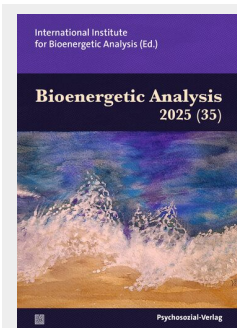


*Robert Hilton*

## Celebration of Life



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*Reviewers for this issue:*

Vita Heinrich Clauer, Odila Weigand, Laurie Ure, Peter Geisser, Susan Kanor, Margit Koemeda, Vincenia Schroeter, Piero Rolando

*Translators of abstracts for this issue:*

Angelina Sarmatova (Russian), Chiara Blasi (French), Christoph Helferich (German), Maê Nascimento (Portuguese), Rosaria Filoni (Italian), Rebecca Liu Gianpu (Chinese), IIBA Staff (Spanish)

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# Celebration of Life

**William Eugene White**

**September 7, 1939–March 9, 2024**

*Robert Hilton*

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## My Memories of Bill

I met Bill in 1967. At that time, he had recently graduated from Yale Divinity School and was an associate minister at the First Presbyterian church in Santa Ana. Bill joined a minister's group I was leading at the Institute for Therapeutic Psychology, which was also in Santa Ana. Shortly thereafter, in 1968 I was introduced to a new form of psychotherapy called Bioenergetic Analysis.

For the next four years, I continued my training in this new therapy while Bill eventually left the ministry and pursued his studies to receive his Ph.D. in psychology. In 1972 the Southern California Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis was formed in Newport Beach, California. This was a local branch of the main institute in New York where the founder and author of the books on Bioenergetics, Alexander Lowen, lived and practiced. Bill was the first student to enroll in this new Institute.

In the seventies and early eighties Bioenergetic Analysis became popular in Europe and South America. After 4 years of training, Bill quickly moved from being a student to being a local trainer to an International trainer teaching especially in Italy, Switzerland and locally in San Diego. Bill was gifted in languages.

He did the New York times Sunday crossword puzzle every week in ink. He studied Greek and German in college and taught himself Italian so he could better communicate with the students he was teaching. Bill was so popular as a teacher that graduates wanted him to continue with providing therapy and supervision for them and thus they organized Master Classes which Bill conducted until he moved to be with us here at Regents a little over 2 years ago. One of these

Master's classes met for 25 years. Eventually he was unanimously voted by his peers to be the Executive Director of the International Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis.

Bioenergetic Analysis was not just a theory Bill taught but it represented a community of dedicated therapists. He joined a group of Bioenergetic trainers in 1979 that have continued to meet regularly for the past 45 years. When Virginia moved out here from New York in 1985 having received her bioenergetic training there, she and I and Bill and Karen became close friends. We had dinner together every Thursday night. He was my golfing buddy for many years and the only witness to my hole-in-one.

Bill was the least narcissistic person I ever met. He was always more interested in the other person than he was himself. He was also a true master of his craft. He was dedicated in mind and heart to his task as a therapist. His brilliant mind and his compassionate empathy created an exemplar for us all.

To quote Shakespeare: "His life was gentle; and the elements so mixed in him, that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, THIS WAS A MAN" He cannot be replaced only remembered and loved.

The night before he left us his family gathered around him in his hospital room and sang as he directed them in beautiful harmony. It was just the day before that Virginia and I visited Bill. He sat forward in bed and said, "I may not ever see you two again so I am going to be very demanding," which was not like Bill. "I want to leave this life with an open heart. So, come, sit beside me. I want to tell you what you mean to me."

The next day he left us. His family, sister, brother and close friends were all there. It was an experience Virginia and I shall never forget. Members of the family took turns holding Bill's hand while others played a guitar and sang. They reminisced about their life with this marvelous husband, brother, father, and grandfather. They recalled camping trips they took and humorous things that happened. They laughed, sang and cried. This expression of love did not happen by accident but was a spontaneous testimony to Bill and Karen's enduring love. I know that even though he could not respond, he heard and was pleased that his desire had come true, he was leaving this world and going home with an open heart.

In closing, I share this silent meditation using Bill's last words to me and Virginia.

Please take your time and in memory of Bill and the expression of your own heart, place your hand on your heart while you read his words. Let your heart be your guide as it explores the meaning of each line in *your* life.

I may never see you again  
I want to leave this life with an open heart  
Come, sit here beside me  
I want to tell you what you mean to me.