

Thank you all for coming. This is a strange situation for us all.

Karen no longer has to struggle.. that is such a relief  
she died peacefully last Wednesday Morning.

I thank everyone who assisted us with her care over the years and there were many years  
and many helpers many of you here today. I want to thank my son Dyfan not only for  
ongoing his support

I thank every one from MCM for their sensitivity and professionalism in helping keep  
Karen where she wanted to be... at home, Dr Phillip Boltin her GP for his regular visits,  
Mario at St Vincents Radiology, Dr Richard de Boer her oncologist who cared for Karen  
since she was first diagnosed so long ago in 2004-5 and A/P Brian Le Head of the Royal  
Melbourne Palliative Care Unit who for the last 6 years with his gentle manner and  
expertise has made the impossible possible.

For her funeral Karen wanted a simple event...

I would have had you listening to great choral music for hours fortunately for you  
perhaps...Karen did not want that .

Instead you heard music from Luke Plumb and his band the Circuit from the album Turn  
and Return

he is a young friend who Karen liked very much... he is amazing mandolinist who  
unfortunately could not be here today to play live as he is the air somewhere as we speak.

I would also like to thank in advance, Dyfan and the Toot Toot Toots/Twin Beasts who plan  
to reform the band especially to play a benefit for Karen at the Old Bar with proceeds  
going to the Peter Mac...we will let you know when

I would like to thank those people who travelled long distances from interstate, overseas or  
from the country.

I would also like to thank the staff here at Lonergan and Raven Funerals for their sensitivity  
and care

BUT MOST OF ALL

I would like to thank Karen for the way through years of illness she remained stoically  
positive, an inspiration to all always giving more than she received.

Karen did not want people who did not know her, to speak about her,  
so you have to put up with me

She was generally unconcerned about the funeral... apart from wanting a cremation  
saying the funeral was not just for her but for us..

This funeral is a chance for us to say farewell and thankyou to Karen to remember her  
each in our own way... it is a sad day but hopefully it will finish on a brighter note as we  
celebrate Karen's wonderful spirit and appetite for life....as we watch the slide show of  
photos we realise the real Karen was/is more than the sum of these parts.

I want you to note as you look at these photos their great potential for humour I hope they  
make you smile as well as remember, There are amazing shots of things growing out of

Karen's head, of feet in the air in different parts of the world, expressions of boredom on Karen's face often waiting for me to take the photo, of flies photobombing us and often you will see Photos of me with Karen in the back ground.. I think she was stalking me,, Hopefully as well as revealing Karen's humour they reveal her ..inner and outer beauty and her affection and curiosity with the world

I first met Karen in in 1969 at college

we didn't get together as a couple till 1973 as my son Dyfan so eloquently put it Dad you were punching above your weight ...I can only agree I was lucky.

After the funeral Karen wanted us to have an informal get together so after this farewell please come to 8 Park Street for a while...

AS we watch the slideshow

I will ask Dyfan to read a short letter  
and then Karen's sister Frances to contribute  
finally I will read a slightly longer letter

After these readings we simply stand and say farewell as Karen's body leaves.  
Then you are invited back to 8 Park street

I will now ask Dyfan to read

I will now ask Frances Desly or Chris to read

Now my turn

I will read my letter which includes a note written by Karen.

This was difficult to write because it started off as a personal love letter but as I imagined reading it in public...I re-edited it... it needed major adjustments or it would sound too Mills and Boon /Days of Our lives like.... So it has become a mixture of heart felt musings..of exaggerated memories in no particular order some parts written when Karen was with us some after her death.. my tenses can be all over the place...so please forgive me if It slips more into the style of James Joyce rather than Barbara Cartlan

in truth it remains a love letter...and it is strange to read it in public

A letter to Karen

I have been trying to learn to say goodbye to you for so long... but can't

In Paris,  
I dragged you to galleries and bookshops... You dragged me to shoe shops...  
You dragged me to cafes... and to clothes shops...and yes to more shoe shops.

I know you also dragged me to galleries and bookshops too .....but as I said this is for effect

Later we took Dyfan to Paris  
that is when you dragged both Dyfan and I to shoe shops ... and oh the sales...  
and yes after the sales yet more shoe shops... there is a drawing by the 7 year old Dyfan in the slideshow that proves this... it is also on our mantle piece at home

-  
to be fair, you bought for presents for others more than yourself...Usually in Australai you were too busy working in

One theory I have about this shoe shopping thing is that all this was not just about your love of shoes or the act of acquiring more shoes but  
it was probably to educate Dyfan and I...

... to teach us patience.... and boy did we take a long time to learn.... But you didn't give up you kept buying more shoes...

On the other hand I dragged you and later Dyfan to churches...cathedrals I was interested in gothic iconography.. in contemplative spaces...  
you weren't really a believer but you were the one who always lit candles for loved ones. ...  
you had a silent spirituality...and you were wary of dogma.

We dragged each other to museums...we loved to learn, discover connections to search out what we didn't know. WE knew that art showed us ourselves looking/learning, reflecting our own understandings...it revealed what we knew and what we didn't  
We walked, we talked we shared meals with friends...it was a place where we had time...time to be. We laughed a lot.

You saw Paris as a place where we were immersed in living... in being.  
In fact you express it better in this fragment of writing of yours that I found

Read letter

Our lives have been so much bigger than Paris after all Paris is only another city.  
And it was here.... in Melbourne... a place we also love, where we shared family, friends and careers and importantly each other.

In life we complimented each other and learnt from each other... we gained a type of energy... over the years we tried to share this energy..  
You brought this enthusiasm for life into your teaching, your love for learning and caring, into your friendships

ours has been a long goodbye...

something I selfishly have been glad about.

I didn't want this time to come, but it had to  
for both of us and it will come for all of us,  
a time when you and later me and all our loved ones will dissolve into time  
... ..that is the way of things

What matters is that we are here, we were here  
that we were here with all our human limitations of understanding and frailties but also  
here with our resilience, our abilities, our hopes, with our humanity... with our great depth  
of feeling,  
That feeling has kept you and I going and fundamentally that feeling I believe is love, a  
love for each other, for our son and for our friends... indeed for life!  
You were always there for me , you were there for your families for your friends and you  
were often there for strangers.

The journey was and is amazing.... Really...this strange mystery we are all part of.  
Recognising this is what makes our lives wondrous and enables us to feel privileged to have  
been here together...amid the sorrows and the joys. I am glad that we shared our destinies.  
You have touched each of the individuals in your life in a special way.. with grace, sincerity,  
humour and care.  
We have each had our journey with you and each journey has been ...precious.

The slide show we all will be watching was originally going to be a series of you taken on  
the bridges of Paris over the years from the 1970s till recently... the bridges remain as a  
constant as we changed.. the images show you/us aging, smiling our way through time ...  
These photos show how we started off young and over the years finished up old.  
like our memories I mixed them up.

The bridge... a metaphor .. linking our birth and death over the river of time... in time..  
Wow....you would roll your eyes at such a description as being a bit pompous, and suggest I  
go back to the lecture theatre  
and I don't blame you... because I agree

Thankfully that idea of bridges faded and the range of images sort of grew ...like our world  
to include other times other places.. and importantly other people

Yet Paris was special for us.  
Perhaps it is just that we had breathing time there... I often in the studio... you away from  
work or perhaps it is just that we took a lot of pictures there.

This following part of my letter is where I misrepresent you... I claim poetic licence for  
dramatic effect



Karen this letter is not the place for me to list your achievements.. but you were an amazing ceramicist and weaver even when at college, I believe light years ahead of your time... but more likely of your time, your dedication, contribution and innovation to art education and teaching have been outstanding since the 1970s. Students and knowledge first.. always. I know how you affected positively the lives of students and colleagues. You made people feel special, valued.

I loved how we grew together how we shared friends together and I loved how when our ideas differed we could accept the differences and see what united us... not simply what separated us.

We have not been perfect but that is ok too.

We/ you were/are only human ....now that is an obvious comment .... but We/you have contributed what we could when we could.

I loved that we had our son together and that he has deepened our lives and that our love grew to include him.

Our lives have not been without stress... they have been fully deeply felt and lived. your stoicism and optimism in the face of pain and illness was inspirational. ...your love for me has been outstanding, unbelievable and beautiful....

So as in the end of all letters I say farewell  
and offer you a grateful thankyou...  
and a prayer ...  
go in love and peace.

David

Now it is time for us all to say farewell to Karen .  
Please stand as she leaves.

May we have music by Luke again please

Thankyou

And see you back at 8 Park Street the Rushall Crescent end in about 30minutes

Writing, writing, writing, that's what she said, I might try a bit of writing. Might seems to be the optimum word, I might write, I might paint & dabble, I might learn french.

Well I opted to relax and enjoy myself instead. To walk and look, to read, to visit galleries, to open my mind to a myriad of images, to be happy and smile at the very idea of being in this city.

To watch the changing light, the coming of winter and the cold, ~~the~~ bought by a soft warm pink & mauve light. The mist raising from the Seine. The ducks we pass as we walk home from school.