

Hold sacred space when words lack meaning

"Holding sacred space" is a term I heard years ago that simply means standing beside and being present to what is happening.

I was reminded of this term when I read the story of a psychologist attending a workshop about dream interpretation. She tells the story of an audience member who reported a horrific recurring dream, in which the dreamer was stripped of all human dignity and worth through Nazi atrocities.



Charlotte Lankard

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YOUR LIFE

As the dream was related, the psychologist said she was formulating in her mind the interpretation of the dream, but when the reading was complete, one of the panel members

looked out over the large audience and asked them to please rise, saying, "We will stand together in a moment of silence in response to this dream."

The audience stood and the psychologist was waiting impatiently for the discussion she was sure would follow. Instead, they went on to the next question.

She didn't understand at all, and a few days later, she asked one of the workshop leaders about it. "Ah, Lois," he said, "there is in life a

suffering so unspeakable, a vulnerability so extreme that it goes far beyond words, beyond explanations and even beyond healing. In the face of such suffering, all we can do is bear witness so no one need suffer alone."

Perhaps you have had something tragic happen to you or someone you love, or you read of horrific happenings, like children who die — victims of neglect and unimaginable abuse. Our response is to

want to comfort, but the reality is there are times when nothing we can say or do will make it better. Nothing will fix it.

These are the times when all we need to do is be present and hold sacred space so the person or persons do not have to suffer alone.

Although I'd never heard of the term, I first experienced someone holding sacred space for me following a climbing accident that could easily have been

fatal or left me paralyzed.

My friend Dot visited me in the hospital. She came into my room and without saying a word, put her arms carefully around my shoulders — the only place that wasn't broken — laid her cheek next to mine — and wept.

That has been over 30 years ago and it is a moment I have never forgotten.

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Douglass: Oklahoma family's saga mostly filmed in state

FROM PAGE 1D

"Heaven's Rain" proves it isn't just about the 1979 murders of the Rev. Richard and Marilyn Douglass.

And that's how Brooks Douglass, 46, planned it.

"A lot of people will be surprised that it's not really a crime story," he said during a recent interview in Oklahoma City.

"It's a story about a family. It's a story about a brother and sister who go through a struggle and try to find peace in their lives."

A movie premiere event for "Heaven's Rain" will be tonight at Science Museum Oklahoma. Douglass said the movie will open for the public at the 89er Theater in Kingfisher and Harkins Bricktown 16 in Oklahoma City on Friday.

The movie was filmed in several locations in Oklahoma including the state Capitol building, the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester and the Governor's Mansion (in a scene featuring Gov. Brad Henry). Other scenes were filmed in the green jungles of Brazil, where the Douglasses served as Southern Baptist missionaries. At the time of his death, Richard Douglass was senior pastor of Putnam City Baptist Church in northwest Oklahoma City.

Brooks Douglass, who now lives in Los Angeles, said he always hoped to see the movie make it to the big screen by fall 2010, but other people questioned whether it would happen.

Douglass and the movie's director, Paul Brown, co-wrote the screenplay, and Douglass produced the film with his own funds and money received from donors who believed in his dream to share his family's story. He said various film companies over the years have wanted to bring the story to life, but he didn't feel comfortable with their treatment of it. For some, financial backing was shaky, or other concerns came up.

The movie depicts the October 1979 night that two men shot to death Richard and Marilyn Douglass at their rural home near Kingfisher. Brooks Douglass, then 16, and his sister, Leslie, 12, survived also being shot. Brooks and Leslie went on to testify at the murder trials of the two men, Glen Burton Ake and Steven Hatch, who were charged with



Former state senator Brooks Douglass talks with actor Mike Vogel on the set of the new movie "Heaven's Rain."

PHOTO PROVIDED



Former state senator Brooks Douglass portrays his father, the late Rev. Richard Douglass, in this scene from the new movie "Heaven's Rain."

PHOTO PROVIDED

their parents' deaths. Ake and Hatch were each convicted of the murders and sentenced to death. Hatch was executed in August 1996, but Ake, the triggerman, got a new trial and was given life sentences.

The bulk of the film, however, chronicles the lives of Brooks and Leslie Douglass after the murders.

Filming final moments emotional

Douglass said the worst part of making the film was filming the murder scene, particularly since he portrayed his father, Richard.

He said worst of all was filming the final part of the scene and realizing that he was re-enacting his father's last, tragic moments

on Earth.

"It really turned out to be an emotional moment," Douglass said.

"This was the one time in my life that something was much harder than what I thought it would be."

Douglass said he heard the term "closure" often in the days after production wrapped for "Heaven's Rain."

People wondered whether he had found it or if it had found him during the making of the film.

Douglass said he's unsure about finding closure, but he does know that his faith, the faith so carefully nurtured by his parents, has helped guide him to what he feels is a sense of justice and peace.

"I don't know if you ever get over something like this," he said.

"I doubt that there's a day that goes by that I don't think about it, but I also think I've tried to deal with it in a way that my faith has taught me, in a way that my parents taught me."

And he hopes moviegoers will find helpful and hopeful messages throughout the film.

"Too often, I think, there's a tendency to hold onto what happens, to hold a grudge that hurts us more than other person (can)," Douglass said.

"Ultimately, we have to move on — not forgetting our loved ones or forgetting what happened — and live our lives to the fullest. This is what I had to do."

Scout: Leadership skills

FROM PAGE 1D

mendous impact on my life," Askins said. "The skills are the values of courage, confidence and character taught so well to Girl Scouts by their leaders. Those lessons have stayed with me throughout my life and served me well. The courage to step forward and lead, the confidence to believe you can succeed, and the character to do what you believe is right are the fundamentals of a productive life."

Fallin said that some of her most pleasant memories growing up in Tecumseh involved being a Girl Scout.

"Looking back, some of my fondest memories growing up involve my time in Girl Scouts," she said. "The friends I made

and the time I spent there, the interest I developed in serving our community and the process of setting goals and meeting them all helped me to move into adulthood as a more responsible and well-rounded woman."

Looking back on their own Girl Scouting experiences, both reminisced about what they learned and what they carry with them today on the campaign trail.

"I enjoyed the time I spent with my mother, who was our Scout leader," Fallin said. "In a lot of ways she was the embodiment of what the Scouts represent: She was civic-minded, selfless and kind."

For Askins, being a Girl Scout meant enjoying camp, earning badges and learning to work as a team.

"It helped me understand this core value: Make new friends but keep the old — one is silver, and the other gold."

Stackpole said that no matter who wins the Nov. 2 election, Oklahoma's Girl Scout family can be proud of the accomplishments of our next governor. "I expect that young Girl Scouts watching either woman take that oath of office will be inspired to greatness in their own lives," she said. "Young girls will be able to look to our next governor and say, 'She was once a Girl Scout like me.'"

For more information on Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma and how girls can become involved, go to www.gswestok.org or call (800) 608-0022.

DID YOU KNOW?

'Heaven's Rain'

The title of Brooks Douglass' new film "Heaven's Rain" came from movie director Paul Brown's citing of a passage in Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice": "The quality of mercy is not strain'd, It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven, Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Douglass said with his knowledge of the Bible, he knew the heart of the literary passage is rooted in the words of Jesus and therefore a fitting premise for his film: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:44-45).

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Why Aren't Men Living Longer?

AMERICA'S SILENT CRISIS

THE CULPRIT: POOR HEALTH HABITS

A fairly well known statistic is that women live on average **seven years longer** than men. But how does that translate into families? In Oklahoma, it means that for married couples of the same age, **more than 14%** of women will enter retirement as widows.

This silent crisis of men living shorter, healthier lives has reached **epic proportions**. Causes can include lack of health insurance, routine checkups or preventive screenings, and a delay in seeking medical attention when sick or in pain. These poor health habits take a toll at early ages, but the **trend is accelerated** as men reach retirement.

Men's Health University (Men-U) was initiated by INTEGRIS to help raise awareness and turn the tide, providing easy access to screenings that men might otherwise ignore. Screenings include glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure, vision, hearing and EKG. Men-U also offers prostate, colon, oral, skin and colorectal cancer screenings. EKG and cancer screenings are by appointment only. Call the HealthLine at 951-2277.

INTEGRIS Men's Health University
Saturday, Sept. 18 · 9 am to Noon
Moore-Norman Technology Center
13301 S. Pennsylvania
Join us for food and door prizes.

Last year, more than **1,000 men** took advantage of these screenings and took control of their health. If you or a loved one have been ignoring your health, **now's the time to take action.**

INTEGRIS Health.
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