

July 8, 2008

Dear Family and Friends,

Please forgive our delay in reaching out to so many of you who have sent emails, notes and telephoned us since Bruce's sudden departure from the world he loved so much. There are no words to describe what all of us are feeling right now, but *your* words have provided a great deal of comfort to our family. We are tremendously grateful for *your* friendship and your love.

Since there have been several versions of his passing, we thought you'd like to know that the actual date of his death was probably shortly after midnight on Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup>. His 81<sup>st</sup> birthday was Friday and the last one of us to talk to him was his nephew, Nick Thomas, Jr., at around 10:30 PM. Although the Medical Examiner listed his death as Friday night we all know that Bruce never went to bed until after midnight, so technically he died on the 21<sup>st</sup>. He slumped onto his bed as he was getting into it and we can all take comfort in the knowledge that he never knew what happened. He had had a wonderful birthday chatting by phone with many friends and family members. The string quartet that he was writing was neatly assembled on the card table next to his piano with all of his familiar manuscript writing utensils neatly laid out for the next day's work. And he had even posted the menu on his refrigerator for the meal he was going to serve his first house guests of the summer, due to arrive at Connemara on the following Tuesday: "Liz and Nick: First Dinner in Maine, 2008. Roasted chicken, asparagus with hollandaise sauce, candied yams, and Dorman's ginger ice cream for dessert." Our long-time friends, Gay and Quentin Quereau, had given him a wonderful birthday party on Thursday evening, where he looked rested and said he felt great. It was a blessing for all of us that they were the ones who found him late on Sunday. We had called them when he had not responded to anyone's phone messages since his birthday. Bruce was Quentin's Best Man in their wedding and these dear friends were surely the next best thing to family to care for him at such a heartbreaking time. We will never forget their kindness, sensitivity and love. So now you know "the rest of the story."

Within the next ten days we hope to have a definite and final date to post on his website, [www.montyart.com](http://www.montyart.com), for the Celebration of Life we're planning to give Bruce the kind of send-off he deserves. It will be on October 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>, either at Annenberg or at Irvine Auditorium. Irvine seats more people and it is the University's preferred venue for important dignitaries. We are exceedingly lucky to have our close friend, Brendan O'Brien, and his dedicated committee of Glee Club alumni who are helping us with the planning – and who are relieving us of the logistical challenges that are inherent for this event. Brendan will keep you posted as things progress and if you have questions or suggestions he will be happy to answer them.

In the meantime, please know that our hearts are brimming over with the outpouring of love you have shown for Bruce and to us. We will be forever grateful for the many ways in which all of you have enriched our family's lives with your music and your friendship over many decades. Monty died without any regrets and his was truly a life well lived. We must all be thankful for that.

With love and gratitude,

*Jim Montgomery, Connie Cook, Liz & Nick Thomas & families*