

TOBAGO CENTRE
FOR THE STUDY & PRACTICE OF
INDIGENOUS SPIRITUALITY



Seeds for the journey, brother Norm.

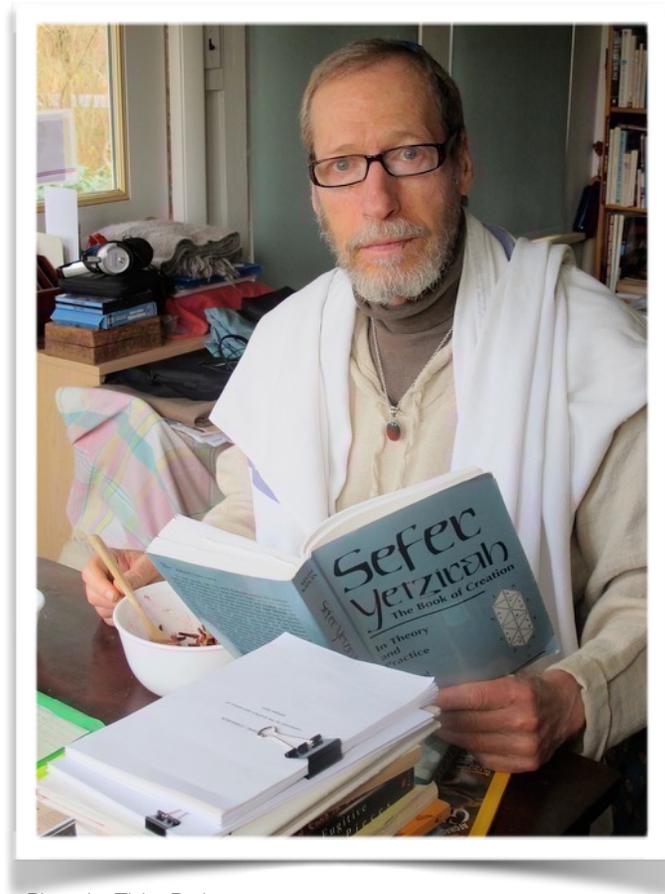


Photo by Tisha Roth

A remembrance shared with Tobago Centre Board members, 7 May 2015.

On the eve of my birthday, May 4, 2015, I received word from Tish, Norm Rosenberg's partner, of his passing, at 2:00 p. m., apparently from a heart attack. I am still trying to put together those two words, Norm and death; they still feel so incongruous, but here they are. You will remember Norm and Tish from our first

board meeting that was generously co-hosted by the Women's Research and Resource Center at Spelman College. It seems so long ago!

I first met Norm at Hamilton College in 1992 where I was fortunate enough to work with my long time friend and writing companion, Chandra Talpade Mohanty. It was through a mutual student of ours, Yancy Ford, whose senior thesis work in the form of a brilliant artistic installation we were co-supervising, that I saw Norm. Yancy had invited him to serve on her committee as her outside reader—unusual for a psychotherapist not linked to the academy. He said little in that meeting, but we spoke later about Pangea Farm and meditation. It was not long after I found myself there, to the point where Pangea became a second home. Not only figuratively, but literally, as I remember thinking at the height of the xenophobia in the wake of 9/11 that I would have to take up Norm on his invitation to seek refuge in Pangea's attic after all. It is at Pangea that I learned Vipassana meditation, the miracle of ground and breath; listened to the poetry of morning Communion which Norm composed; viewed endless movies, many with muted words as a way of getting in touch with the language of the body and the senses, not the language of the mind; sat, ate and lived in silence for days on end with countless others; engaged in any range of conversations from baseball (and am no fan of sports!!!) to the sacred vocabularies of ancient Kaballah—all under Norm's skilled and persistent guidance and Tish's healing touch. Pangea it was that helped me to hold the vision of the Tobago Centre within, when it was but a tiny seed, not yet manifest. It was a place for many realizations and revelations. A model for living a committed spiritual life.

Norm was not at ease in public. He was more at home at his home, the cloister, which Pangea opened with a wide heart to hundreds over decades. Yet he was never too busy to love even when 12, 14 and 16-hour days were the norm. In the end, love is all that remains. I'll take succor from knowing that death ups the stakes: He was among the staunchest supporters of the Centre. He still is. He won't be far away. Beginning Sunday, May 10 at 3:00 p. m. the Pangea family and many who so dearly loved him will sit in meditation; and for the next forty days (through Saturday, June 13th) we will sit at two different times: 4:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. helping him find his way to what lies next. And so the wheel has come full circle. He who devoted so much of his life nudging others into finding their path will now rely on the love of those very same people to ease his.

From Jacqui

Norman David Rosenberg, March 19, 1941 - May 4, 2015. Board Member: Tobago Centre for the Study and Practice of Indigenous Spirituality, 2009 – 2015. He was the co-founder of Pangea Farm, a cloister in upstate New York, where he combined his love for Creator with his commitment to helping others find their own truth through meditation and counseling.