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Obituary: 10-13-2003

Douglass Preston Adams Gochenour

Fellow Practitioners:

On Sunday, October 13th, at about 3:30 pm, Douglass Preston Adams Gochenour, NTI Team Member and my little brother died. Among his final communications yesterday afternoon was a request that you all be told goodbye.

Doug counts two groups of people as family, those of us with whom he shares blood and those of us with whom he shares the spirit of the extraordinary man, especially as expressed in association with the NTI. Unbowed by the ravages of his disease that sapped him of his immense physical power and strength and caused him to suffer indescribable indignities, he maintained his spirit, dignity and good humor until he parted us.

Since at least the beginnings of oral history, extraordinary men have expressed the belief, in one fashion or another, their comrades who left life before them continue to live among them so long as the good deeds of the departed bear fruit in the lives of other extraordinary men. The same tradition holds that such men sit with us and enjoy our company when we think of them and retell stories of their lives. Please indulge me as I tell a few.

Doug had no children. He did, however find that a small boy needed help when his father abandoned him as a toddler. Without comment or request, Doug moved into the boy's life. He took him everywhere and taught him through example how men think and behave. Today that young man is a member of the United States Air Force stationed in Greenland. I am told that in a personal telephone conversation last week, that the young man thanked Doug for all he had done for him and how much he enjoyed their time together.

Doug thanked the Airman and allowed that he did recall some good times interspersed with the "ass kickings" he had to administer to set his nephew in order. Doug sees irreverence as a virtue and is not very skilled at receiving a thank you.

As with all Team members, Doug is devoted to helping good men learn skills that will let them daily return to their families, should evil come their way. Doug's thoughts are on this subject daily. Each conversation we have had for more than a decade involved the work of the NTI Team. That has been especially true since he was diagnosed two years ago. At the time of diagnosis he knew that the odds were very much against him. In the weeks before NTI XI and XII Doug rearranged chemotherapy and other treatments so he could attend the work days. At each of the two events, he was scheduled to be hospitalized for bone marrow

transplants. He manipulated the schedule in each occurrence so he could attend NTI. He worked them both setting aside great personal discomfort and no small risk to his already limited chances. The Team and the NTI are very important to him.

Doug daily wore a pin given to him by Practitioner B. L. Farley at an NTI in the mid-90's. The pin said "sniveling" with the universal sign of forbidden conduct across it. Doug lived that expression. At no time during his illness did he complain. He accepted with dignity and good humor whatever the day brought. When told that Johns Hopkins would no longer treat him because any treatments would be experimental and insurance would not cover it, he went to NIH. When he got there he insisted on being referred to as a "lab rat". They did not like it but he did. Accustomed to dealing with people in each case they see who are facing mortality, the Drs and nurses at that facility gasped as he wandered the hall wearing a shirt that had printed on it, "when you die, we split your gear". Until late last week, Doug rose each day, dressed and went about some project he had set for himself. As part of his daily wear he was armed. When he was unable to get out of bed last Thursday, the visiting nurse arrived to find a handgun under the covers. She reported that to her service who promptly called and said that she would not be returning if there was a gun anywhere around when she arrived. Doug's position was that she need not worry about returning, with that attitude she was not welcome anyway. His humor never failing, near the end, he awoke to find the entire family gathered about him. He looked at us and demanded to know which of us was about to die.

Doug lived DOMARI NOLO. He would not bow to the imposed will of another. He would show respect only to those who earned it through their actions. He is so dedicated to the NTI because he could associate with men of like mind and character. There are men of courage associated with NTI. Many have demonstrated that courage in times when danger was about. Doug demonstrated a special kind of courage. When Death looked at him and smiled, Doug looked him squarely in the eye and smiled back. That hoary old bastard learned that even he could not bend Doug's will or dignity.

Later today the arrangements for Doug's Memorial will be finalized. I will send out a separate e-mail. Doug will be appreciative to any who can make it, and understand those who can not. If you could take a moment to remember him he will happily move among us.

DOMARI NOLO

Skip Gochenour