and it is the primary means by which civilization is preserved and advanced. All who knew Steve were his students in that sense, and his

influence so far exceeded the normal percentage of people he touched and excited that, whether or not his name is remembered generations from now, his influence will still be as potent as it is today. No teacher can wish for a greater memorial.

Donald Patterson '64

Parlor Light

For Steve Lacey

On the other side
of footlights in my dreams
is his laughter, are his
soaring comprehensions,
illuminating time.

Knowing what we knew,
harboring suspicions he knew more,
we went from day to day basking
in his brilliance—and that was just
the way he wanted it to be.

Later was his voice on the hill,
sharing a heart as large as his mind,
guiding lives up slopes
of careful dimension,
a voice above the roar.

Back for reunion years ago
in the warmth of his parlor,
through the vigil of decades
I saw lives pass through him,
in a play of conversation
where silence would have ruled.

Now rest comes as easily as
a sigh from breezes past
that lighted window
where you stand.

Steven W. Hinkhouse '65

The special gift of Stephen Lacey was his ability to cultivate in students the best and highest of our civilizing instincts through a command of language. These gifts, once

instilled, flourish and renew, ever and anon, the mortality of the mentor notwithstanding. In that sense, Stephen now joins a great host of Cornellians past whose real presence endures. Stephen's passing is not so much the extinguishing of light as it is the burning out of a luminous candle at the hour of dawn.

The Rev. Alan Johnson '65

I was saddened by the news of Steve's death. His creative exuberance kindled the *joie de vivre* wherever he was. We were in the same class at Cornell, 1965, and his always imaginative verbosity and demonstrative gestures brought flair! Though we did not stay in touch over these past 35 years, I sense his shooting star has lit many a crystal night sky for many, so very many. Peace, Steve. Deep, wild and abundant peace.

Thomas S. Kingston '66 and Susan Leigh Kingston '67

As a college student, Steve Lacey was never one to be first to arise in the morning. He much preferred holding salon late into the night when he might grant both counsel and gossip to the bevy of classmates who strolled through his room.

When in the fall of his junior year Steve enrolled in Winifred Van Etten's Monday-Wednesday-Friday 8 a.m. American Literature class, I—as a comrade-in-arms enrolled in that early morning, never-to-be-missed set of classes—became his appointed deputy for early rising. The schemes I would have to devise; the tricks I had to play; the excuses I had to concoct! Stephen even once declared he would no longer need my services because he had written to the Rosicrucians in order to learn how to levitate himself in the mornings from his bed to South Hall. Yet, once arisen, once having completed the grumbling walk from Guild to South Hall, and once in place in that second-floor lecture room, Steve was one of the stellar students, as astute as the best, more perceptive than anyone.

Several years later we remember fondly an out-of-the-blue visit from Stephen who found us in Massachusetts while on his way back from Provincetown. John Shackford was retiring; he'd encouraged Stephen to apply for the open Shakespeare position. Sue's aunt ('Liz Isaacs) was all for Stephen's appointment. We had, in the meantime, also had the chance benefit of working with Joe Barber from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Joe was at the time academia's most eminent Shakespearean scholar and Stephen's advisor and mentor at Buffalo. Knowing of Stephen's keen reputation for teaching and Barber's glowing enthusiasm for Stephen's scholarship, we spent a warm afternoon talking about what it would mean to return to Cornell, what kinds of prejudices Stephen might face and conquer, what he needed to say and do to earn the appointment, and what kind of determination he needed to summon to make the invitation a reality.

How fortunate, yes, for Stephen that he returned to Cornell. But how exquisitely fortunate for Cornell to have invited him to return.

With loving fondness and extended remembrances of things past

Craig Kuehl '66

“And in his blood that on the ground lay spill’d,
A purple flower sprung up, chequer’d with white.”
(*Venus and Adonis*, 1167-68)

I met Stephen when I entered Cornell in the fall of 1962. I was going to live in Guild (rhymed with “wild”) Hall, where Stephen was to become a legend.

Ironically—for most of its residents would have sniggered at the idea of a fraternity—Guild was the closest thing to a Greek house there was on the Cornell campus, and Stephen was our house mother.

Other tributes have described better than I could the Lacey Salon, his imposing presence, the music and the all-night seminars. While I was not one of his intimates, I was happy to participate on the fringe. Still, Stephen did have a profound effect on my education by insisting that I enroll in Dr. Hesla’s freshman English seminar. It was in Hesla’s classroom that I began the difficult process of making over my way of writing and thinking.

Stephen could be pompous, but it was a lovable pomposity. I remember by heart a phrase from his review for *The Cornellian* of my first performance on a Cornell stage, in “Lysistrata” by Aristophanes: “Craig Kuehl played the love-starved Kinesias to perfection.” I still don’t know for sure if he was putting me down!

Later, my wife, Jane, and I got to know Stephen in a totally different light, as he visited us in New York or as we occasionally passed through Mount Vernon on the way to somewhere. He was always warm and kind to us. Our last fond memory is of a wonderful dinner Stephen held in September 1999. It was an idyllic fall day; we gathered on the deck with friends and Galen, who was the chef for the evening. Then we sat down to a lovely meal, presided over by Professor Stephen Lacey.

Thank you, Stephen.

Charles (Chuck) Lentz '66

I remember Steve’s first English class, his first as a student: the freshman composition class, David Hesla’s section in spring ’62. At that time Steve inquired about moving to the “Honor Residence” (a.k.a. Guild Hall), the men’s dorm where a 3.0-plus GPA qualified one for living without a housemother(!). He lived there through the rest of his student years at Cornell—his room door always open and visitors almost always found inside, conversing enthusiastically on constantly changing topics. Then all too soon we all graduated, and were scattered—but not forgotten. Thus I was pleased but not surprised when my oldest son returned not long ago from a college forensics meet on the Hilltop and reported the widespread fondness for Dr. Lacey he found there. And in summer 1997 I attempted to see what Steve would remember after 30 years, but he was traveling when

I came through. Now I grieve, not so much because of my loss as for my inability to confirm for him my own fond memories.

Marguerite Fiero Which-ta-lum '66

I first met Stephen shortly after my arrival as a freshman. I remember being terrified for the first few months of college—sure that my bumbings and stupidity would brand me as an idiot for all time. I was working my “board job” at the grill in the student union which was located in the downstairs of the library. A new friend, David Wilkinson, walked in with Stephen and introduced me to him. With a great flair, Stephen dramatically bowed, kissed my hand, and declared himself at my service at any time!!! And thereafter his greeting to me was always something like “AH, Peggy, DAHLING, how fare ye today ...?”

In those insecure days, Stephen became an anchor for me, the dearest friend and confidant. How I loved him. Last November, when visiting Cornell, I tried desperately to see him, but he just had a few hours left with his mother. However, I reached him by phone. “Peggy, DAHLING, is it really you? How fare ye today?” After all these years

Oh, Stephen, we all fare a bit sadly -- and yet we laugh and celebrate with tears for having known you—such a rare, outrageous, loving and magnificent man.

This one life was changed for the better for knowing you. Fare Thee well, dear friend

John Robilette '67

I knew Steve for 38 years, since I used to visit him when he was a sophomore (and I was a freshman) living in the honor dorm, Guild Hall. In those days my mother made chocolate chip cookies and I would send some across campus to Steve. Once I got a note of gratitude, signed, “Stephen Cardinal Lacey.”

We renewed our friendship in 1991 when I played a piano recital at Cornell. In fact, he mentioned in a Christmas card this past holiday that he was working on a return engagement for me. Ever after, my wife and I stayed with Steve whenever we came to Cornell. Of course, the chocolate chip cookie pleasures had by now turned to something stronger, and we enjoyed the drinks just as much. He subsequently visited our house in northern Virginia in 1997 and we have many memories of that. He was a fabulous character, and a powerful and loved teacher. The latter will be his enduring legacy.

Bill and Jean Sylvester

From the very start, he was a dear friend.

Jean and I first met Stephen over thirty years ago, in the days of manual typewriters, when he was a student in my graduate classes at the University of Buffalo.

He was also my research assistant, and would go over my writing, proof reading but also offering fundamental editorial responses. He pointed to one section and told me I could let it stand as is—there was nothing really wrong with it—but it sounded as if I were writing because I had to. Perhaps I might mull it over and rewrite it.

At the time I took his responses for granted, but thinking about it now, I am struck by how—at a some strangely intuitive level—he was absolutely right.

Fifteen or twenty years later, he asked me about some comment I had made in class. It was hard to remember, but between the two of us, we dredged it up, and the discussion continued, and we discovered that both of us had changed our views a bit.

A lovely moment.

When he first came to Buffalo, he was slowly, painfully struggling with obesity. The very worst was already over, but he still had a long way to go to reach the state which most people probably remember. We were having lunch near the University one day, and he ordered a beer and immediately explained why: he had lost ten pounds; he would be ready for the next plunge into dieting provided he allowed himself a few indulgences first. Otherwise, pushing himself too far, he feared he might lose all control.

One of his moments of indulgence was at our home in Buffalo. He wanted to make fettuccini Alfredo. At that time I had never heard of fettuccini Alfredo—so long ago, I don't think many people had. Anyway, the big question was: did we have enough butter.

“That's ok.” I said, “we have plenty of margarine.”

If I said something he really didn't agree with, Stephen would tilt his head back a bit, his eyes would droop and he had a sly smile, as if he himself were amused by his own aristocratically languorous boredom in response to what he had just heard: “Bill ... really”

For any fettuccini Alfredo, margarine was a solecism, for Stephen's fettuccini Alfredo, a gustatory illiteracy.

We stayed in touch through letters and phone calls, and from time to time a Cornell student would stay with us, en route elsewhere, or headed for graduate work at Buffalo thanks to Stephen. But over the years we all became aware that we were seeing each other mainly in England. We'd come in to London, or he'd stay with us in Woodstock, or at Cardiff in Wales. In London, he offered us his bed while he slept on the couch, and at that time, we noticed a cough that concerned us.

We went with him on the bus tours he conducted for his students, to Salisbury, Winchester, Litchfield, Stonehenge. On the Litchfield tour the bus driver (also the owner) was trying to sweet talk Stephen into coming back during the summer to conduct some tours. Stephen was tempted. He liked the idea, and he knew he was good at it: he had just made us see the ghost of Samuel Johnson walk through the Cathedral—but Stephen was good at it because he put so much into it, and later, his better judgment prevailed and he declined.

As we got close to London, the traffic was the worst I had seen then or since. We were moving a few feet at a time, with long, long pauses, and the driver would intone over and over again, “Woe to the city of Litchfield.”

In London we saw him as a teacher in his own right, and enjoyed some of his lectures. More frequently, we'd go to the plays that had been selected and join the group to hear his introductions.

In talking about the play, as part of a dramatic tradition, he would also include some comment about the staging, the acting, the theatrical aspect, and what they were going to see and hear.

He could be eminently practical. "Bring only two bags," he advised his students, "then carry them fully packed around the block—if you can't do it comfortably, you're taking too much."

At Winchester cathedral, we noticed a 16th century grave for a child "born in May and died in February of the same year."

February of the same year?

That was before the Calendar change when the new year still began in March, not January.

His sense of detail was also intuitively effective: on one bus trip with the students, he suddenly jumped up and pointed to the window, and said, "Look at that green field. When you hear people speak of 'England's green,' THAT'S what they mean."

It wasn't just any green field. We didn't hear him say that on any other trip. That green was a wet, bright, green under strangely gray luminescent mist and fruitfulness, a seeping sense of moisture, the feeling of "wetness" in a Constable painting.

A lost time or place was brought back, or as if—at that very moment—all the other green fields he had ever seen in England, all those lost times had been gathered and fused into a sense of a richer texture, deeper glow of the field we were actually glimpsing.

Small wonder that students taped one of his lectures about Proust—and many others that I don't know about—and copied it for wider distribution.

With Robert Dana's agreement, Stephen invited me to give a poetry reading here at Cornell—which was a dear pleasure, to meet his friends. Then again I stayed with him, here at Mount Vernon, while a Shakespeare production was being prepared.

As often happened, several other people were also staying with him at the same time: the Stephen Lacey Free B and B was up and running while young actors, stage hands, costume designers, publicists were taking over the rest of the house.

Independently they seemed to have discovered a new principle, namely: one does not have to stop talking to understand what another person is saying.

Also I discovered that undergraduates don't have to sleep after midnight. They had much more to do and to talk about...I turned in, hoping to get up around eleven.

Shortly after seven, the phone rang and we were out of neutral, into gear, the pedal down to the floorboard.

And the range of personalities!

One student, I remember, wanted to go to law school, specifically to specialize in criminal law, and no, not to defend the innocent but to be a prosecutor. I am confident that I am quoting word for word: "There are a lot of people out there I want to put in jail."

Whatever you think of that aim, I think you will agree, that personality was quite different from Stephen's.

They were all involved in the play, and they were all working for a common end.

He was devoted to that involvement and he was devoted to Cornell.

We began with manual typewriters, and he left us in the age of computers. In less than a month after Diane Crowder's update for March 27th, I saw a headline: a college in Florida will be the first to offer a degree completely on line, all the students at a computer keyboard for all courses.

Will they never hear anybody—except in a pre-recorded audio?

How would Stephen fit into that world?

How will Cornell College adjust to that future?

It's as if some people were actively searching for the kind of loss we are now experiencing.

We'll never see Stephen open his arms wide in that slightly dramatic gesture, his head tilted to one side "Bill! Jean!"

Nobody will ever hear that voice again, but what will remain with us—at the last—is love, and the source was within his family—how vividly he talked about his mother, his sister and brother, the nieces he welcomed so heartily in London, a family love that moved through his devotion to students, his friends, to Jean, and to me, a love that can be epitomized by a small incident, when he was still at Buffalo, at our home.

We were talking about the plants in our house, and I began reminiscing about earlier days, and Stephen said: "Why, you must have had plants in the house long before anyone else." It was a pretty compliment, yes, but it was true, and imaginative awareness of us, and our lives, a discovery for us too, an activity recovered from lost time—a blessing, as we are blessed by our awareness and memories of dear, dear Stephen.

Stephen Lacey could change your life.

II. Colleagues/Friends

Robert Dana
Hugh Lifson
Richard Martin
George O'Connell
Sally Farrington-Clute
Gordon Urquhart
Carol Lacy-Salazar
Karen Greenler
John Gruber-Miller
Ann Gruber-Miller
Renato Martinez
Catherine Burroughs
Gayle Luck
Scott Klein
Roy Hamlin
Cinda Thomas
David Evans
Janel Sutkus '90
Pat Dolan
Ivan Vonk
Jim Baxter
Nicholas Bradbury and Cathy Oakes
Helen Mason
Desmond Barrit

Robert Dana
Professor of English Emeritus

The Figures
(In memoriam: Stephen Lacey, 1943-2000)

Sunday morning. A summery
March 26th, and I'm pastor
again of The Little Church
Of Last Year's Fallen Leaves.
Mostly oak. Mostly white.
Some red. Some burr. Those
plastered together closest
to the dirt make up a black,
wet page. Text for a late
mass, perhaps. My raking,
a late call to prayer.
My parishioners, the usual
ones for the time of year:
the beetle, the hellgrammite,
the robin, the mole. My own
work's a kind of sweat
meditation. Join me. It's
the perfect weather for it,
and the clearing out will
go faster. By noon, we'll
lie back on a hill of grass,
the beer tasting crisper,
the crackers saltier than
we might ever have imagined.
And though I cannot now
know it, tomorrow, a young
friend will die of pulmonary
honeycomb fibrosis, as if
some strain of bees, finding
him choice enough to hive in
drowned him in their sweetness.
Later. Oh, much, much later,
should you choose to read
in your Book of Hours,
look no further. You know,
those figures in the old story,
aflame at the edge of the wood,
brightwinged and laughing.

Hugh Lifson
Professor of Art Emeritus

My wife and I first knew Steve as a student here at Cornell. He was part of a group of students in the early '60s who are still legendary. Thus my first exposure to Cornell students, including Stephen, was to students who were as exciting and as able as any students, anywhere.

Some years elapsed—naturally. I remember meeting him when he talked enthusiastically about the students he was teaching at Howard University. At that time one caught the tone of his infectious enthusiasm.

As a teacher at Cornell, his triumphs are well known, and justly praised. Likewise his erudition, particularly with regard to music. However, I, like many, also have personal memories of him. He was as supportive as anyone could be. His enthusiastic praise for my drawings from Piranesi (with Steve's knowledge and love of Piranesi these were not merely casual words). His critical insights as well as his admiration toward my paper on Herbert Marcuse, which I had given him for a critique, were such that the unusual form I was using in the paper (which was written a la Norman Mailer, in the third person, employing Crispin, the hero of Wallace Stevens' "the Comedian as the Letter C" as the narrator), that I felt encouraged enough to continue to use the form for several papers thereafter.

I will miss Steve, both as a colleague and as a friend.

Richard Martin
Professor of English

We have all lost a friend in Steve Lacey. For some of us he was a new friend, for some, a friend of long standing.

Cornell College has lost a presence. Steve was a graduate of Cornell. He brought much back to this campus from his own teachers. He learned from them that teachers play a special role at a small liberal arts college, a role that reaches far beyond the classroom and its demands. The response of students past and present to Steve's death reminds us all how well he filled that role.

We have lost a presence, and we will feel the loss. Grief will have its time. But we also have memories, and can be grateful for them. Of all the voices I have heard for the last few days, of the voices I am still hearing, I want to select two—one representing the very young, and one the old.

My own son, when he heard of Steve's illness, sent us the following e-mail message:

I still remember when you guys used to have the English Dept. soirees and Lacey's booming voice could be heard from every room in the house. When we were really young, that sound was comforting—partly because it symbolized the excitement of all the

grown-ups and partly just because his voice is really sonorous. I'm sorry to hear he's ill; he has always been nice to Sass and me, and he never talked down to us.

The other voice is, of course, the Bard. It is from *The Tempest*. The play is set on a small, special island, a place where wisdom and magic and love all have their chances to deal with those who come there. *The Tempest* is Shakespeare's last play. It was the last play scheduled for the course Steve did not live to teach. And Steve himself read these words in King Chapel at a memorial service for his own teacher, John Shackford.

Our revels now are ended. These our actors
(As I foretold you) were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air,
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Steve hated getting tired and did not like to rest, but it is time now.
Steve, sleep well.

George O'Connell
Former Visiting Assistant Professor of English

I hadn't been teaching long at Cornell when Steve Lacey joined the department. His zest, candor, and great heart for life were soon widely known, and belong now to his legend. What I wish to speak of involves a small confession.

Late one winter afternoon, after I'd finished teaching a class in the newly remodeled basement of South Hall, the students had filed out and I thought I was alone. Then I heard a voice through the closed door of a classroom at the end of the corridor. I could barely make the words out, something to do with King Lear, but the voice was Stephen's. Whatever he was saying took on a sweep and cadence that stopped me. I sat awhile on the dark stairway and listened, how long I can't remember, telling myself that even Robert Frost put his ear to walls for the muted casts and rhythms of speech. Steve's voice rose and fell, a passion and a music, now soaring, now stooping to pluck some bright thing from the page and loft it. Anyone could hear this teaching was deep song, his joy and sweet measure. But I was still, I now confess, more than a little jealous.

Not long after came the first of Steve's holiday parties at Cornell, the glow and rollick, the hug of his benevolence. I recall John Shackford reading the little Chekhov story "Vanka," with its doomed letter. Steve offered Shakespeare's "Winter," where

“Joan doth keel the pot.” Sometime that evening, through something of a haze, it occurred to me that Stephen’s famous Christmas punch could not have been more rightly named. For he was a good archbishop, rich in the raiment of himself, passing among his flock, scattering treasure. And many were the hungry whom he fed.

Sally Farrington-Clute
Professor of Spanish

Ever since Stephen arrived on campus I have felt the deepest affection for him and have admired him, you might say, “from afar.” I have many memories of Stephen—in faculty and committee meetings, at parties and search committee receptions, receiving praise after Shakespeare plays, lining up for Commencement (we were promoted to the rank of full professor the same year).

But the one I choose to remember now revealed an aspect of him that I hadn’t seen before. When Bill Heywood retired as Dean of the College, Stephen threw a party in his honor. Two days before the event, I was surprised to receive a phone call from Steve. Would I lead the guests in a toast to Bill? I was happy to accept, but terrified. What would have been second nature to extroverted, eloquent Stephen was extremely difficult for introverted, tongue-tied me. I spent hours finding the right words and called Steve the next night for his evaluation. He listened with the greatest of attention—I can feel now the quality of that attention, the depth—and approved with a laugh and a hearty “Cute!”

The moment to deliver my little piece came all too quickly. Elegantly dressed, our gracious host called for the toast and for me to stand beside him. As I spoke the first lines I began to tremble and the words became a jumble in my mind. At a loss, I looked up at Steve. Once again there was that total attention ... a radiant, encouraging warmth ... a calm, smiling nod Buoyed up in this wave of affirmation, I was able to finish without stumbling. Stephen could have done it so much better. But like the master teacher he was, Stephen stepped aside to allow a less skilled person to take a turn. And it gave him great pleasure. That was the secret: he loved doing it. What a gift to his students. What an astonishing lesson for me.

Thank you Stephen.

Gordon Urquhart
Professor of Economics and Business

I came to teach at Cornell in 1984. In the spring of 1986 I wrote a report in *The Cornellian* on a now legendary soccer game between the Cornell faculty and the fledgling Cornell women’s soccer club. I wrote it in the florid and over-adjectived style of Neville Cardus, once the cricket reporter for the *Times* of London.

Shortly after its publication I was hailed on the mall by professor Lacey who complimented me on the piece. “At last,” he expostulated, “a f***ing social scientist who can write!”

This was, of course, typical of Stephen's not-always-appreciated talent for dramatic overstatement. I knew that very well, but was still tickled pink by his approval.

Carol Lacy-Salazar
Professor of Spanish

When I was invited to deliver the commencement address in May 1997, I accepted somewhat hesitantly because I was truly terrified at the prospect of speaking, not only before 4,000 people, but even more so, before my peers. When Stephen congratulated me on my selection, I asked if he would be willing to look over what I had written and give me any suggestions he thought appropriate. In his usual generous, exuberant fashion, he said he would be delighted to do so. When I appeared at his home several days later, I thought he would glance quickly at what I had written and make a few cursory remarks; however, he closed himself in his study for about half an hour while I sat in his beautiful living room, sweating it out and occasionally relaxing whenever Stephen emitted a lusty guffaw. When he emerged from his study, his only comment was "Don't change a word!" When I expressed my doubts about the inclusion of the work "bitch" in the address, Stephen assured me that "the students will LOVE it!"

I didn't change a word in that address even though my mother tried to convince me that I should eliminate one of the anecdotes. In the end I decided that **if Stephen Lacey said it was okay, it didn't matter what anyone else thought.**

Stephen has left a hole in our lives and in this place, but what he imparted while he was here has enriched our lives beyond measure and beyond time.

Karen Greenler
Former Assistant Professor of Theatre and Communications Studies

Stephen was the person responsible for hiring me to teach theater at Cornell in 1986. He was chair of the search committee and had apparently pulled my resume out of a stack several inches high and declared that I was the person they'd hire. The fact that I had worked in feminist theater companies had attracted his attention, but that I had once directed a play by Hrotswitha sealed his decision. During the course of my interview, Stephen and I had a long discussion of this nun-playwright and I was humbled at the breadth of his knowledge.

I was green. I was very green. Not even Kermit the frog was greener than I. Many of the veteran faculty at Cornell were kind and helpful. Stephen was extremely so. He offered friendship, vision, community. He was able to give feedback directly, but discreetly, and with panache.

After my first production, "Crimes of the Heart," Stephen came to deliver an evaluation to the cast and crew. He loved, he said, the particularly appalling choice of the

aqua telephone for this family. “Nobody would really own such a fucking ugly telephone!” The cast and crew all started to giggle and look at me. I had to confess that it was, indeed, my telephone, on loan to the production. Without missing a beat, he leveled his gaze at me, raised his eyebrows, and dismissed it all with, “Really, I don’t think so,” and a shake of his head.

I watched Stephen change the lives of his students. I saw what teaching could be. And as I now read the tributes on this Web site, I am again humbled.

John Gruber-Miller
Associate professor of Classics
Ann Gruber-Miller
Director of the Writing Resource Center

Stephen has made a big impact on our lives in many small but eloquent ways. We miss him, but we cherish the friendship, concern, and hospitality he shared with us.

For us, as for so many other new faculty, Stephen was one of the major reasons we felt comfortable at Cornell our first few years here, beginning in 1987-88. That year was John’s first year in Mount Vernon teaching courses in Latin and classical studies, while Ann commuted back and forth from Columbus, Ohio, working to finish her Ph.D. in linguistics. Stephen welcomed both of us almost as if we were family, having us over for meals and wonderful conversation, often with other friends as well as new faculty in English. Coming straight from graduate school—where we were used to hanging out regularly with other students—to Cornell—where everyone is so busy that it’s hard to find time to socialize, we hungered for camaraderie, for breaks from the constant preparation, teaching, and grading, and for a sense of normalcy. Stephen’s friendship and hospitality gave us all that, and especially helped John, who was mostly here alone. John especially remembers Stephen warmly including John’s parents in a Fourth of July cookout and celebration when they visited during the first summer John was in Mount Vernon. His parents still treasure being included in the festivities, and marvel at the friendliness and collegiality here.

Stephen’s interest and sage advice especially helped John to persevere through the transition of teaching on a more conventional schedule to teaching intensively on the block plan. And Stephen’s Shakespeare and England courses were the inspiration for the Latin play that John incorporated as a major part of Latin 205 and for the trips to Greece and Italy that John built into the Archeology of Greece/Italy courses he developed. John feels that Stephen’s encouragement and support are what made these extra aspects of his courses doable. It is perhaps fitting that John taught both of these courses this year, in April and May, right after Stephen’s passing in March. The class dedicated this year’s Latin play, *Miles Gloriosus*, to Stephen.

When we got married in June 1989, in Columbus, Ohio, Stephen was the one Cornell faculty member who came. He was visiting a colleague in the Ohio State English Department and made time to celebrate with us, representing our friends from our new life in Mount Vernon. His presence made us feel cared for by our new Cornell friends, and helped integrate our old and new lives. We still marvel that such a new acquaintance

took the time to share that very special day with us. To him, though, it was naturally what he would do. He said something like “Of course I would be here. I wouldn’t miss it!”

When we were picking out names for our first child, who was born in April 1993, we had a hard time deciding on boy’s names because we wanted this name to be unique in our family, which already had six boys in this generation and four in the parents’ generation. We also wanted the name to be biblical, not too common but not too weird, and one that didn’t have any bad associations with people we already knew. We settled on Stephen. When Stephen Lacey heard of our choice, he said he was glad that he hadn’t spoiled the name for us. We said that, on the contrary, he gave it good associations. And now whenever we think about our son Stephen’s name, some of the memories it calls up are those of Stephen Lacey’s warmth, hospitality, collegiality, and friendship.

We miss you, Stephen, but we remember you fondly in many parts of our lives.

Renato Martinez
Former Associate Professor of Spanish

Steve and I were born the same day, the same year and I called him “my twin brother.” On vacation, at the beginning of August, I used to send him a postcard wishing him “a happy birthday to us.” I will always remember his kindness and cordiality.

STEVE

friend
strange word
made of
minutes
or years
and
wine
and
small
paths
in the snow
and
also
now
of emptiness

Catherine Burroughs
Former Associate Professor of English

Dearest Steve,

You gave everything, always.

“More Life” (Tony Kushner, *Angels in America, Part II*).

“Orchestrator of private gaiety, curator of richly encrusted happiness”
(F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night*).

Gayle Luck
Professor of Education

Any tribute to Stephen Lacey pales in the remembrance of who he was and will always be in my heart. When I came to Cornell College in the fall of 1988, I knew no one. Stephen welcomed me with open arms and an open heart. Over the years that followed, I learned that Stephen was the embodiment of a generous heart and a gracious spirit. His heart and his home welcomed us all. He walked a difficult line between many factions and beliefs on campus, pointing the way toward mediation and compassion.

I am a better person for having known him. He supported me as the parent of a wonderful gay man; he supported me as a friend and as a colleague; he supported me in my endeavors to ‘do the right thing’ in faculty matters. I will make many future decisions with Stephen’s spirit firmly planted in my soul.

I miss him deeply. I cherish his memory.

Scott Klein
Former Assistant Professor of English

The day Stephen died I was preparing to teach Dickens’ novel *Our Mutual Friend* to a group of freshmen. There seemed something appropriate about that, not only the relevant title (for who was a mutual friend to more students and colleagues than Stephen?), but the expansiveness of the fiction, its ability to contain multitudes in a world defined by social bonds, and—one of Dickens’ strongest concerns—the sharing of meals between kindred spirits, whether related by blood or not. There was always something larger than life about Stephen, even Dickensian, for he was what most of the world would call a “character.” His gestures, his loves, his dedication to teaching, were italicized, overlarge. Yet Dickens alone can’t serve to describe him. He was also Falstaff, a little perhaps of Don Quixote, and a bit (I’m sure he would have insisted) of Proust, although with the solitude of the cork-lined bedroom replaced by his abundantly social beautiful wooden living room.

Stephen was a large part of the reason I came to teach at Cornell out of graduate school. When I came to Mount Vernon to interview I was dubious about the nature of life in a small town in the Midwest. But dinner and drinks afterwards with him changed my

mind utterly: if Cornell could offer a safe haven to this artistic, witty, liberal man, then clearly my preconceptions were dead wrong. During our time in Mount Vernon, Stephen became one of my and my wife Karen's dearest friends, sharing meals, the arts at Hancher Auditorium in Iowa City, and significant events in our lives. When I decided to leave Cornell to move to a larger university, telling him was the hardest part. Although we've kept up over the years at professional meetings, and the time I returned to Cornell to present a Convocation—and I'm heartbroken to find an e-mail in which we'd planned to meet in London this coming summer—I'll always think of Cornell and Stephen as inseparable and luminous parts of my life.

The biographical information in my book reminded me that Dickens died when he was only 58. As I deal with the sadness of losing this special friend, I take some comfort in the fact that when we think of Dickens we never think of how young he died; we think of how many lives he touched, and how much he accomplished in the time he had. Alive, Stephen was larger than life. I'd like to think that, now, he's larger than death. The poet W. H. Auden wrote in an elegy for W. B. Yeats that when he died he "became his admirers." Stephen, our mutual friend, has now become the many, many people who loved him.

Roy Hamlin

Former Associate Professor of Theatre and Communications Studies

After Sonnet 30
For Stephen Lacey
with apologies to Howard
by Happ-less Hamlin

When to the thought of sweet ship fellow's
I summon up remembrance of things past,
with wine, with food, discoursing music mellows
and I sigh the face of your die's cast.
Then can I share the eyes (which light but flow)
of precious friends caught in death's seeming night,
Thy soul but stirs and love cancels woe,
Repose, recall, rejoice the vanished sight.
Cliff coasts, firesides, and collegial hilltops,
the legendary tellings that we all know,
cathedrals of laughter and ethics from alehops,
Thy stages held breath, thy life their pedago.
So the while I think on thee (to be frank)
All lost is restored, tho 'twas but the shank.

Cinda Thomas
Former Associate Professor of Music

It is with deep affection and fondness that I remember Stephen Lacey, one of my most dear and cherished friends. I knew Stephen for nine years, and in those short nine years he enriched me for a lifetime; he touched my life in ways that I am still discovering. I will be eternally grateful for the time I knew him, for all of his birthday parties and Thanksgiving dinners, for the many evenings of conversation, laughter, opera recordings, dinner and drinks, for our last visit on Maryland's Eastern Shore in June of 1999, and for his overflowing friendship, love, and loyalty. I will forever hold you to my heart, Stephen, my friend, who showered me with kindness, generosity, and the spirit of life and living. Thank you, Stephen. You will be forever loved and your laughter will be forever missed.

David Evans
Associate Professor of English

For Stephen
A Polyvocal Elegy, rather than a Monody

The Proem

Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

Aye, there's the rub: the language whose riches you unlocked for so many has, in fact, few resources to capture truly what you meant in the lives of those with whom you shared your precious gifts.

But, Fool! says my Muse to me, look in thy heart and write.

The Elegy Proper

In your living room the music has fallen silent.
Heard melodies are sweet, but the small recurrent figure
From Vinteuil's sonata—never really heard aloud
Since it exists only as language on a page—well,
You made it play (no, *sing*) in the minds and
Hearts of numberless young readers.

*Proust for senior sem? Oh, no! But those Shakespeare classes
were great, and besides, if Stephen likes it, it must be good(?).*

Revelation, transformation, capstone experience.

Parties at your house, Bordeaux and Bourbon, Port and Pâté,
A little slice of England on an Iowa hilltop.

(No, it's not Chipping Camden, but one does what one can.)
Like Chaucer's Franklin, *it snowed in his hous of mete and drynke,*
Old hospitality, good cheer, *verray felicitee parfit,*
Epicurus owene sone.

England, the place itself, January, cold and rainy.
In the Black Swan dining room, however, cozy heat
From roaring fire and aperitif.
Dresses and ties, students, friends, joined in camaraderie
Over crème brûlée and coffee. Later, stories, laughter
Weave through the barroom smoke.

*(Did I ever tell you about that most romantic night on the walls
of Helmsley Castle? Well, perhaps I shouldn't say, but a soupçon
more brandy and I'll begin...).*

Another vignette: Two professors, snowed in
Three long long days at the O'Hare Hilton
In the "Blizzard of '99," trying to gather
36 young travelers from the four points of the compass
To make it to that selfsame warm evening
Happily appointed in North Yorkshire.
Frustration, stress, phone calls, confusion, despair.
One says, in extremis, "Let's just go back to Mount Vernon."
You'll forget about it as soon as we get there, you reply.

Depends on what you meant by forget--
Get over it, yes indeed, but that time is now become
A deeply cherished memory.

Generations of students wiser, more tolerant,
Living richer lives through the alchemy
(But real, unlike that work of questionable wizards)
Of your love for them,
Your clarity and courage to be who you were,
To confess it all, yet all the same
Show there was nothing to confess,
For confession implies wrong-doing.

No harm, says Prospero, I did it all in care of thee.
It's true, the shipwreck serves to reconcile, and to renew,
To put in place a dispensation washed free of enmity and plots.
But later, *Our revels now are ended,*
Bittersweet conclusion to a happy time,

For what renewal can take place
Without its antecedent loss?

Our little lives are rounded by a sleep,
Though as Prospero and Hamlet both know,
To sleep is perhaps to dream. Hamlet's dreams,
His restless days and wakeful nights, are haunted,
So he fears to sleep;
But there's another way to look at it, Prospero's way:
We are such things as dreams are made of.
How many dreams have you touched, shaped, made possible?
Too many to number, and not only in your students
But among those who had other privileges to know you,
Mentor, colleague, *cher âmi*.

In those dreams Vinteuil's sonata will always play,
A madeleine, a cup of tea, will always bring it back,
For when I think of thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

Ave atque vale, Stephen

Janel Sutkus '90

Former Dean of Enrollment Services

Stephen was my colleague for seven years and my next-door neighbor for four years. I always enjoyed watching the students come and go at all hours during the Shakespeare block. It wasn't unusual to walk into the front yard and see students taking a break while Stephen stood at the front door yelling for them to get back to work!

My favorite memory of Stephen is a very brief conversation we had in The Commons early one fall. I had walked up from the Admissions Office for lunch and ran into him near the Orange Carpet. We chatted for a moment, then he put his hands on my shoulders, threw his head back and said, 'Janel, darling, I must tell you what an abso-
\$%#@-ing-lutely wonderful class you brought in this year. You're a doll!' That comment meant more to me than he could ever know.

Pat Dolan

Instructor, English 324

I taught Stephen Lacey's Shakespeare class [in April] this year and had the unfortunate tasks of telling his students that he wouldn't be teaching and then that he had died.

I only know Stephen from the reaction of his students. I know from them that he cared deeply for them and gave himself joyfully. As deeply as he cared for them, he cared for what he taught and challenged them every day.

He's passed on legacies of love and commitment. He created a meaningful, if too brief life for himself. I am grateful to have seen it, however indirectly.

Ivan Vonk Neighbor

Dearest Stephen,

They say that life goes on, but I have yet to be convinced. Existence, yes; but life? For years we have glanced out of our windows to see you scurrying in your kitchen, preparing another feast. The flickering light of the candles on your table became reassuring evidence that life continued. Those candles were faithful reminders that life could be so much more than mere existence.

We so loved your dinner "productions." Whether it was Beef Wellington or Teriyaki Salmon, you arranged each plate as if it were a stage. You chose your dinner guests with the same diligence that you gave to casting a Shakespeare play. Although the eating was always fabulous, your dinners were so much more than the eating. You found boring chatter as distasteful as rancid food. I remember you leaning over with a smile, after surveying the group at your last birthday party, and saying, "Look at this. There are at least seven different intense conversations going on in this room. Isn't that !#@\$*# WONDERFUL?" Yes, Stephen, these events were wonderful, and invigorating, and so thoroughly enjoyable.

Looking back, I don't know what I expected when we moved next door to you, but it wasn't you. I had never met anyone with such an incredible appetite for all of life, with such an insatiable intellectual thirst, with such a uniquely multifaceted soul. We were, after all, the quintessential "straight, white, professional couple with 2.0 children," whom you suspected of being "disgustingly normal."

Like so many of the other things that you celebrated, you came to celebrate the normalcy of our lives. You watched with the twinkling eye of a proud uncle as our children journeyed through high school and into college; and oh how they came to love and respect you. Working the soil was not one of your passions, but you enthusiastically applauded the beauty that you found in our garden. You became so much a part of our lives that even our pug found it necessary to greet you with a bark when you left for class each morning. You made our lives a thousand times richer.

I keep glancing up from my favorite chair expecting you to appear at your kitchen window. I keep watching for you to return from class because the weather is right for a drink on the back patio. I keep hoping that the phone will ring and you'll be on the other end asking if we might have a particular spice. But your kitchen window is dark and the candles no longer flicker.

We will continue to go on, Stephen; your memory will not allow us to only exist. It will be more difficult without you here, but you never claimed that a full life was easy, only so much more worthwhile.

We love you Stephen, and will miss you more than we will ever be able to express.

And from England:

Jim Baxter

Ascot

My wife, Shirley, and I will miss the many happy occasions we shared during Stephen's visits to England. He will be sadly missed by ourselves and our family. The Sunday lunch, the summer barbecues and the weekends we spent in the Black Swan with him and the students on their winter tours over the last 16 years. I guess our son-in-law, Ian, will have to finish the Jack Daniel's alone.

Nicholas Bradbury and Cathy Oakes

Bristol

Who could not love Steve very much? Impossible not to be drawn by his colossal power of mind, largeness of heart, laughter, generosity of spirit and literal generosity, his enthusiasm, zest, Falstaffian debunking directness, his gastronomic brilliance (those meals in the cottage were life-events!), the imagination of his approach to friendship and, above all, his larger-than-life, life-affirming, other-affirming, "isn't-life-bastard-tho-it-can-be-an-immense-and-overwhelmingly-wondrous-thing-to-be-recognized-and-celebrated" stance on things, unspoken but incarnate in the way he lived. The absolutely finest kind of human being. Extravagant with goodness and most honorable of integrity. An unwitting aristocrat of human relations.

Helen Mason

I have spent hours trying to find the words ... but how do you sum up such a friendship, such a guy, in a neat little box? The joy of Steve was that he could never be fit into a box of anyone's making, always surprising, provoking, amusing, delightful, so disparaging when he disapproved, so enthusiastic, captivating.

We met while I was working at the Duke of Kendal when Steve had his bedsit in Marble Arch. I was in the process of my Ph.D. and we hit it off immediately. We arranged to go to the theatre one night at which there was a lot of nudging and winking from the stiff upper-lipped English guys in the pub. I pointed out that Steve was gay. "Oh, he is just telling you that ... you wait and see!" Well I waited ... and I saw! Perhaps that's why it was easy for me to be close to him. The night we heard the news my husband and I opened a bottle of Jack Daniel's and drank to his memory.

Steve, a part of you will always be alive in me.

Desmond Barrit
Stratford-upon-Avon

While I was at Mount Vernon in the fall of 1999 Stephen promised me that he would come to Stratford-upon-Avon to see "Henry IV." Even though he has passed on I am sure that part of him is now in Stratford with me. Stephen was like Falstaff:

"Give me life
Which if I can save, so.
If not, honour comes unlooked for
And there's an end."

I dedicate my performance as Falstaff to Stephen.

III. Students

Philip Luing '79
Becky J. Frederick '80
Jane Carpenter Thomas '81
Liz Doxsee Carlson '81
Dana Erwin '81
Brad Johnson '81
Philip Sieff '82
John Edwards '83
Christine Larsen '83 and
 Vincent Dopulos '84
Jeanette Rattner '83
Bradley Seebach '83
Connie Nininger Armstrong '84
Sean Minear '84
G. Paul Beaumaster '85
Sheila Kruse Boyce '85
Andrea Herrera '85
Arthur Ingersoll '85
Vic Janey '85
Frances P. Kao '85
Scott Klann '85
Mark Allen '86
Robert Austin '86
Jennifer Doron Borchardt '86
Ben Miller '86
John Caruso '87
Karen Friedhoff-Mertes '87
Paul Grohne '87
Jennie Morgan '87
Christopher Nelson '87
Diego Sada Jr., Esq. '87
J.J. Connaughton '88
Don Furman '88
Julia Gutz '88
Elaine Hayes Reitz '88
Tony Vaver '88
LaDonna Sloan '88
Jay Andersen '89
Johanna Carlisle '89
Joseph J. Straka III '89
Dan Winslow '90
Anonymous '91
Brennen Dicker '91
Sara Felton '91
Leslie LaPlante '91
Todd Norris '91
Virginia Stockton Cardoza '92
DJ Edwardson '92
Kelly Remakel Kirkpatrick '92
Robert McGuire '92
Chris Staples '92
Briget Tyson '92
Chris Davis '93
Darcy Davis '93
Lisa Weddle '93
Meg Su-Reed '94
Ellen Horne '95
Aaron Edmundson '96
Chad Elliott '96
John Masi '96
Christine Parker '96
Christiana Roccaforte '96
Deirdre Rosenfeld '96
Ryan Tucker '96
Miranda Richards '97
Sara Kyte Roth '97
Shannin Stein '97
Tammy Fowler '97
Jennifer M. Brannan '98
Lisa Butterly '98
Beth Maria Eyanson '98
Darcy White Shargo '98
Thomas J. Carlson '99
Jennifer Leigh Coates '99
Jeffrey McCune '99
Daniel Cope '00
David J. Peterson '00
Terri Sonnek '00
Gail Bransteitter '01
Peka Poyer '01
Adam Hale '02
Sarah Hamilton '02
Beth Richardson '02

Philip Luing '79

As editor of *The Cornellian*, I had arrived on campus the weekend before freshman orientation in the fall of 1978 in order to prepare to impress promising frosh writers and typists into our service. It was Saturday night, and I was having fun in one of Cedar Rapids' two gay bars. A guy with whom I'd been chatting a little earlier in the evening came over, pulled on my arm, and said, "Come on, you should come over and say hello to your advisor." My mind twisted in several knots because it could not accommodate the thought of my academic advisor being found in a gay bar. I followed with some trepidation. The man to whom my friend brought me was, indeed, not he. This man had a head full of curly gray-brown hair, a chubby face with brilliant, blazing eyes, a cigarette in a holder held as an extension of his fingertips, and a demeanor about him which told me that he was holding court. I had no idea who he was. It turned out he had taken on the "dreary" task of advising the student paper only because, as the newest member of the English department faculty, it was the thing he was "advised" to do. His concept of this duty changed considerably as I detailed for him the plans my co-editor, Susan Mohler, and I had made for thought-provoking content in the paper, including a series on human rights.

This was in the time of Jimmy Carter, after all. Susan, Steve, and I had many a post-production conference over burgundy or bourbon in his living room as he punctuated our discussion of issues with passages from various operas. In the course of our human rights series, we produced several controversial articles and editorials addressing the human rights of Native Americans, African-Americans, women, children, the unborn (the abortion issue), etc. One of the more controversial, one that got us called before the Student Council to "explain" ourselves, was the issue in which I presented a personal perspective on my human rights as a gay man! The student government was concerned that parents and alumni might read these articles to their great consternation. This was 1978, and being gay was not discussed in polite company. Most Cornellians did not know there were any gay people on campus.

At the weekly faculty meeting following our appearance before the Student Council, the faculty passed a resolution of support for Susan and myself and gave us a standing ovation. Stephen had, of course, helped engineer this in order to come to our defense, but its implications had far greater meaning for him in the long term than it did for Susan and me. When he saw how supportive the faculty was of a gay student, it gave him the courage to come out more widely on campus as a gay faculty member.

We stayed in touch over the years, and visited occasionally when he would come to Chicago. I'd send him my writings. He'd write back and say that "some" had real merit. I'll miss hearing his accounts of life at Cornell, hearing how the career I experienced at its beginning grew to have such a tremendous influence on so many other students. Thanks, Stephen, you put on a good show!

Becky J. Frederick '80

I've read with interest and great fondness the other tributes to Stephen. I will always link my English major to the English Club parties at Stephen's house. How was it that he was able to convince me to be the president of the English Club? As far as I can remember, that gave me the privilege of cleaning his house before a party, concocting the "infamous" Archbishop's, cooking dinner, and hanging out into the wee hours of the morning (as I had such a short walk to Dows Hall!!). Now that I think of it, it was absolutely the right role for me. I will always remember his laughter, his style, his welcoming spirit and his true joy of life. It was such a pleasure to see Stephen again at my 10-year reunion where I had to confess that I had used my English major to become a lawyer (he quickly forgave me) and he paid me the highest compliment by reminding me of what grand parties we had—and how clean I always left the kitchen!! I will use the Archbishop recipe this year as I toast Stephen and thank him for some wonderful memories.

Jane Carpenter Thomas '81

I met Stephen Lacey on a Tuesday morning in the fall of 1977. I was 18, a little scared, a little raw, sitting in South Hall on a sunny morning waiting for my first college class to begin: Tragedies of World Drama. That was also the first class that Stephen taught at Cornell. We read, among other things, "Oedipus Rex," "Mother Courage," and, of course, "King Lear."

He met us individually in his office to discuss our first papers. I was visibly nervous. I had written an absolutely dreadful paper in which I had compared "Oedipus Rex" and "Antigone." I knew it was dreadful and only awaited his verdict. Watching me sweat and tremble, Stephen reached into his desk drawer, drew out a bottle of something, and offered me a drink. So we had a drink together and then he gave me my paper with its charitable C+ and its one positive comment, a comment which I have always remembered: "You have a sophisticated sense of punctuation."

Parties at his house were legendary. At one party, Neil Berry spilled a drink on the floor and Stephen directed him to the kitchen to get a towel. Neil wiped up the spill, but then drunkenly threw the towel in the fireplace. Stephen's voice could not have been drier as he said, "Neil, I don't burn my towels."

I still remember the first 15 lines of Chaucer's General Prologue which we had to memorize, and my middle English accent is tolerable. Stephen said that a knowledge of middle English might be the one practical skill that we English majors would acquire. At the time I thought he was being silly, but what a joy it is now to be able to read Chaucer.

Thank you, Stephen.

Liz Doxsee Carlson '81

Long after I was graduated, I met up with Stephen several times while traveling in England. I have several very vivid memories, and even more foggy ones, but my favorite

is one when he invited a group for drinks at his lovely bed-sit near Marble Arch. Stephen had gotten a terrible cold, but ever the consummate host, he still managed to entertain us beautifully tucked up in his sickbed, issuing careful instructions on how to mix the perfect gin and tonic.

When I heard of his illness, that was the first image that came to mind, of my greathearted friend and mentor issuing orders to the doctors and nurses to see that his friends and family were well set up with food and drink.

Dana Erwin '81

I was saddened to learn of the death of Professor Lacey last month. I participated in his London trip in January 1981—we all had a wonderful time because of his excellent planning, thoughtful side trips, infinite knowledge of the country and subject matter (Shakespeare) and wonderful and infectious personality. I know he will be deeply missed on the Hilltop. I will remember him fondly.

Brad Johnson '81

Steve accepted people as they were, and changed them for the better by doing so. Many times over the last 20 years I have thought of Steve and how important an influence he has been in my life. He was so much wiser at 35 than I am now at 40, and I am still learning from him.

I love you, Steve.

Philip Sieff '82

To a good friend, a great teacher, and a wonderful person—may you rest in peace.

John Edwards '83

Thirty minutes after a friend called to tell me that Stephen had died I was sitting in a gay bar silently toasting him with bourbon, writing a poem on cocktail napkins as a way to absorb and comprehend the sense of loss that had left my cheeks streaked with tears on my drive downtown. I might as well have just dunked that famous Madeleine into that renowned cup of tea: the pastiche of memories formed and reformed faster than my hand could write and with more force than the thin paper could bear. I was thinking of the night when Stephen received the call that his own beloved mentor was dead. On that night, Stephen was the same age I am now.

He called a friend and the three of us packed into his car and drove to a bar in Cedar Rapids with the most apt of names: Port in a Storm. We drank and careened wildly around the small dance floor, three revelers dancing to a disco dirge. Glad of the chance

for an outing and for the friendship of my two companions, I was too callow then to know the steps of the dance of death. On that night Stephen was as old as I am now, and in my head, in that bar 17 years later, I danced madly.

How many sentences began “Just one more drink and I’ll begin to think about ...” in that haven on Summit? How many times did a younger, spryer Mimi Lacey dash wild-eyed from the room as Maria Callas pumped up the decibels in mortal pain? The tally is unknowable. One measure, though, I know intimately and have carried with me off the Hilltop and across every terrain in every season: the number of young, gay men from one of the tiniest hamlets in this country who learned to think, to explore the richness of life, and to embrace his own truths at the hands of a master.

Christine Larsen ’83 and Vincent Dopulos ’84

Our tribute must come from both of us. For you see, if it weren’t for Stephen, we would not have our life together.

Vincent met Stephen in Los Angeles in 1980 through Ken, their friend-in-common. Stephen suggested that Vincent, then a struggling actor/waiter, come to Cornell to finish his degree. Although we’ll never know how much influence Stephen had, shortly thereafter Vincent received a full scholarship to Cornell. Stephen was driving back from the West Coast that summer, and they arranged to drive back together. Vincent’s first view of the Hilltop was in that old gold Nova coming up Highway 30.

The 1980 Shakespeare production was “As You Like It,” and Vincent played Jacques.

The 1981 production was to be “The Comedy of Errors,” and Vincent was to direct. That fall, Christine met Vincent at one of Stephen’s legendary back-to-school at-homes. While we had so much to drink we can’t really remember, we think that Chris LaLonde and Joel Morton were there, as well as Christine’s friend, Amy Mulnix.

“The Comedy of Errors” (starring Sean Minear, Russ Petersen, David Haas and Brad Seebach, with a fabulous set by Tracy Fares) received Stephen’s complete commitment. Stephen made the class feel that we were doing something very special. Now as aging adults we can appreciate how much the non-stop energy a month-long project like that must have cost him. At the legendary cast party, while watching the videotape, someone, somehow, erased the entire soundtrack!

Stephen’s great love of Shakespeare was contagious, and we both carry that gift with us. His reading and teaching were truly inspiring. Christine’s first transforming Shakespeare experience was seeing “Midsummer Night’s Dream” in King Chapel. For Vincent, the experience of directing brought the text to life and made the characters compelling. Our Riverside Shakespeare is well-used, making after-dinner appearances in our kitchen.

In one of those strange coincidences of life, we had just seen “Bomb-ity of Errors” off-Broadway, a hip-hop “The Comedy of Errors,” just days before receiving the news of Stephen’s death. We were filled with memories, and then the letter arrived.

We long to be present on May 6 to say our farewells, and our thank you’s. But it’s a long journey from New Jersey to Cornell, and our lives keep pushing us on.

Dear Stephen, well done, faithful teacher. We are grateful for your gifts, and feel blessed to have lived on the Hilltop with you.

Jeanette Rattner '83

Since I knew Stephen as a friend, student and am a veteran of not one, not two, but three Shakespeare plays, I'm not sure which "category" to post this, which in itself is representative of Stephen! I guess I'll choose "friend," because that is the heart of the matter with Stephen!

I saw Stephen over New Year's for the first time in 10 years. It was almost as though I had never left, sitting in his house drinking and talking (I think we opted for Bloody Marys ... for those keeping record on the site!) What a shock, after hearing him talk about his dreams of going back to England, his goals, and uncensored conversation after so long to hear several months later that his health had gone downhill so rapidly.

I first met Stephen my second block at Cornell, where I signed up for an English required course (of all things, for people who know Stephen). Stephen chose the topic: Identity and Sexuality. We read, discussed and belabored the truths of love and human emotion via Proust, the Sonnets and life.

As a former dean fatedly warned me my Cornell experience would be unique and far beyond other places in intellectual richness—and while this truism as been proven again and again and is applicable to a number of my Cornell professors—no one can match Stephen's character and exuberance. Imagine my shock (and boredom), after three years of indoctrination from Stephen, to find a prestigious graduate school course actually discussing the Dark Lady in the Sonnets as a simple mystery lover, not worthy of more than a five-minute discourse, rather than an impassionate discussion of the Dark Lady as a cover-up for a Shakespeare's homosexual lover laced (heavily) with Freudian analysis and often leading to topics for papers, integrated discussions in class, and of talks on life, love, and gossip over drinks at his house!

Convinced that I couldn't possibly be from Cedar Rapids, that course started a long-term association with Stephen, which would rank him without question as a professor to drop in on during any visit back home! I met a large number of professors and students at his place (often on the floor as people overflowed his furniture, bourbons in hand) and I have countless memories of listening to heated, humorous and intelligent thought bristling over drinks, opera and Mimi the cat. Although often lovingly berated by Stephen for being "conservative" (i.e. read "female, heterosexual and monogamous!"; once after putting his arm around me on a couch, to my mortification the next day on the mall the openly gay professor yelled across campus to me that "he almost lost his reputation last night!"), Stephen extended his respect and support as friend on countless occasions and often I witnessed that Stephen had a clear, genuine and heartfelt knowledge and acceptance of humanity, which rivals anyone I have met.

Many people have commented on Stephen's contributions to the strength of a small college which is, of course, true. Stephen made a large mark on the Cornell experience in so many ways that extend far beyond the outstanding classroom instruction. Yet it has crossed my mind after he has left us, that Stephen himself—flamboyant,

colorful, full of heart, sarcasm and wit and love—was in many ways a living novel, more instructive than the literature he taught, daring to live and express in a way most of us would reserve for imaginative life between book covers and in doing so, challenging us in what we are doing with our lives and to always look and find the beauty, richness and texture of the life we are leading, so that we too can lie down to rest feeling we have lived a life fulfilled.

His death, as I know in talking to other former students as well, hit very hard and I can only hope in some way his legacy and contribution will live on in what he gave to others. I am very grateful that I attended college at a time when Stephen was there and am grateful, after so many years, I feel such a loss as this only means there was much there to be lost ... keep posting, he would be outwardly mortified and inwardly charmed.

Bradley Seebach '83

I am sad that Stephen Lacey will never mentor another college student, but joyful to be among the multitude whom he affected profoundly. Among the lessons I learned from Stephen through Shakespeare and Stephen's own life were these: to find and follow my passions, to glory in humanity, to expect and not be overwhelmed by human limitations, and truly to love learning.

Stephen once told me that he didn't expect his students to make literature the focus of their lives. His hope was that on occasion each would turn off the television set, dust off their copy of the Riverside Shakespeare, and remind themselves of the life of the mind. You accomplished so much more than that, Stephen!

Connie Nininger Armstrong '84

Stephen,

You must know now how greatly you affected my life. I came to Cornell as a Shakespeare-hating, non-understanding fool. I signed up for your freshman English course because it was titled something like "Love in Literature," and seemed to promise no Shakespeare. To my horror, our books did not arrive in time and, ninth block with no other options, I had to study Shakespeare's history plays! Yet within a week, I was understanding and learning to love Shakespeare. (Your method was amazing, and one I now copy in my own teaching. As I teach drama, including Shakespeare, I often ask myself, "What would Stephen do?" This past year, I reached many students by following in your footsteps.)

Before I knew what was happening, I was in "Comedy of Errors" and "Much Ado About Nothing." I treasure not only the memories of being a part of the shows, but the self-confidence and feeling that I can learn anything, instilled by you. The love you

showed each and every one of us is enfolded in my heart forever. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Sean Minear '84

He was my teacher, my advisor, my mentor, but most importantly, my dear friend. After a decade and a half of being away from Cornell, I still looked forward to regular late-night telephone chats with this man who took such an interest in the events that were shaping my life here in Maine. In October, I bought a rambling old house and Stephen was one of the first people I called to tell him of this purchase. We talked of him coming up to Maine for a visit, the meals that he would prepare, the friends and family that I wanted him to meet. It hurts tremendously knowing that we will never get together again for a drink, a dinner, a laugh.

I am sad for his family. They have lost a son, a brother, an uncle. I am sad for the college. It has lost an alum, a teacher, a leader. I am sad for his former students. We have lost a man who taught us so much, both in and out of the classroom. But all of these—his family, his school, his students—had the joy of knowing him for all these years; we will carry with us forever the memory of his intellect, his friendship, his remarkable ability to make one feel safe and loved. Today I grieve most for those students not yet arrived at Cornell who will hear stories of our friend but will never be able to sit in his classroom or partake of his legendary hospitality.

My heart hurts as I come to accept that he is gone. But I find myself smiling a lot these days as I remember good times and quiet conversations shared. I have come to realize more and more what a great friend he had become. I will miss him forever and I will always celebrate that friendship.

G. Paul Beaumaster '85

This session, to our great grief we pronounce,
Ever pushes 'gainst our heart:

Stephen Lacey was my first professor at Cornell College in English 101—dum-dum English. Stephen came to the class with a vat of coffee, a cigarette in a long black cigarette holder and belief that everyone loved Shakespeare—they just did not know it yet. Stephen took me under his wing and nurtured my love for reading and pathetic writing skills. Stephen so inspired me that I became an English major—no small task for Stephen to create an English major out of a dyslexic jock. For that gift I will always be in your debt, Stephen, and hold you close to my heart. I learned much more than Shakespeare and Proust from Stephen. He taught me to live an enlightened life, filled not only with the pursuit of material gain, but also in pursuit of literature, art, friendship and creativity. Stephen wasn't just my teacher and mentor; we became friends.

When I left Cornell our friendship continued and we stayed in touch. I shared my accomplishments with Stephen. Because of Stephen's encouragement, love and hard work, I was able to go on to graduate school and earn master's and doctorate degrees. Stephen was and continues to be a major part of who I am. Stephen long suffered my drinking his bourbon, raiding his home, camping in his living room and continuously bending his ear. I shall truly miss sitting with him and talking of the world and life. Stephen is one of the people who made a difference in my life and his parting leaves a deep void in the Cornell community and my life.

They say he parted well, and paid his score:
And so, God be with him!
Good night sweet prince:
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!
Grieve your parting.

All my love.

Sheila Kruse Boyce '85

When I opened the letter from Ruth Keefe Miller letting English majors know about Stephen's death, I gasped. What a sad shock to lose someone who embodied so well all the things that are best about Cornell College for me. Stephen was an icon on campus about whom I had heard from my earliest freshman days. In addition to taking a Shakespeare course from him my sophomore year, I had the pleasure of taking part in his Shakespeare play course my junior year (*Twelfth Night*) and was lucky to have him teach our English Senior Seminar course as well. I took as many courses from Stephen as my curriculum would allow.

Of course, his passion as a teacher, his support for his students, and his opening of his home, mind and heart to them is legendary. I remember sitting outside South Hall one beautiful day in May reciting the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* with great fervor. I remember feeling challenged to go beyond the simple answers in class discussions. I remember many great parties—and his saying, “Ah, ‘tis the shank of the evening!” when people would start to think about heading home as the night turned into morning.

Stephen made us feel like intelligent adults, when we were still growing into the part. He was a role model to respect as we looked around our work to figure out what kind of people we would grow up to be. Stephen was someone who lived life with great enthusiasm—a great example of what it means to be a liberally educated person.

Stephen expected a lot from his students! Everyone who participated in the Shakespeare play knows the crazy schedule we somehow managed, and the quality of the play performed after only 3½ weeks of rehearsals. In Senior Seminar, Stephen gave us a master level course which used 20th century psychological theory to help understand Renaissance tragedy. We had to read the psychology during the summer before, so we were ready to attack one Shakespeare play a day during the term.

My most defining memory of Stephen and of why it was so special to attend Cornell College is from the last weekend of that Senior Seminar class. We had to write 20 pages defining Renaissance tragedy based on what we had discussed during the previous three weeks. I had been up most of Friday night working, and spent all day Saturday working on this paper that was due Tuesday. I was running into brick wall after brick wall, and couldn't make it work. Finally, at about 7:00 in the evening, I phoned Stephen at home nearly in tears from frustration. Stephen calmly explained that he was in the midst of a dinner party, but he would be happy to see me over coffee in the morning. I should relax and we'd look at it the next day.

I don't remember many specifics from my Sunday morning meeting at Stephen's dining room table, but I know he said, "Sheila, you are overworking this. Throw away your outline and just write! You know this stuff, just WRITE!" I did, and I ended up with a paper to be proud of. I often wonder how many other colleges have an environment where it's perfectly acceptable for a student to call a professor at home, on a weekend evening. And how many professors at other schools would be willing to interrupt a quiet Sunday morning to help a student overcome her writer's block and produce the quality she is capable of.

Stephen will be so sorely missed—I can't believe I can't look forward to his annual homecoming get-together in September, and hearing his booming voice greet me. I wish I had known of the seriousness of his illness, so I could have communicated with him at the end to add my voice to the thousands of former students who loved him and believed that Stephen Lacey was a shining example of a liberal educator, of a great Cornell professor, of a human being, and of a friend.

Andrea Herrera '85

It has taken me the last three weeks to sit down and write something. I wanted to express everything Stephen was—impossible, so the few following memories will have to do.

What an incredible person Stephen was. I came to Cornell knowing I would be an English major; I love to read and was fortunate enough to have freshman English with Stephen. He made Shakespeare come alive and I was hooked. I went on to take most of Stephen's classes—Shakespeare play, England trip, one of the survey classes and senior seminar. Stephen also became my advisor. Stephen was kind. He made me feel special, important. I remember so many funny things about class: Stephen on cannibalism—parents wanting to gobble up their children's fingers and toes (textbook Freud!); Stephen acting out parts of the plays—he was so real doing a scene from *Titus Andronicus* that he scared me—stumps waving in the air and foaming at the mouth while reciting the lines. His heart visibly breaking while reciting *Lear*. His exasperated joy when the class finally "got it," whatever it happened to be that day.

I remember crying to him that I wanted to drop Shakespeare play. He refused to let me drop, he gave me a drink, an extension on my paper, and the play went on—and it was a marvelous experience. When I heard that Stephen had died I felt as if the wind had been knocked out of me. I was trying to explain to the people around me who he was to

me. They expressed their sympathies, but did not quite understand my feeling for this professor from long ago. Stephen was a good man—caring, loving, and vibrant—and though he was only in my life for a short time, he made a difference. I think that was his gift: he was able to touch so many lives and make a difference.

Arthur Ingersoll '85

By far, one of the most important influences in my life was the four years that I spent learning, living and experiencing the wit, wisdom and guidance from Dr. Stephen Lacey. Although my major at Cornell was in theatre and speech, I always felt that I had graduated with a minor in Lacey's Shakespeare. I took five Shakespeare courses from Stephen including English 323 in England. I'll always remember Stephen's booming voice, "People! you're missing England!" as we tried to keep up with him through countless cathedrals, Roman ruins and, of course, the many pubs.

I was also able to work with Stephen in three Shakespeare productions on the King Chapel stage. These plays are so valuable to me because of the way that Dr. Lacey approached the text. So many Shakespearean productions that I have seen live, and most especially in recent motion pictures, exhibit actors reciting lines that make it clear that they do not have a full grasp or understanding of what they are saying.

Stephen taught us the fine art of dramaturgy, the intense examination of the "clues" that the text offers us. Using the various Folio versions, comparing the original punctuations, and measuring the use of meter and prose allows us to obtain the meanings that this master storyteller had in mind for his characters and creates a much richer and more "real" character. Stephen would often say, "If you don't know what you're saying, how is the audience to understand or believe your character?" Not enough acting companies who approach Shakespeare have this resource or take the extraordinary amount of time needed to "unravel" the all-important subtext that will bring out so much more of the play. I can't believe that we did it all in three-and-a-half weeks! Sure, we had poor lighting, makeshift sets and the creakily old King Chapel to deal with, but what really makes Shakespeare special is the words, and Stephen made sure we had that right. It is extraordinary that even as a scholar, Stephen understood that Shakespeare's works were best expressed in production, not just in scholarly examination, as if a museum piece. To give the text life by performance keeps these works alive.

I hope that the English department will keep this annual production alive—it really is the best way to examine the Bard—and that Stephen's legacy can continue. I owe a debt of gratitude to Stephen that I continue to pay each time that I start a new Shakespearean production, which to date numbers around 30 either in acting or directing. His memory will always be strong with me and I will miss him terribly.

Vic Janey '85

Once in a while, if you're lucky, you'll meet someone and know right away that you're in for an adventure.

Steve was the first "out and proud" person I really ever knew, and I'll always remember a feeling of amazement that I carried around with me my first year at Cornell—the feeling that all my life up to that point I'd lived only 20 or so miles away from the college, and people like Steve.

His excitement about art and learning was extraordinary. His clear and clever love of language, his wit and welcoming ways, all worked at times to transform him, his house, the college itself beyond the ordinary realm of experience. In a real sense for me, Steve worked a kind of magic. What else can you call the ability to conjure Tamburlaine or Samuel Johnson or the other hundreds of writers and characters that he gave voice to over the years in South Hall?

I remember a moment from my senior seminar, and Steve, reading the lines of Hieronimo in "The Spanish Tragedy" after he finds his son hanged. By some kind of alchemy, he was able in that basement room in South to disappear, transform, and become that character to the point that I lost Steve and saw Hieronimo. When he taught, you didn't just talk about the characters, ideas, and emotions in a work. You saw and felt them. That's powerful magic.

People are going to say it's too bad, he died so young. That's true, but a spirit like Steve's doesn't die. The fact that we're here remembering him attests to that. And I believe Steve was able to live more than most people do in longer lifetimes. I'll miss him, and feel lucky to have known him.

Frances P. Kao '85

The last time I saw Stephen was in 1987. I was in California preparing for a hearing when I learned that Stephen passed away. Thirteen years removed from our last meeting, I went onto the Web, read Diane's postings and cried.

Long before my arrival and long after my departure from the Hilltop, Stephen was the Pied Piper of Cornell. He seduced you into love and appreciation for literature, music, repartee and candid self-examination. You laughed with him, laughed at him and his liking you made you feel better about yourself. But more than that, it was his deep and fundamental kindness that touched you most of all and you knew, somehow, that kindness was the core of the man.

Just as many others have experienced, Stephen was the first openly gay person that I knew. Stephen (and his good friend Diane Crowder) taught me that it was OK to be gay and proud. He showed me how liberating it was to eliminate the complexities of social schizophrenia and be candid about how you led your life. Thank you, Stephen, for that incredible gift of freedom.

Scott Klann '85

Though it saddens me to know that Stephen has left this world, I can truly picture him in a far better place, bourbon and water in hand, sharing a drink with Bill Shakespeare and Jeff Chaucer.

I had the privilege of knowing Stephen from my freshman English class to my senior seminar. In between, Stephen was my teacher, my advisor, and my friend. Whether it was making omelets at 4 a.m. after the annual Shakespeare play cast party or leaning how to recite the general prologue of the “Canterbury Tales” in Middle English, Stephen tackled both with the same gusto. While at Cornell, Stephen taught me an appreciation for life that has endured with me to this day. His was the type of education one did not find in a college catalogue, yet had more bearing on life than anything taught inside a classroom.

I thank you, Stephen, for the lessons learned.

Mark Allen '86

It is now 14 years since I graduated from Cornell, and to this day when I recount my college days to new acquaintances, I describe in detail my experience with Stephen's Shakespeare class. I recall about five days before opening night, burnout was starting to take hold. The lines were almost memorized, the staging was basically done, and it was about 10:30 at night. One of the actors missed his cue to be on stage, and was MIA. After calling his name and searching for a few minutes, the actor's head popped up from the pew where he was sleeping. Unfortunately for him, he was about three pews in front of Stephen. Of course, Stephen was exasperated. His quote at that moment was every bit as memorable as any Shakespeare line: “Santa Maria Jesus Oh Fucking Christ Andy Get Out Of That Pew And Onto That Stage!”

Thank you, Stephen. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.

Robert Austin '86

I don't know if others have had this experience, but even the thought of sitting down to write about a man who was indescribable has been more than I could bear; the loss is still felt too keenly, the life still too large to get my thoughts around. Nevertheless I feel duty bound to add my inadequate words to our collective expressions of grief.

Stephen was first and foremost my teacher. Lacey taught me much about literature, of course, but he taught me even more about living the good life, a life rich with friends, food, spirit, song, generosity, and integrity. I spent many a night discovering the joy of amazing food—Lacey taking a first bite of his latest creation, then gasping and throwing his hands back to exclaim, “Damn that's good”—while developing a lifelong appreciation for Jack Daniel's, Jeff Chaucer, and Will Shakespeare. We would listen to his collection of LPs long into the evening while every attempt to go home early would

be thwarted with something along the line of “but ’tis the shank of the evening. Now get me a soupcon more bourbon.” What I wouldn’t do for one more bourbon with Stephen.

Lacey also taught me the importance of living honestly. He was the first openly gay man I knew. When, in my senior year, I told him I was gay—no surprise to him—he helped make it abundantly and gloriously clear to me that I was going to be just fine, no matter what. He did so by taking me to California that spring when we were both off for a block. He introduced me to some of his dear and amazing friends as a way of helping me understand that being gay would be no handicap to my happiness. It was truly a life-transforming gesture on the part of a man who made countless such gestures in his too-brief life.

His influence will be with me a lifetime, and I think that his life’s legacy will be the infinite ways in which his love, his generosity, his clarity, and his passion have rippled out across generations of Cornellians, colleagues, and friends like waves in a pond. “Each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others he sends out a ripple of hope, building into a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression.”—RFK

It was but the shank, Stephen.

Jennifer Doron Borchardt ’86

I signed on to the CC Web site to update my address information and was deeply saddened to hear of Stephen Lacey’s passing. Stephen had a wonderful gift, the gift of educating and passing on enthusiasm to even a non-serious student like myself. Few teachers have touched students like Stephen Lacey, with his warmth, humor and genuine love for his vocation. I recently spoke with a fellow CC alum who was very close with Stephen and our conversation caused me to reflect on how, as a teacher, he made an impact on my education—no small feat in my case. He not only taught me subject matter but also engaged me in my learning. His passion for the Shakespeare play, his uncanny ability to recite Chaucer so you could actually hear and understand it, those types of things will always stay with me. Stephen Lacey was a master of his craft, not just a teacher but an educator. He was a role model for tolerance and acceptance and it is touching to see the impact that he has had on so many lives.

Ben Miller ’86

I was very saddened to learn of the premature passing of Dr. Stephen Lacey. Playing Puck in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” was one of the highlights of my Cornell career and I certainly would not have had the opportunity to sprinkle that magic dust on the first row of King Chapel had he not possessed the magic power to elicit the Elizabethan from anyone.

John Caruso '87

Where does one begin when talking about Stephen? Certainly, it would be easy to say that he was an enormous influence upon me. But that seems almost a bit too trite. He was so much more than a professor, so much more than a friend. He was an enormous part of my life for four years, and a continuing force ever since.

I hear bits of Stephen, every once and a while, in my speech and in my thoughts. I hear his voice every time I read one of the plays. I hear his wit and wisdom whenever I wrestle with a literary nugget.

He provided that elusive “directionless direction” that one can only hope to achieve with a liberal arts education. He showed me new ways to look at the world, new ways to find the simple meaning in the seemingly complex. Whenever I find myself facing a difficult situation or decision, I inevitably hear Stephen telling me, once again, “the answer is in the text.” And as sure as the meaning and answer was always there with Shakespeare, it tends to be there, in the proverbial text of life.

My most enduring memory of Stephen happened at the close of “Merchant of Venice,” in which he asked me to play Shylock. After the final performance, everyone had left King Chapel. The audience was long gone, and the cast and crew were on their way to the party. I took a moment to go back up to the stage, just to sit there, in a private, quiet moment, reflecting upon one of the most difficult and draining tasks I had ever undertaken—playing a difficult role in an equally difficult play. I thought about how Stephen had encouraged me, supported me, made me believe. I was feeling ... melancholy. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, Stephen appeared. He took the slow walk from the back of the chapel to the stage, where I was sitting. He put his arm around me, and simply told me how proud he was. I cried then, and I cry now, as I remember.

But that was the essence of Stephen: how, with simplicity and clarity, he could make us UNDERSTAND.

Not to mention he threw some of the best damned parties I have attended in my life!

“Oh-dear-lord,” I can see his head rolling back in utter dramatic fashion, “all of this fuss for we, ourselves?” Pause. “I LOVE it!”

Karen Friedhoff-Mertes '87

I am very thankful that Stephen Lacey was my first professor at Cornell. In that 3½-week time frame, he gave me the academic confidence as well as the social confidence that I needed to begin my journey at Cornell. Stephen somehow knew that he needed to “hold my hand” during that first block in order to give me the guidance and direction that I needed. He also knew to “let go” of my hand at the end of that time, so I could venture out on my own and find my own identity. For four years he continued to genuinely care about me and my well-being and for that I am so thankful that he was part of my life on the Hilltop.

Paul Grohne '87

“Have enough sense, Paul,” Stephen would intone. I had just dropped by his gracious, welcoming home, which contrasted somewhat with my basement apartment with wooden cable spool coffee table, and was explaining how I had welcomed some friends into my apartment by making some toast. True, the toast had literally burst into flames, but I was reading Plato at the time, and felt that the *esse*, not the *perceptio*, was the important thing. I didn’t mean a word of it, of course: I was baiting Stephen in hopes of hearing another one of his senatorial pronouncements, which, magnificently cadenced in the same effortless rhythm with which he summarized Shakespeare, had the awesome ring of eternal truth. Stephen didn’t disappoint me. Clearing his throat as I launched into a mangled summary of Hume, his rich baritone cut me off in mid-sentence like a luxury liner swamping an off-course dinghy: “If you cannot master toast, you must be truly inept.”

But Stephen’s comments ran far beyond mere toastmaking. Cornell College, in the mid-’80s, sandwiched as the time was between the ribald excesses of the ’70s, and the online connectivity of the ’90s, could be an unforgivingly isolating place, however sensuous and enormous as the air off the fields might be (as R.P. Dana would say). During this time my misadventures included not just burning toast, but erotic misadventures in canoes, changing my major every third Tuesday, and being blackballed by the Miltonian Literary Society. Stephen was there, like a pool of light in the darkness, to assure me that I was smart, valuable, and that my life would mean something. Years later, on a business trip, the plane flying over nighttime Iowa, I see the lights of the roads, tiny jewels, pools of light, connecting together different places. That is what Stephen did for us, he connected us, from the places we had come from, to the places we were going. We will miss Stephen, and carry him always in our hearts and minds.

Jennie Morgan '87

I came to Cornell in 1983, as an art major. Unexpectedly I found something totally different and inspiring. One was a new appreciation of American history, thanks to Professor Lucas, and the other is a love and understanding of Shakespeare, via Professor Stephen Lacey.

I was saddened to see his passing. Some of the most memorable class experiences I had at Cornell came in that one-block period when our class worked our tails off to study AND put on a Shakespeare play, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

Who would have thought Shakespeare could be so funny! John Caruso brought me to tears of laughter, because of the wonderful instruction of Professor Lacey. And because of Professor Lacey’s passion for teaching Shakespeare, as an adult I eagerly seek out Shakespearean plays and movies. Stephen really enriched my life, without even knowing it.

Because of this, I pray that Stephen's legacy of the Shakespeare play will always be a part of Cornell's environment!

Christopher Nelson '87

Oh hell.

When I received from Cornell the letter noting Stephen's death, I wept. And I thought about how he'd briefly pretend to be embarrassed by it, but then delight in the attention. And I wept. I have the advantage of having read so many other tributes before posting mine.

I met Stephen my freshman year, 1983, at a gathering of students for the January 1985 England trip. It was a trip I often reflect upon, and it was undoubtedly my favorite month at Cornell. Next, of course, was the Shakespeare play. I remember walking through London, pretending to know too much about Lord Nelson, who stands at the top of the column in Trafalgar Square. I was rambling on about him to someone, and Stephen, who was walking ahead of me, stopped and said, "You know, Christopher, he also was a well-known bisexual." So typical, so perfect.

He encouraged us to sample the beer and wine and then flipped us shit for sampling it too much. He got me a cake for my 20th birthday in York, got me drunk and then never let me forget that I left the rest of the cake at the hotel when we left for London the next morning. Stephen was the first person to make me realize I didn't know as much as I thought I did, but he did so without making me feel insignificant.

He was the first professor I heard say "Fuck."

I was a sociology major my first three years, and, late my junior year, I remember how pleased he was when I told him I was adding English as a second major. "Christopher, you're much too smart to not major in English," he'd told me.

Senior year, Shakespeare play, "The Merchant of Venice": He told us we were invited to his house every night to study, work on props, make costumes, drink. "Just don't smoke pot in my basement."

I remember his lectures, his ability to recite from memory—with passion—any sonnet. Or any passage from any play. "Isn't Shakespeare wonderful?" I remember his insistence that the dark woman was Shakespeare's gay lover, and his disappointment when no one argued. I remember when he recited a sonnet and asked what it brought to mind. I raised my hand, gave an answer, and he said, "You know, I never thought of that." I was instantly pleased. And then terrified.

I remember the friendships because of him. I must say how pleased I am to read through this tribute and see names of friends I haven't seen in years. It's all because of him.

I remember visiting him a couple of years after graduation and telling him I'd become a sportswriter, and how pleased he was that another of his students was making a career of writing. Not that he was particularly thrilled I was writing about sports or a

journalist. But he knew it made me happy. I'm so glad I stopped in to visit during trips through Mount Vernon. The first time I brought my girlfriend to Cornell, we went past his house and I shared stories of him and his parties. Hey, Stephen, I finally got married.

I think of him often, particularly in April. "Isn't Chaucer wonderful?" What crap he died before April. I remember leaving his Medieval Lit class in 1987 and hearing the news of the Challenger explosion. I remember encouraging prospective students to go to Cornell, and telling them to take a class with Stephen. Not one failed to tell me how much they enjoyed his classes.

Perhaps the saddest thing is knowing that Stephen will influence no more lives. He'll enlighten no more students, make no more freshmen grow up. I can't say anyone meant more to me or challenged me more than Stephen. I can't say I have many Cornell memories better than those that involved him or his classes or parties. I miss him terribly.

Diego Sada Jr., Esq. '87

I have just learned of Stephen Lacey's passing when I visited Cornell's Web site yesterday, 5 April 2000. I sit here, barely over the shock and very sad over the news, trying to collect my thoughts about a man who was both my teacher and my friend.

I first met Stephen during second block, in the fall of 1983, on the first day of his English 101 Shakespeare class. I thought I knew a lot about Shakespeare. Thanks to Stephen ("Dr. Lacey" at the time), I found out not only how little I really knew about Shakespeare and how much there was to learn, but also how the only real way to learn about Shakespeare was to be passionate about reading and learning about his plays.

Stephen was absolutely delighted when he learned I was from Mexico and loved Shakespeare, and was an Anglophile and a Beatles maniac. He was fascinated by the parallels between Shakespeare and Cervantes, and we would sometimes talk about them. Although he always insisted English was more poetic and romantic, he was very interested in discussing the romantic and poetic qualities of the Spanish language with me. After he tore apart my first paper for his class and I expressed my frustration over finding a subject to write about and properly focus on it, he patiently told me that I had a better grasp of English as a foreigner than many native speakers he knew and told me that all I needed was guidance and that that's what he was there for.

After that first English class, I had the privilege of taking the Shakespeare play class sophomore year ("A Midsummer Night's Dream"; I was in the light crew), the England trip class during fifth block of that year, and Survey of English Lit. I during junior year. These classes were among the best blocks I ever had at Cornell, and the ones I had the most fun taking. On the first day of the Shakespeare play class, he told us that for the next three and a half weeks we would "eat, drink, breathe and sleep" Shakespeare, and we certainly did and it was challenging and exhausting, but lots of fun. It was during this class that I stopped addressing him as "Dr. Lacey" and simply called him "Stephen," at his insistence.

I slowly got to know Stephen during and between those classes and at dinner parties at his house. During those parties you were not having dinner at a professor's house, but at a friend's house. I never felt more at ease at a party given by a professor at

home than at Stephen's parties. He would talk, tell stories, jokes, play his albums, swear and likewise listen to and laugh at people's anecdotes. Stephen would not only want you to learn about Shakespeare or literature, but also to learn about life. I have particularly fond memories of the block I spent in England, and I will never forget that trip. During that cold, snowy January I learned more than I did during that entire year at Cornell, and I saw and learned more about England than I have in subsequent trips. I truly became an Anglophile then.

What I will always remember about Stephen is his honesty, no matter what the circumstances, and the fact that he would always encourage you to do more, and with passion, even if he had just shredded a paper you had written for him, and how he would ask if something was wrong (and if he saw it in your face, it was no use denying it) and would want to hear about it, even demand that you tell him. He would not hesitate to tell you that you were wrong about an analysis or theory, even in front of the whole class, but likewise, when you were right, he praised you and made sure everyone noticed. I recall one morning during Survey of English Lit. I, when he was trying to explain how Middle English was pronounced, and when my Spanish background came in handy in correctly pronouncing the clipped t's and rolled r's in the "Canterbury Tales," he immediately barked to the class "Listen to how Diego reads!!" When you thought things in his classes were getting serious—which is not to say that he did not take his classes seriously; he undoubtedly did. He was not only serious, but also passionate—he would always make some remark or tell some story that would have the class in stitches. I still laugh when I recall the anecdote he undoubtedly told to many Cornellians of answering a female student of his in California who objected to his smoking in class—and interrupted a passionate lecture on Shakespeare to tell him so—"We all have our neuroses my dear, and that is one of yours!"

On the England trip, during those first jet-lagged days when some of us would doze off on the coach between towns, he would bark, in his familiar, deep voice, "Wake up, people! You are sleeping through England!" Even though we had lots of free time, and lots of fun, the schedule on that trip was tight. The last three days were spent in Paris. One month was not long enough to see and do everything. When I told Stephen as we were departing London for the English coast and the ferry to France that my only regret upon leaving England was not being able to make a day trip to Liverpool and see the birthplace of the Beatles, he laughed and said, "Diego, don't sweat it. Liverpool is a fucking dump anyway!"

I last saw Stephen during my five-year class reunion in 1992. He was very happy to see me as I was to see him and we chatted for a while and caught up. I was looking forward to my 10-year reunion, and in particular to see and talk to Stephen again, but unfortunately, it was not possible for me to attend.

Stephen was one of the best teachers I had at Cornell, and the best English teacher I ever had. He taught me all I know about Shakespeare and literature, and to be passionate about Shakespeare and England, but I also learned from him to be passionate about life. I certainly try to be.

Adios, Amigo, Que Dios Te Bendiga.

J.J. Connaughton '88

Some of my fondest memories of Cornell are my courses with Stephen Lacey, specifically Senior Seminar and the independent study course on Proust's second volume. We would trudge over from our dorms on cold and snowy nights, and enter Stephen's warm and inviting home for an evening of intellectual discussion. I remember sometimes feeling a little nervous voicing my opinion, but it was such a great group of people, and Stephen always made me feel comfortable. I think he exemplified what Cornell is all about, professors that care and will make the time and effort with each student. He will be missed by many.

Don Furman '88

When I heard the news of Stephen's passing, I was shocked. I had not kept in close contact with Stephen over the years, stopping in three or four times to visit briefly, but I thought of him often. He was larger than life. Stephen was never supposed to die. He was supposed to teach generations of Cornellians a love of Shakespeare, literature, and life, although not necessarily in that order.

I was a psychology major with a biology minor, yet Stephen was the most influential educator I experienced at Cornell. I treasure the memories I have of rehearsing "The Comedy of Errors" on the King Chapel stage, literature discussions, philosophical debates, laughter, and bourbon with him and the rest of the cast. The memories are removed, yet always fresh. Most of all I remember his passion for all things in life.

In reading through the tributes I am struck with how many lives Stephen profoundly touched. While I have great difficulty putting into words the feelings I have within me (God, Stephen would have hated that), a few others have tapped the truth in their words:

"Stephen was articulate, eloquent, funny, sarcastic, and, of course, passionate."

"Some professors teach while others change lives. Stephen did the latter."

Thank you for capturing a bit of the spirit of Stephen Lacey. You got it right.

Goodbye, Stephen. You are already missed.

Julia Gutz '88

When I heard about Stephen's death, I was immediately reminded of the wonderful experiences I had with him during the England trip my junior year.

The memory that frequently crops up in my mind is a random one ... we were standing on a beautiful little bridge in Salisbury, England, early in the morning. The sun was rising over a small hill on the horizon, and was just beginning to hit the fog that had settled in the valleys. Just across the small creek, a farmer was tending his flock of sheep, the shadows from the sheep still long in the morning light. Beyond the farmer was the spire of the Salisbury Cathedral, reaching upward toward the promises of the unknown.

Just then, Stephen commented on the beauty of the scene, in a way that only Stephen could. He topped off the observation with a perfectly recited quotation from Shakespeare. I'll never forget that scene: the smells, the sounds, the damp, cold fog against my face. At that moment, Shakespeare came alive for me.

Later, shortly after I moved to the Twin Cities, I saw a Shakespeare play at the Guthrie. Throughout the night I celebrated my ability to thoroughly understand, enjoy, and embrace the production. I couldn't wait to return to campus to tell Stephen how wonderful it was to put that liberal arts education to use!

He embodied what it meant to be a champion of life and all that it could behold.

Thank you, Stephen.

Elaine Hayes Reitz '88

One chilly winter evening, after the holiday dinner on campus, a group of us walked back to Stephen's for drinks. Although I was not an English major, most of my friends were, so I was always pulled into the group. That evening, as we shivered on our walk to Stephen's beautiful home, he turned around, saw me, and said, "Oh, Elaine, I always forget that you're not an English major!" To me, that was the highest compliment he ever paid me. I think I glowed all evening.

I was on the England trip in 1987. What an exciting few weeks! We got caught in the middle of the biggest snowstorm to hit the British Isles in 20 years. My favorite memory of that trip was when we visited Whitby Abbey, which is located in Northeast Yorkshire. It was so cold and windy that day! Stephen was the first one off the bus that chilly morning, and as he stood at the top step of the bus, he flung his scarf around his neck, exclaimed, "By God, the wind!" and marched off the bus!!! It was wonderfully funny, and truly representative of the way Stephen lived his life: to the fullest!

Tony Vaver '88

Those of us lucky enough to have attended a winter holiday party at Stephen's might remember drinking his famous (or infamous, depending on how many you had) Archbishops. Some of us might remember frantically making them in his kitchen in preparation for the party.

If you are looking for a "madeleine" that will transport you back to those good times, here is the recipe for his Archbishops:

Blend:

2 cups hot coffee

3 cups ice cream

Add:

2 cups vodka

1/4 cup dry sherry
1/8 cup kahlua

LaDonna Sloan '88

I am deeply saddened to learn of Stephen's death, yet I find solace in having the opportunity to have so many fond memories of him. I will continue to reflect on the many lessons he taught me about literature and life.

I remember the infamous Archbishops all too well—the making, the consuming and the recovering. And I remember making my chicken curry in the kitchen of his “new” house. I was so pleased he let me do that. (What an understatement.) And—oh—countless evenings and weekends with food, drink and conversation galore! Stephen welcomed me and nurtured me for who and what I was – something few others have ever done, or even known how to do. Thanks to Stephen and his flamboyant hospitality, I have a wealth of memories from my four years at Cornell. But beyond the food, the drink, the boisterous good times, there was an unforgettable atmosphere of both welcome and challenge that is, and always will be, the bedrock of my memories.

I've read the silver-colored print off the cover of my Proust volumes since that Senior Seminar class in 1987 and the independent study some of us did in the spring of 1988. I can't count the number of times I've turned to that work for a quote that expressed something I was thinking or feeling so perfectly that there was no point in trying to craft my own prose. I look at life, and memories, and even the smell of cilantro differently because Stephen demanded that we “WALLOW IN PROUST!”

Jay Andersen '89

On my bookshelf, amid a few select remnants from medical school, is a file. Inside the file are the worn pages of the papers I wrote while a student in English 101 with Stephen. Certainly, the value of the file is not related to the quality of my writing. Similarly, although to this day I cherish Stephen's honest comments (“EEEEK ... GOOD GOD JAY!!” “Sigh ... such fine writing; such dreadful writing”), the file has more meaning. Most importantly, this file represents a pivotal point in my education. Stephen was instrumental in expanding my mind beyond the hard sciences. He balanced my hypotheses and observations with eloquent sonnets and lively drama. Thank you, Stephen, for bringing the liberal arts to life!

In a recent *Cornell Report* there was an article that highlighted the challenges of teaching on the block plan. A visiting professor was interviewed and commented that it was quite rigorous because many of the students expected you not only to teach, but also to be “their cheerleader.” Well, frankly, that is the difference between a lecturer and an educator. Stephen, you are our teacher, our educator, our mentor, our cheerleader and our friend. If only every student could have experienced your stage

Johanna Carlisle '89

Stephen was one of those people you always talked about and always will. When I first walked into his classroom, I thought I was knowledgeable about literature and writing. I was so wrong. He showed me a side of poetry and literature that I could never have learned from anyone else. He was passionate about his love of the written word. He opened a book and made it come to life. He read a verse and made his entire class go through a gambit of emotions. He inspired us to be those words on that page.

I must admit that the thing I love most about Stephen is his ability to love everyone. He embraced us all for who we were and made us all a little more open about the world and those in it, past, present and future. (OK, and I will NEVER forget the driftwood monkey!)

I was unable to attend the memorial because I was in a musical performance in Phoenix. However, we dedicated our May 6 performance to him, because we too had put together a show in 3½ weeks which reminded me of the Shakespeare plays he did and how in that short time he made us all feel like we were on the stage at the Globe Theater and great actors and technicians, as well!!

I will never forget what he did for me and will always carry him in my heart! “Summer king, summer king, come with me! Will dance on hills of fires.” And in the dream we run like the wind, run home forever under the hill.—from FIRELORD by Parke Godwin.

Joseph J. Straka III '89

Stephen was far more than a professor; he was a powerful and wonderful character. What I remember most and what I would like to express in this forum is the way that he could bring out the best, an unknown quantity, in anyone, myself included. When I participated in the Shakespeare class we presented the play “The Merchant of Venice” for the whole community to enjoy. I recall that it was a stressful and difficult time for me as I am not an actor nor do I have today or had then any theatrical experience. The workload between the sonnets, other plays and “The Merchant of Venice” was intense but Stephen was both supportive and boundless in his energy and spirit. What he wanted from me, though, was something that he knew that I had inside but had yet presented to him on paper, a perfect essay. After a long struggle and with extensive consultation I wrote him that essay and for that I will forever be both proud and satisfied.

Dan Winslow '90

Well, I am not surprised to see references to the infamous Archbishops here. I believe it was in 1989 that I was somehow roped in by Stephen to prepare that year's batch. My

roommate at the time was supposed to help, but he never showed up. Stephen was busy with other things, so that left me, with his patient guidance, to concoct the stuff myself. Let's just say that one should not sample too much of the Archbishop mix while preparing!

Then there was New Year's Day, 1991. After having celebrated in Iowa City the next day, I decided, with my companion, to drive over to Mount Vernon as long as I was in the area. Upon approaching Stephen's house, we saw him in the kitchen window and proceeded to knock on his door unannounced. Well, he warmly welcomed us in and promptly offered us his trademark bourbon on ice.

I can't think of many people I know even today who would welcome unannounced visitors with open arms at almost anytime. But Stephen was like that. He loved life and it showed. And he taught me, a cynical teen-ager at the time, something about loving life, too.

Anonymous '91

Today I miss his fluffy hair and rosy cheeks.

Brennen Dicker '91

I was fortunate to have Stephen as my professor, mentor, and friend. He had a profound effect on my life. He was one of the first people at Cornell who believed in me, when I didn't believe in myself. I was 19 and taking the Shakespeare class. I felt like I had it made. I had a very small role in "Much Ado About Nothing" and thought it would be one of those blocks where I could do just a little work and coast. (No one coasts in the Shakespeare class.) Ahh, the life ... going to class, writing some papers, and then going to Stephen's with the class to have a bourbon and discuss Shakespeare. That illusion was blown out of the water when one of the students had to drop the class. The next day in class, Stephen walked in with his large-than-life personality and announced that I was to play the Prince Don Pedro. As I quickly glanced down at the script, next to Prince Don Pedro I saw line after line on the page. I realized that this was not a small role. In a panic, after class I met with Stephen in his office to protest. "Stephen, I think you are making a big mistake in giving me this role. I have never memorized anything of this magnitude!" Stephen just smiled and said, "You will do just fine Brennen. You have a week and a half to memorize your lines so I suggest you get started."

I was the Prince Don Pedro in the production of "Much Ado About Nothing," and it was one of the best experiences I have ever had. I had the opportunity my senior year at Cornell to direct "As You Like It." Again, Stephen believed in me.

I feel that some of the best moments in my college years were spent with Stephen, whether it was at his house discussing life or in class discussing Proust or Shakespeare. He had an energy that just took over the room. He simply was larger than life. So a toast

to Stephen, thank you for believing in me and telling me to go for my dreams when there were few listening.

Sara Felton '91

I was on the England trip in 1991. We were there when the Gulf War broke out. I will always remember the coach ride to London where Stephen and John told us we were staying, but not to act “too American.”

I have been back to England two more times now, but will always remember that first special trip. It taught me independence, and it can never be recreated.

Leslie LaPlante '91

While at Cornell, I was lucky enough to experience what I have always thought of as the Stephen Lacey Triumvirate: the Shakespeare play, the trip to England, and Proust. All of these classes were both personally and academically rewarding, as was my relationship with Stephen.

When I took the Proust Senior Seminar, Stephen broke our class into groups of four, and each group took turns leading the class discussion. The second time my group led the discussion was late in the block—students were exhausted and were becoming frustrated with the size and complexity of the work. Leading the discussion was difficult, but my group did our best to keep the flow of ideas going and eventually the discussion really began moving. It was one of the most difficult academic experiences I had at Cornell, but I felt like I had to do a good job because I didn't want to let Stephen down. Although I also wanted Stephen to be pleased with my papers and comments in class, I felt that leading this discussion was my way of showing appreciation to him for his amazing skills and devotion as a teacher.

I stayed after class to talk with Stephen, and he complimented me by saying that our group had dealt well with a very challenging portion of the book during a difficult time of the block. He even suggested that I should consider going into teaching. I positively floated out of the room. A compliment from Stephen was not simply something that made you feel good (although, of course, it did that, too); it made you introspective and thoughtful because his opinions were so deliberate and valuable.

It's hard to give a tribute to Stephen that I feel is fitting. College was such a self-focused time of life and all of my thoughts of Stephen turn back to me—what he did for me, how he affected my thinking, etc. But that was the role he played for me and so many other people—he was a teacher in the best and grandest sense of the word.

Todd Norris '91

“For a long time, I used to go to bed early ...” Then, I met Stephen Lacey! It is impossible for me to think about Cornell without remembering late evenings at Stephen’s home with other students, helping ourselves to the gin as we philosophized, psychoanalyzed and discussed into the night. I can’t count the number of times I got up from his sofa only to hear: “What?! You’re not leaving already, are you? ’Tis the shank of the evening!” More often than not, he was right.

Stephen was a gifted professor with a talent for making literature real. I can still hear his voice thundering out the meaning of a text. When it was something he loved, you knew it. The same was true when it was something he detested (e.g., “self-referential masturbatory crap!”).

I was struck by the way Stephen made everyone in his classes feel as though he or she had something important to contribute. No matter how ridiculous the idea, there was no fear of expressing it—Stephen could rescue any thought, and still give you credit for hitting on something crucial.

But much more than a talented professor, Stephen was a symbol of hope to me. As a college student who was struggling to come to terms with being gay, I was trying to imagine how I could be authentic, true to myself, my friends and my family, and still be happy. Stephen proved to me that it was possible. He was openly gay, and was loved and respected by a multitude of people. He was the inspiration I desperately needed at that time.

Though Stephen left us much too soon, his memory and influence will live on for years to come in the hearts and minds of those who loved him and who were lucky enough to be touched by his life.

Virginia Stockton Cardoza ’92

Professor Lacey was the man that brought Shakespeare, Proust, England and the simplicity of a Madeleine to many students. He will be greatly missed by those blessed by his knowledge, compassion and friendship. His legacy will survive through all he has touched.

DJ Edwardson ’92

Stephen was a great teacher, a great motivator and touched many lives. I am deeply saddened with the news of his loss. It makes me realize that there is not always the time we hope or expect to have. I regret not keeping in better touch with Stephen the last few years. Of course, most of my memories of Stephen center around the Shakespeare play. It was an intense experience for all of us, kind of a theater boot camp. It was a crucible experience that forced you to push yourself to do what before you had not imagined you could. How Stephen ever came up with the format I do not know, but it worked. And I am thankful to him and all the others who made it happen.

Stephen was a tireless promoter of his students and was influential in my life especially in urging me to take a semester abroad. Somehow his confidence in you inspired you. That was one of Stephen's gifts.

Again, I am so sad that he was snatched from this world so soon. Many words come to mind that I would liked to have shared with him but I shall never get that chance. Perhaps we will learn from this tragedy to speak before the words can no longer be spoken and to "redeem the time."

Kelly Remakel Kirkpatrick '92

Going far beyond the call of duty, doing more than others expect ... this is what excellence is all about. And it comes from striving, maintaining the highest standards, looking after the smallest detail, and going that extra mile. Excellence means doing your very best. In everything. In every way. This was Stephen Lacey and the lesson he taught me.

I met Stephen my senior year in English Literature, Proust, and Shakespeare, just prior to beginning my student teaching and the career I love. His excellence in teaching goes beyond the classroom and has helped me become a great teacher today. I will remember him for his wisdom, energy and the gift of giving me a love for the literary word—all things I impart to my students today. He could take the most complicated lines of Proust and Shakespeare and, with a couple of words, turn on the "light bulb of understanding" in my head. He wore his teaching hat wherever he went and every place—whether it be the Orange Carpet, the local bar, walking to or from class, or his home—became his classroom.

I will never forget how he opened his home to students working toward the deadline of opening night for the production of "Love's Labor's Lost." Stephen fed his hungry students chili and we washed it down with some ale as we sewed costumes and practiced our lines late into the night. He made me and other students feel like we were part of a community and that the things we had to say were important. One night over drinks Stephen asked how the job search for teaching positions was coming along. When I had responded that I had an interview in the Cherry Creek School District in Colorado, he replied, "That's f_ _ king great!" and he raised his glass in my honor. Today I toast you, Stephen, with this tribute: May the memories of you and your teachings live on.

Robert McGuire '92

I was thinking about Stephen a few moments before I learned of his death. Thumbing through the alumni magazine, I was drafting in my head the update I would send to the Class News section. I was thinking of how people would react to the lunatic and utterly impractical news that I am trying to write a novel at the expense of any real employment. As supportive as people usually are, it is hard to be wholeheartedly supportive—hard not to think of the low pay and the extreme unlikelihood of ever finishing or getting published. Except for Stephen, I was thinking. He is the one person who is sure to hear that news and think this is exactly what I should do, who wouldn't expect me to rationalize it. He never cared if his students were rational or practical. He never tried to explain, as I do so often now as an English teacher, how all this will come in handy in our professional lives. Literature just was important all by itself and somebody had to be so foolish as to teach it or create it or spend their youth studying it. I frequently have doubts about this new adventure, and when I do I sometimes think of Stephen, and that always gives me heart.

Chris Staples '92

Last night, I scrolled through the eloquent tributes to Stephen's life and, curiously, I got grumpy. Not because Stephen is gone, but rather, because I couldn't help but feel that everyone else had usurped my precious memories: Proust, Archbishops, the Shakespeare play, thousands of 50-cent tap beers undone by a single bourbon in Stephen's living room. I read on and on and on until I felt that there was nothing I could add. Besides, I was grumpy and wasn't sure I wanted to add anything. I went to sleep after not being particularly kind to my lover.

In an ironic turn that Stephen could appreciate, my dream life took over and reminded me that not only do I act like a spoiled, ego-driven child (something Stephen would happily point out) but that my grumpy response was, in a way, an entirely appropriate extension of the process of "griefwork." Stephen taught me that griefwork is the "psychic re-killing of a corpse—a reassertion that you are alive and it is dead." Through grumpiness, I was trying to tell myself that Stephen hadn't offered me anything special and that I should get on with it. This thought is both profoundly flawed and right on the mark: Flawed because, of course, Stephen offered me (and everyone else, as it happens) something incredibly special; and on the mark because it delighted Stephen to watch us take what we learned from him into the world. Stephen's death reminds us of this, and indeed our success. Life is sweet. Let's get on with it!

Not only did my dream life provide me with an explanation for my feelings, but it also offered me what I was looking for: an experience I can share with all of you. One day, Stephen played me an aria. If memory serves, it was from "Madama Butterfly," sung by Leontyne Price (please forgive the spelling) at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. I

don't know why he shared this with me, and frankly I don't care. That moment was remarkable.

Stephen Lacey was a remarkable moment. When I woke up this morning, I felt great. I kissed my lover, got out of bed, then made my way to the computer.

Briget Tyson '92

Trying to pick a topic to focus my tribute on is not possible, for Stephen opened up the world of Shakespeare, Proust, England, writing, teaching and friendship to me. In many ways he defined my Cornell years, which have influenced my life to this day.

I first met Stephen as a prospective student. In the back of my mind I've always thought I came to Cornell so I could take a class from Stephen (known to me as Dr. Lacey at the time). When I returned to Cornell as a freshman, I thought I wanted to be a Spanish/education major. But after an English class with Stephen, again my life took a very different direction. I signed up as an English major with Stephen as my advisor. I learned to write, I learned to love Shakespeare, Proust and England. I learned to love a professor as a mentor and as a friend. I also learned that life was about doing and pursuing what you love.

During my junior year I discovered my love for wilderness. I added a second major, environmental studies, and since then I have been pursuing what I love—teaching and being in the wilderness (and the great outdoors in general). Still I needed encouragement to reach for higher goals. I received that encouragement from Stephen. First, to pursue my master's in environmental education and now to be pursuing my doctorate in parks and recreation with an emphasis in outdoor education.

The last visit I had with Stephen was in 1997. I told him I was thinking of going back for a Ph.D. His words, "Of course you are," are what gave me the courage to actually apply. I thank Stephen for his love of his students, for his larger-than-life perspective, and for always being inspiring and encouraging.

Chris Davis '93

Steve taught me and my wife an appreciation of food, wine, art, and music that continues long after I graduated from Cornell. I hope to pass on this appreciation to others in my life so that Steve will forever live on. Steve is the reason I chose Cornell, and he is the reason I will continue to love and support it.

Darcy Davis '93

While this story is being told in the third person, I feel it symbolizes what Steve is all about.

Back when Steve was teaching in Santa Barbara, my father-in-law (Mac Davis) decided to teach Steve how to play tennis. Since tennis was an athletic event requiring nourishment, Steve came to the lesson with a pitcher of margaritas. You can't help but smile if you visualize Steve back in the '70s holding a cigarette and sipping on a pitcher of margaritas, while at the same time trying to learn how to play tennis! Not surprisingly, Steve did not play much tennis after this.

Lisa Weddle '93

Growing up a faculty brat in Mount Vernon, I remember passing Stephen Lacey's stone cottage just off the Hilltop in curious wonder. I knew of his life of culture, of "Friends," and most importantly to me, of theatre, but I never thought I would have the opportunity to be invited into it. Fortunately, I transferred home to Cornell in 1992 and eagerly signed up for Shakespeare Comedies that fall. Never before had I witnessed a teacher share such intense personal passion for theatrical work—from interpretation, to staging, to performance. Our closely knit class passed through all the rigors of the infamous three-week production schedule—sewing up pantaloons with one hand, drinking gin and tonics with the other—and performed Shakespeare's final comedy, "Twelfth Night," to some of the warmest houses I've ever felt. I had the honor of playing Feste in the production. Stephen had announced early on in class that our production would be his final year of coordinating the Shakespeare play. I remember vividly singing the final stanza of the play for him on closing night: "But that's all one, our play is done, and we'll strive to please you every day." Stephen resonates in my heart as an artist and a thoroughly enjoyable and alive human being. I thank him for sharing his gifts.

Meg Su-Reed '94

When I think of Stephen, I remember his deep, melodic voice ringing through some of my most beloved memories. Stephen was my advisor, professor, friend and mentor. Trying to boil some of those memories down to a tribute seemed trite. As an English major, I was fortunate enough to take many classes from Stephen. I participated in what Stephen would proclaim to be his last Shakespeare play done in his usual format, "Twelfth Night." I still remember the smell of his damp stone basement during those cold nights working on sets and costumes. Many of my classmates will recall me forever with my camera trying to capture each delicious moment of it. Looking back through those pictures I found very few pictures of Stephen.

I turned to my photo albums from that magical month in England. And then there was England. Experiencing England would have been a joy. With Stephen it was magical. Catherine Burroughs and Stephen would take command of the bus's microphone and give us history lessons about the areas we were about to visit. No one could bring the

country alive like Stephen! Simple stones would jump out at you with immense significance. Long-vanquished royalty would reign freely once again in castle ruins. I had gone through literally dozens of rolls of film, yet very few pictures of Stephen.

What I finally realized was that there was a reason for this in my heart. Whenever I take a photo, I look to capture a moment, to express a feeling, emotion or memory. Stephen is larger than life. I experienced the same difficulties capturing the essence of Stephen on film as I do now, trying to put Stephen into words.

As so many others have written, some teachers have a gift for teaching, but Stephen's gift went way beyond that. Stephen's lessons went beyond the phallic implications of Shakespeare, or the architectural style of a castle. He taught us about life, by example. He taught us how to be true to ourselves, be true to others, and to live life to its fullest. He had an enviable way of loving, of accepting yet being brutally honest. He brought out the best in me, and I believe, the best in everyone around him.

My mother had a cross-stitched poem titled "Success":

"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you lived. This is to have succeeded."—
Harry Emerson Fosdick

I believe Stephen is the most successful man I have met. I will forever love and miss him.

Ellen Horne '95

I had the pleasure of knowing Stephen for the last 10 years. I was his student and his neighbor. In the last three years, Stephen spent some time in San Francisco, so I was lucky enough to see him for dinner and drinks on several occasions.

He was the reason that I came to Cornell. I took the business of picking a college very seriously. I had just figured out that it was more fun for a high school senior to travel, sitting in on college classes, than to stay at home. When I visited Cornell, I sat in on Stephen's class and joined in on the class discussion. (Later, Stephen told me that it was a one-time occurrence for him—pre-munks didn't usually say much while observing a class.) His class was brilliant. What a teacher! I remember the way he caressed the language he discussed. He infused the class with his passion.

After a few days at Cornell, I went to Macalester in St. Paul. (I was attempting to choose between the two schools.) Stephen also happened to be at Macalester that weekend. In the lobby of the theater he came rushing up to me while I was on a campus tour. He pleaded with me: "No, no, no! You can't go to college here! We must have you at Cornell!" Then he turned to the tour leader (in a melodramatic way I was to become very familiar with) and screamed, "You can't have her!"

He had such a wonderful way of making us feel special.

Thank you, Stephen! I'll miss you and I'll remember you.

Aaron Edmundson '96

Stephen made grumpy, hungover college students love Shakespeare. I remember the first day of my Intro to Shakespeare course, half the class was grumbling with their heads down, the other half staring at the desk top in front of them. In popped this smiling, red-faced man with smoke trailing out of his nose. With a sudden burst of life, sound, and he introduced himself, the course, and the fact that we were about to embark on a journey filled with drama, action, and a lot of f*&@ing in the woods. Many students that day suddenly became very interested in Shakespeare and spending as much time as they could with this wonderfully crazy and fun professor. Thank you, Stephen, for everything. You made learning fun again.

Chad Elliott '96

The way he embraced literature, not just Shakespeare, but everything he taught, was extraordinary. He wanted you to be as passionate about the work as he was. And as intelligent as he was, he was never condescending to his students. Partly, I think, because he genuinely cared about them, but also because he was a perpetual student himself. The texts were always teaching him new things. He was never complacent. Kids loved him for that. They fed off his energy, and he fed off theirs.

John Masi '96

Though I had taken many courses in English the previous three years, the Senior Seminar in Proust was my only opportunity to get to know Stephen during my English major at Cornell.

When our final papers were due and the last day found me writing until all hours of the morning, I found that by class time I had still not finished it. When I asked if I could have an extension, Stephen said he would trade a letter grade for an extended due date, and thinking that is the best that I could ask for, I put in another solid day of writing and delivered my paper to his house the next evening. After reading it, he called me into his office and said, "John, this is one of the best papers I have ever received. You will get an A and I am putting it in my permanent file."

His encouragement in and out of the classroom is one of the greatest gifts I have come to realize from my time at Cornell. To encapsulate a life in the span of language is the most profound of tasks. But language can only be language without the emotion of the reader.

Marcel Proust and Stephen Lacey brought their expanse of self into our lives and improved our understanding of the human condition. Those of us who had the privilege to experience them together are better for it.

Christine Parker '96

Let me begin by saying that from the very first time I met Stephen, as a prospective student in 1991, I knew I'd met a person I could trust. When Stephen said something was “!#@&* wonderful,” then I could rest assured that it indeed was “!#@&* wonderful.”

Which is why I was so perplexed in Senior Sem, when introduced to Proust. I hated Proust the entire term. I believe I once told Stephen I could not read even one more page about the “wussy momma’s boy.” But trusting Stephen’s judgment, I carried on. I finished the entire novel one year later, and by the end, aided by Stephen’s words of wisdom and eternal patience, I had grown to understand and embrace the writings of Proust.

There’s a section in “Within a Budding Grove” when Marcel enters Balbec and visits the famous Persian-style church. Initially, he doesn’t know what he’s looking at, and dismisses it as “the immortal work of art so long desired, whom I found transformed, as was the church itself, into a little old woman in stone whose height I could measure and whose wrinkles I could count.”

A brief moment later (or about 200 pages), the artist Elister spends pages describing the true beauty of that same church, the graceful poses of the statues, the poetry of the carvings, the genius of the depictions—“Because it’s all the circles of heaven, a whole gigantic poem full of theology and symbolism that you have there ... it’s fantastic, mad, divine.”

Thank you, Stephen, for showing me how to look—for helping me see the true beauty of Shakespeare, of Chaucer, and most certainly of Proust. You have made my life much richer for it.

Christiana Roccaforte '96

It makes me nervous writing this for Stephen because it always made me nervous to have Stephen read my writing. He was so HONEST, about writing, about literature, and most importantly about life. What a quality!!

Stephen Lacey profoundly affected my education about the REAL WORLD. Who would have known that one of the most worldly men I would meet would be found in Mount Vernon, Iowa, of all places.

We have lost a great man, but the angels have gained a new companion. Boy are those angels going to know a lot about Shakespeare & Proust!

Stephen, I will remember you fondly always!

Deirdre Rosenfeld '96

This January, I joined 11 college students for a three-week course in London. Turned out to be five years to the date that I traveled with a group led by Stephen. I heard Stephen's voice outside every theater, speaking from the Tate Gallery, and inside every pub. He knew every inch of Stratford, Canterbury, Edinburgh, and Salisbury, and made the streets, cathedrals, minsters, abbeys, and even the hotels come alive.

A year later he would shed that same light onto Proust.

I'm still drawing from those experiences, learning about my world and myself each day.

Thank you, Stephen, for handing me a very magical cup of tea.

Ryan Tucker '96

As I read the other tributes, and sit down to try and capture thoughts for my own, I find it difficult to pick a category. Proust, England, teacher, mentor, friend all apply to my experience with Cornell and Stephen. I took English 111, Problems in Shakespeare, with Stephen my first block at Cornell in September 1992. I will never forget the looks on the 20 faces of the very intellectually impressionable 18-year-olds as we sat waiting for Stephen to appear. Many of us, of course, had met him as prospectives and were eagerly anticipating the beginning of a wonderful journey. Stephen arrived late, at about 10 minutes after 9 a.m., lit cigarette in holder, clenched between his teeth. He plopped the massive "Riverside Shakespeare" down on the table, looked at us and sighed, and said, "F__k it, I need another cigarette, I can't do this," and left the room!! You can imagine the looks of shock and dismay.

Of course what I learned from 111, and my entire English major, and the trip to England, and senior seminar with Proust, was what Stephen could do, which was teach me the love for language, art, culture, and life that I carry with me today. To this day, I have never forgotten his teaching of the sonnets, and his engaging Shakespeare in actual one-on-one conversation, with comments like "What are you hiding here?" or "That's crap, Bill." He had an amazing way of bringing words to life, and had an absolutely enormous love for life. Perhaps best for me are the last lines of Sonnet #18:

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Stephen, you are not forgotten.

Tammy Fowler '97

As a Cornell graduate, I was saddened by the news of Stephen Lacey's passing. I would like to send my deepest regrets to professor Lacey's family. In this time of grief, I hope his family will find comfort in the knowledge that Stephen had the admiration and respect of many students. It was his generous spirit that made him such a wonderful teacher.

When I think of Stephen Lacey, I think of his humor and the way he could fill his classes with laughter. And his kindness. I will never forget Stephen's overwhelming kindness. His door was always open because he cared about his students. He extended a helping hand or offered an encouraging word because he believed in his students even when they didn't believe in themselves. Stephen Lacey was more than a teacher—he was a friend.

I cannot help but feel sorry for the students who didn't have enough time to know Stephen Lacey and appreciate this amazing man; therefore, I feel incredibly fortunate to have spent my time as a Cornellian with Professor Lacey. His influence cannot possibly be measured because it carries on today.

Miranda Richards '97

I was at work just now, and I opened the letter from Cornell casually, thinking it was another update from the alumni committee and a request for a donation. I've never experienced anything quite like this. I opened the letter and was about ready to take another bite of muffin when time stopped.

I didn't even know that he was ill, and suddenly I get this notice of his passing. Then the tears started. In the letter it said that we should write tributes, and I thought to myself that I would want to do that, but where do I begin? I've read the tributes from some of the students I shared Stephen with, and the couplet from Sonnet 18, and I got to thinking, "He was too important to sum up in mere words."

Stephen was one of my favorite everything: professor, teacher, friend, confidante, human being. When I studied the Tragedies of Shakespeare with him, I learned about raw emotion and the power of life to make us feel like gods or dust. When we discussed the power of jealousy in *Othello*, Stephen made it abundantly clear that it can make us do things we wouldn't otherwise consider or even consider possible. The most vivid personal experience he related to us must be his jealous rage story. He threw a large, full bookcase out the window when he caught his boyfriend in the act with another man. Not many people I know could do that under any circumstances.

The most emotionally filled scene we studied, however, was not from *Othello*, *Hamlet* or even *Romeo & Juliet*; it was from the end of *King Lear*. The mad king comes to a moment of lucidity when all the most terrible things have happened, and realized that he has killed his most faithful and loving child, Cordelia. The anguish Lear expresses in that passage is not so much in the text as in the way I finally understood it, through Stephen. Even he was at a loss of how to explain that kind of emotion. I was thinking the other day of making the short pilgrimage to the Hilltop and visiting him, not knowing what had happened. I think I now understand the depth of loss that Lear must have felt. I just wanted everything to stop when I heard.

Stephen was one of the most important people ever to play a part in my life, and I, along with the rest of the world, will be lessened by his absence.

Sara Kyte Roth '97

I remember when I first met Stephen Lacey. I was a freshman at Cornell and he was teaching the first class that I had, Literature of AIDS. I was scared at the prospect of attending college, but he put me right at ease. If possible, he made me even more sympathetic to the plight of those with HIV and AIDS. I have always been a supporter of the homosexual population, but he reinforced it. I also remember his Shakespeare course vividly. My parents had always taken me to Shakespeare plays against my will in an attempt to pique my interest. Nothing worked until I took Lacey's course. He inspired me in a way that no one else was able to. He breathed life into something that I thought was all but dead and urged me to continue my writing and capture my dreams of being published. He will be missed with every breath.

Shannin Stein '97

It is difficult to put into words the way this amazing and very real man touched so many different lives. His passion for life and for others was contagious and beautiful.

I remember taking his Literature of AIDS course my junior year. I don't know if I have ever learned as much about life in a class as I did over those three and a half weeks. Stephen took us to a level of introspection and human analysis where we could truly experience an awakening in ideals and beliefs. It wasn't a literature class; it was a class in life and human understanding.

Throughout the process, the one thing that touched me the most was his heart. Here was a man who had lost friends and lovers to AIDS, who you would think would have become hardened to the grief associated with it. Not Stephen; he opened his heart to each person affected by the disease and shed a tear in support of their situation and their pain. A true sign of a man willing to give to all he encountered, even through his own adversity and difficulties.

He will be missed.

Jennifer M. Brannan '98

When I received an e-mail from my college roommate titled "Stephen Lacey" I knew it could not be good news. I sat in front of my computer with tears in my eyes, for Stephen, for the students who would never know him, and for myself.

Just the night before I had been describing Stephen to some friends of mine. I told them about hearing that a gin and tonic at Randall's used to be called "The Lacey." I told them about how magical it was to sit and listen to him read Shakespeare. I shared with them the story that every Shakespeare student of his has undoubtedly heard. That, when telling a group of students that he thought that Shakespeare's sonnets were the most beautiful love poems ever written, a young female student whined at him, "But professor Lacey, they were written to a boy!" Stephen responded, "My dear, I don't give a flying

f*** if they were written to a sheep; they are still the most beautiful love poems ever written!”

I enjoyed every minute of class with Stephen Lacey. Even though I’m in graduate school for the biomedical sciences, on the morning of my biochemistry midterm, I found myself reading the sonnets instead of studying, and remembering all that I learned from him.

Two lines that I learned are running through my head right now. Undoubtedly they are echoing through all the hearts and minds of Stephen Lacey’s students around the world:

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
(Sonnet 18)

Thank you, Stephen.

Lisa Butterly ’98

I will never forget my trip to England with Stephen. He is such an inspiration, a mentor and a friend. He taught me so much on that trip, but especially I gained so much independence. I will never forget the letter he wrote in my journal, expressing his admiration for that. I will miss you.

Beth Maria Eyanson ’98

Dear Dr. Lacey,

Sorry that this thank you note is a bit late. I left Cornell over three years ago, without a proper goodbye. You didn’t know what you meant to me. But I was certain that we would meet again ... I thought that it would be in Mount Vernon.

Anyway, thank you for believing in a depressed freshmen. I had a lot of professors, during my five years of college, tell me directly and/or imply that I was stupid or lazy. I had your class during the hardest point in my college career and you made me feel like a genius. I’m not sure how you did it, but thank you for it. You are what a teacher should be. You saw the best in me, before I even started to look for it.

In the words of May Sarton in “Letter from Chicago”: “I send you love forward into the past.”

Thanks, for everything

Darcy White Shargo '98

During my senior year, I took two Shakespeare classes from him, and for those two months I think almost everyone had perfect attendance. His classes were so memorable that to miss them seemed unimaginable. Stephen's booming voice and dramatic pauses were fascinating. I still carry Shakespeare inside me because Stephen brought it to my bones. He encouraged me to speak in class like no other professor could. He, I think, embraced all students by making the literature sing with modern implications.

Stephen Lacey represents to me what it means to live one's life unafraid, to confront passion and longing head-on and create from that collision a rare beauty.

Thomas J. Carlson '99

The closest I ever came to having to deal with death was when I was five. My cat, Nosy, ran out into the street and killed herself. I know she killed herself because I was watching. I watched her watching the cars from under our neighbor's bush. I watched her dash out into the street and pause to let the car run her over. I watched her as she jumped and turned and flipped every which way—my mother called it nerves. The man who hit her happened to be a friend of ours. My father went out in the street and put her in a plastic bag. My family stood outside of the station wagon as my father began loading a shovel and some gloves. He said he was going to bury Nosy out at the farm.

It was then that it suddenly stuck me that something was wrong. I remember laughing at Nosy's uncontrolled death, but when my father began to place the plastic bag in the truck I said, "Why can't we take her to the vet?" My father, having witnessed my laughter at the time of Nosy's demise, became impatient with my sense of loss and decided to teach me a lesson in death. He took Nosy out of the bag and flung her in my face, saying, "Does this look like we can take her to the vet? She is dead, Tom! Her neck snapped in two. This is what death looks like." He didn't have to say anything. He could have just pulled the cat out of the bag and I would have known. She looked worse close up than on the street and I knew this was the last time I would see my cat.

At the time I did not know what that meant to me. Later I would realize I have no fear of death, but the death of others terrifies me. This is in part because, on that day, although Nosy's body was mangled and bloody, her eyes were peaceful, silent; I could see that she had found something that I would never grasp.

So when a friend of mine told me that Lacey was ill and I began to watch his health daily, I soon realized that Lacey would be the closest human to me that has died. And what was I to do? Handling loss is not my strong point because I have never really lost anyone close.

On March 27th, I received several phone calls, all of which were sad in tone. I disappeared into myself, to a lonely five-year-old boy who wanted his cat back. Being so far away I did not have to believe that Lacey had died, but my friends' voices were

shaken with death and I did not need my father shaking Lacey at me to prove his departure. And I felt loss, but it was a different, more personal loss than that of my cat. Nosy I would miss spending time with. For Lacey, it was the loss to everyone he touched and loved. I felt the loss come out with a tremendous amount of memories, others and mine.

The first time I met Lacey, I was attending a Family and Friends meeting at his house. My friend Rich had asked me to come and I agreed; he would be the first professor that invited me into his house. We were the first ones to arrive, so Lacey got to know us. He asked simply for my name. "Thomas," I said. He has to trade hands with his drink to shake mine. "How marvelous. You know, my first lover was named Thomas."

He asked what I wanted to be and I said, "a writer," and he said, "Good, the world can never have enough writers." Later we sat down to have the meeting and got on the subject of writing a statement about who we are and exactly what we represented. "Who's going to write it?" someone asks, and Lacey bellows from his chair, "How about Thomas? He is the writer."

When I was eight, I wrote a story about my dog, Nancy, and how fat she was. It was maybe a page long and had colorful illustrations. I still have that story. I took it with me to college. When my sister was eight, she wanted to be a veterinarian. When she was ten, she wanted to be a marine biologist. When she was twelve, she wanted to be an astronaut. When she was fifteen, she wanted to be veterinarian again. In all those years, and to this day, if you ask me what I want to be, you will hear, "a writer." You will, if you ask around, hear my friends and family say I will be a writer. Some say a great writer. Some say, "Thomas? He wants to be a writer." Lacey was the first person to say that I *was* a writer, without ever looking at my writing. That one phrase uttered by him gave me the confidence to follow my writing instinct to a degree.

Lacey did not see my writing until I took Lit of AIDS with him my junior year. It was the most emotional class I have taken. I made many friends in that class and learned more about Lacey. His passion was equal to what he loved and hated. It was also the first time I had really heard the cough. Lacey was an extremely articulate man, every word that he said had meaning and energy behind it. He loved to talk! Many times after class I would rush home to look up the words he said during the day. I also started to imitate him (out of respect, of course). Many other students did as well, envious of the hilarity and vulgarity that Lacey thought up. He never had an uninteresting story and if it was not for the coughing, you might think your father was telling you a bedtime story. Not that your father would have dismissed class because he was too embarrassed to finish a story about the first time he went to a gay bar. He got so caught up in his life; that is what he loved: life. It was not until two days later that he told us that he bit a man's nipple because his chest was "glistening." I think the students who imitated him wanted to display passion in their words and simply wanted to share Lacey's stories with everyone. And you can only tell a Lacey story like Lacey.

He liked to speak in twos about a lot of things. Certain words could only be spoken with other words. For instance ... "God" and "Damn it" never surfaced unless together. Nor did "Gin" and "Tonic"

Toward the end of class, Lacey invited us to his house for drinks and to drop off our papers. I am not a big drinker as a lot of people know, so I was not going to hang around for long. I happened to be the first one to arrive, and he wanted to sit down and go

over a few things with me. He asked how I was feeling about class, told me I had been making some great observations and then asked me if I was dyslexic. Nobody had ever asked me that before. I had never really thought about it. He showed me my other papers where signs of dyslexia had emerged and then asked me some simple questions about how I read and write. It only took about twenty minutes, but that was more than anyone had ever given me about my study habits. I thanked him, left, and went home to call my mother and ask about my possible condition. She said that she had known for a long time but never got around to telling me. All the way up until my junior year of college, I felt that something was wrong with me because I was not reading as fast as the other students, or because after looking over my papers five times, they still came back with simple errors. That still happens now, but thanks to Lacey, I no longer feel it is my fault, and now I know how to work at fixing the problem.

After Lit of AIDS, I was a Lacey fan and would talk about him often to my peers. Most of us in that class decided that if we really wanted to enjoy Lacey in all his glory, England was the place to be. When the information meeting came, I was there. Over the summer I realized that I might not be able to afford to go and backed out. About a week after the payment date, I decided it did not matter; I needed to go to England. I made some phone calls and talked to Lacey. He listened and said, "I will have to check with the travel agent..." but then he said, "Fuck it, Thomas, you're going."

It would be the last England trip with Lacey. Everyone on the bus united and became fast friends because of the hardships we had to face in the beginning. A lot of beautiful and fun things happened on that trip, but one of the greatest things was our stay at the Black Swan.

We had been traveling all day and we were all very anxious to get to our hotel. The bus was silent as we ventured up a long, windy road. We were on this hill for an hour; as the darkness entered the bus, some of would rest on each other for support and comfort. Occasionally, we would wake to look down and see exactly how high off the earth we were. At the top, Lacey's voice whispered over the intercom: "I bet you are all wondering why I brought you here. This is where my lover took me." He told us about the town and about the hotel, but more importantly, he told us about the castle and how he and his partner made love there. He encouraged us to do the same.

There were not many couples on the trip, but we all knew what he meant: "Go out and live, people." Most did on the first night. I was not one of them, mostly because I had gotten in trouble with the law in the States and could not afford to get into trouble overseas. I did eventually go. With two of my other friends, one foggy night, the castle called us. We did not stay very long, but it was enough to feel alive. Here in the presence of history, we trampled the soil, making our own where Lacey had made his.

There were some other great moments at the Black Swan. There was the night I sat at Lacey's table; when you sat at Lacey's table he bought you wine. I had never had wine before, except for a swig of Boones one New Year. Discouraged that my drinking habits were few, he poured me a glass. I smelled for a minute and then gently took a drink. "Tastes like Boones," I said. His eyes got big and he announced to those that were near, "This man gets no more alcohol for the rest of the trip." There were all the after dinner conversations, where I learned gossip about other professors. I have some of it on tape: everyone being free, being scholarly, being a family. Inhibitions were few, if any, and that is how Lacey wanted it.

The last time I saw Lacey was at Homecoming. I talked to him for a few minutes and then went about my night. Much later I called him to ask the whereabouts of Dr. Angela Jones, now that I was living in the Bay area. He called me to tell me where she was teaching and to wish me luck. I hung up the phone thinking that I would be able to have dinner with him out here sometime, since San Francisco was one of his favorite places.

The great thing about Lacey is that he got fed up with people who did not come out of their closets. Lacey helped me come out of my closet, and I do not mean the closet of my sexuality. I am talking about the fact that we all have closets; we all hide our feelings, and Lacey became exasperated that these people were not being themselves. I remember thinking how embarrassed some of us were on the National Theatre tour when Lacey was outspoken about everything. He knew more than the tour guide. But Lacey did not care. He knew who he was and nobody was going to make him feel bad about himself.

Thank you Lacey. Thank you for being you and wanting to get to know me.

Jennifer Leigh Coates '99

The day of Stephen Lacey's death, I went home from work and called anyone I could think of who wouldn't mind listening to me cry.

When I finally put the phone in its cradle, I glanced at the pad of Shakespeare quotes that I use as message paper. The quote on the top was from "King Lear." Stephen, I remembered, had introduced me to "King Lear" in 1997. I had always favored "Hamlet," but Stephen said he liked "King Lear" the best, because his was not the tragedy of one mere man, but of an entire society.

Stephen was able to teach as he did because he viewed each text—and each student—not as a mere, isolated entity, but something connected to the greater whole. Stephen's death, like Lear's, is more than a personal loss. Not only has Cornell lost one of its finest teachers, but humankind has lost a soul who changed others for the better through his belief in the power of art.

Jeffrey McCune '99

There is so much to say about this great man. He exemplified what it truly means to be compassionate, caring, and clever. Stephen Lacey exemplified the essence of the phrase "keep it real." It is for this reason we loved him so.

My relationship with Stephen goes as far back as the Literature of AIDS course, but extends to a fruitful mentor-mentee relationship, a friendship of truth and honesty, and a magical sharing of ideas, thoughts, concerns, and rituals of "the life." It is because of Stephen that I was able to stand tall in moments where it seemed that no one was there; he taught me it is more cool to be myself than not to be myself. I remember so many times that Stephen walked the walk in his support for ALL people. Well, yes, he was quite verbose. But we loved that. I loved that. He loved that. And you always knew that

Stephen loved you and he loved himself. In no way am I suggesting that Stephen was arrogant. However, he was quite the confident person. We all know with good reason.

I found out about Stephen's death recently at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln forensics speech tournament. I am a graduate assistant for this program. I was heartbroken by the news of Stephen's extended journey. We all know that Stephen walked a mile with us and is probably now walking another mile. The good mile. As I reflected on the things Lacey taught me, I found that I was able to do what I believe Stephen would want me to do: "Channel your sadness. Don't allow this sadness to become you." So I shared with my speech competitors these words: "Do what you love and enjoy it to the utmost. Make every moment magical. And remember in every moment why you do what you do." This is what Stephen Lacey's life gave me and these words are with me for life.

Daniel Cope '00

The very first day I met Stephen Lacey, I cried; that is the effect he had on me. I was in his Literature of AIDS course, back when it was still a 111, and Stephen opened his heart to the class and cried. I cried with him.

From that day on, Stephen was more than my advisor or my professor, he was my guide. My freshman year was not easy. Accepting yourself as a gay male is not easy. Stephen helped me cope. I cannot remember the countless number of tears I have shed to Stephen, or the number of gin and tonics that followed.

For the next two years, Stephen and I remained close, but not as close as we should have. It was not until the beginning of my senior year that Stephen gave my life a complete overhaul. He was very nosy about my private life, but that was okay, because I enjoyed the attention.

One day during my senior seminar, Stephen said he needed to talk to me after class. Having just turned in a paper the day before, I was sure that we were not going to have a good talk. I met Stephen in his office where he proceeded to try to set me up with a thirty-six-year-old ex-student of his. I declined, but nonetheless, I was honored that he would try to make me happy.

Stephen has been the father figure of my life at Cornell. He shaped and molded me into a brave and strong young man. He has given me shelter over the holidays when I could not spend them with my own family. He has taught me not just to love literature, but to live literature, and he has taught me about love. Stephen once sat me down in his living room and told me that I was a fool for thinking that I should not allow myself to take chances on people. He told me that the only way that I will ever find true love is if I let my heart get broken over and over. His advice will never escape my heart or my mind.

I saw Stephen in the hospital before he died, and, on my way out of his room, I stopped, turned, and told him that I love him. My words were true; they will always be.

David J. Peterson '00

Hegel argued that sometimes what a person wishes to express is limited by the means of that expression; I have found that to be true in this case. It is impossible to sum up Stephen's influence over my life in words, regardless of how numerous or heartfelt those words are. Much of who I am and how I think is the result of late night conversations with Stephen over a gin and tonic, perhaps two. It is because of Stephen that I love literature as much as I do, and it was through watching him that I developed the desire to teach. All it took was a three-week dose of French literature with Stephen my first block here and the next four years were already written, so to speak.

He was more than my professor; Stephen was also my mentor, an advisor, and a friend. I learned as much from him outside the classroom as in it—maybe more—and Stephen would always listen to those problems which, after a drink and a talk, did not seem as terrible as before.

These words are not doing him nearly the justice he deserves, and I am sorry for that. All that can be written is that Stephen Lacey was the kindest, most generous, most brilliant man I have been fortunate enough to know. He had a wonderful sense of humor and an incredible life. I believe that the best thanks I can give Stephen for sharing some of that life with me is to always keep in mind the most valuable lesson I learned from him: half of everything is style, the other half, passion.

Terri Sonnek '00

Until I signed up for the England Trip last year, I did not even have a clue who Stephen Lacey was. However, I quickly learned that he embodied everything. He was a good friend, a wonderful professor, honest, lived life to the fullest, had a wonderful sense of humor, and was a damn good bartender.

The trip to England started out as a disaster because of a huge blizzard that hit the Midwest the same weekend we were scheduled to leave. Yet a strong bond was formed among the students when we were trapped in our various locations. That bond lasted throughout the trip and Stephen told us we were one of the best groups of students he had ever taken.

As a result, I made wonderful friends, shared dinner and conversation with individuals, including Stephen, that I had never met before. Thanks to Stephen's tour of England, I have a desire to live overseas and explore the nuances of Shakespeare.

Stephen sparked something in everyone he met and taught. In some cases, as in our Proust class, it may have been frustration, but it was also a deep love for English literature and the desire for just one more of his gin and tonics, with a little more gin than tonic.

I miss you, Stephen. Cheers.

Gail Bransteitter '01

I consider myself extremely fortunate to have taken classes with Stephen. He is one of the major reasons I came to Cornell. As a high school senior I was able to sit in on his Literature of AIDS class, and there I encountered a wonderful man full of stories and passion. I thought if all the professors here were half as good as he was, I was all set.

I was able to work with Stephen on my first play at Cornell, *The Taming of the Shrew*. I was so intimidated to audition in front of him it went horribly, but Stephen was encouraging and constructive. We had the cast party at Stephen's house. As Gretchen Niemiec entered the room (after playing Petruchio in the gender-reversed show) Stephen proclaimed, "When you bit that apple tonight ... you were so cocky, even *I* would have gone to bed with you." At that moment, I knew I would love this man.

I did not have a class with Stephen until my sophomore year when I took Shakespearean Comedies and Sonnets, and it was exciting to see him come to life during class discussion. He always pushed us to go further: "Yes, yes. More, more...give me more!" The next course I took from Stephen, the most anticipated class of my college career, was Literature of AIDS. I learned about courageous struggles, pain, humor, and love. My emotions were pushed to a level I never knew I had. No class or professor had ever done that for me. This year, Stephen became my advisor and encouraged me to do what I love, but to stay focused and realistic.

Stephen also gave Cornell students the opportunity to work with Desmond Barrit from the Royal Shakespeare Company. Again, Stephen's knowledge of and love for Shakespeare gave everyone a new appreciation for the material. Stephen and I grew very close during the production of *Comedy of Errors*. I found myself giving tours of his home because I had spent so much time there.

I am very fortunate that Stephen was such a large part of my college career. I will always feel blessed that he shared so much of his life with me. I am sad for all the students who never had a class with him, or were never able to work closely with him. I will never forget the times spent at his house just talking and gossiping. Stephen was bluntly honest, and never hid his emotions: he was articulate, eloquent, funny, sarcastic, and passionate. I have a great amount of respect and admiration for Stephen. He will always hold a place in my heart.

We are never allowed to forget that courage and compassion, truth and renewal, are the price and gift of survival-that survival in the context of loss may lead to a unique and even eloquent reengagement of the self.
(Stephen Lacey, from the Foreword to *Mortal Men* by Richard McIntyre).

Peka Poyer '01

I have no, "I was drinking at Stephen's house this one time ..." stories. I did spend a few evenings at his house, true, but mostly I prefer to recess them into my subconscious because every time I left I couldn't shake the feeling that I had just made a complete fool of myself. There was the time that I got into such a heated argument with another student that Lacey had to direct the attention of the other guests away from us (which he did with perfect manners and elegant grace, I might add). There was the time he told Desmond

Barrit not to drink the full glass of champagne on the table by warning him, “Desmond, that will make you *very drunk*,” and I volunteered to drain it instead.

There was the time that a friend of mine introduced Stephen to our “Shafted Shakespeare” idea—something we had cooked up at lunch one day. My vision was of a Shakespeare company that would only perform the Shakespeare plays that no one else in the area was doing that year; my friend pitched it to Stephen as performing “those Shakespeare plays you never see done” which was, naturally, the wrong thing to say to Stephen Lacey. Stephen Lacey has seen Shakespearean plays that Shakespeare never saw. From nights such as these, I spent quite a long time thinking that Stephen Lacey didn't quite like me, nonetheless grateful for the opportunity even to be not-quite-liked by a walking library.

All of this explains why I was overwhelmed when one of my papers for Lacey's class was returned with the postscript, “I should mention here that you have a wonderful style and an impressive voice of your own.” I think that at this point my jaw fell open and then stretched into a grin that lasted three days. It suddenly didn't matter to me, an almost clinically self-conscious person, whether I had made a fool of myself or not—at least I was my own fool. I think Stephen's most constant theme to his students was that we should be ourselves, and mean it.

Adam Hale '02

Stephen Lacey was my first professor at Cornell. I remember walking into class that first day, holding the largest textbook I had ever seen, far removed from anything and anyone I'd ever known. I was a million miles beyond scared; I was terrified. We all sat there, each of us just as nervous as the other, waiting in silence for Stephen to show up.

I'll never forget that moment when he finally did.

When he walked in the room, white-haired and confident, smiling and loveable, all fear washed away. I knew, on first sight, that he was a good teacher and a better man, and that I had no reason to fear his classroom.

Further experience with him only confirmed this.

Stephen Lacey changed my life forever. Through him, I gained a love of learning, of Shakespeare, and of life that few others could have given me. He was an inspiration to me, as he was to so many others before. My biggest regret in the face of his passing is not that I will no longer set foot in his classes, but that future generations of Cornellians will be denied that opportunity. It was truly an honor to learn from him, to live with him, and to count him as a friend.

That is what Stephen truly was to me: a friend, above all else.

Satyagraha, Stephen. And thank you.

Sarah Hamilton '02

The last time I spoke with Steve was in his home about a month before he was hospitalized. I had gone over to have him sign a course change form, and he started showing me pictures of his friends and telling stories about his days in college. He told stories about sneaking in the windows of Bowman-Carter in the middle of the night and his first day of class at Cornell. Then he started the story about how he and his roommate had this bottle of bourbon.

Steve and his friends would mix bourbon and Tang together. Steve Lacey, the man who taught us the meaning of “good alcohol.” I was speechless.

When Steve was in college, there were still house mothers in the dorms and they would periodically conduct room searches to be sure that no one had any “contraband” in their rooms. Having alcohol was, according to Steve, an expulsion-worthy offense.

And then came the morning when the infamous bottle of bourbon was left in the middle of the floor. When Steve and his roommate returned to their room after a room search one morning, they were terrified, as they felt there was no way to miss the bottle in the middle of the floor. On the way into the building, they ran into their house mother and inquired about the morning's search. She said, “Oh, you boys are so good that we didn't even bother to search your room. We know you wouldn't do anything wrong.”

Steve never knew if the room was actually searched, but he always thanked his house mother for the opportunity to continue his education. On the day that Steve died, I found myself thanking her, too.

Beth Richardson '02

How can one pick a topic to put Stephen into? He was a teacher, mentor, and friend to anyone who ever had a class with him, and to many who didn't. I was only privileged to have one class with Stephen, Shakespeare I. He made me want to come to class every day to listen to him bring William Shakespeare alive. The sonnets were no longer confusing poems written long ago, but a sort of diary into Shakespeare's soul that Stephen opened up for us. The comedies became a part of our lives, especially with Stephen and the wonderful Desmond putting on “Comedy of Errors.”

I loved Stephen for being a friend more than a teacher. You knew that he knew more about everything than you ever will, and he knew it too... but you never felt like he was above you in any way. He was just a friend with a great sense of humor and a lust for life. I learned this especially by coming to Desmond's birthday party at Stephen's house. More fun wasn't possible during that evening!

These are the things that I remember when I think back. One block was all the time I had to know him, and he will still be a part of my life forever. I can hear him telling us “goodbye darling” in that deep English voice.

Goodbye, Professor Lacey. You will be missed, but you will live on.