

Douglas Sloan celebrated his 90th birthday recently with an open house at which a stream of illustrious friends and colleagues coursed through the Sloan's warm and lovely home!

The Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE) saluted Douglas at this gathering from both near and far with flowers and visits. It could be that few realize the powerful gifts Douglas Sloan has given RIWE and the whole Waldorf community over his years of steadfast work for Waldorf education. He was co-founder of the RIWE in 1996 and the first editor of the *Research Bulletin*, now in its 28th year.

Douglas' life is one of those miracle stories of unlikely beginnings and remarkable pathways. Born in 1933, in Kansas, during the Great Depression and in the first year of the catastrophic Dust Bowl events in the Midwest, Douglas once reported that he assisted on the family farm by spraying DDT (touted to farmers as an answer to all problems) and was covered in the stuff along with the fields he was treating. He wondered how he had lived this long with such events in his early years — a fine tribute to the health-giving power of discerning clarity of thought, a defining characteristic of Douglas Sloan.

In high school, Douglas held the record in the Central Kansas district for the one mile run at 4 minutes and thirty seconds. This might have led to his capacity for quick and deep thinking and may have helped in his attaining a degree in Philosophy from Southern Methodist University, and later, with a scholarship to Yale's Divinity School, a master's degree in Theology. He spent an additional scholarship year studying theology in Edinburgh, Scotland, and returned as a Methodist minister in the city of Protection, Kansas.

In Protection, Douglas met Fern Sloan's mother and eventually her daughter, who was living at that time in New York City and training to become the storied actress she is today. The origin of their meeting has a prophetic ring to it, as Douglas has been a lifelong protector of the arts and of Fern, a gifted actress and teacher of the Michal Chekov acting technique. Fern and Douglas married in 1962 (60 years together — still counting!) and moved to New York City.

Douglas earned a doctorate in History, on scholarship once more, at Columbia University and was Professor of

History and Education at Teachers' College from 1969 to 2003. As curriculum theorist and author, he also taught for many summers at the Rudolf Steiner Institute, and in the 1990s he taught teachers at the Sunbridge College master's degree program. In addition, for several years Douglas taught Rudolf Steiner's *Occult Science – An Outline*, at the Alkion Teacher Education at the Hawthorne Valley Association in Harlemville. He is a retired class reader for the Harlemville community group of the School for Spiritual Science of the Anthroposophical Society.

While at Columbia's Teachers' College (TC), Douglas served for seven years as editor of the national journal of education, the *TC Record*. Several grants secured made possible a series of conferences on "Education and Modern Culture" at Columbia, which included perspectives from Waldorf education — a first in many ways — along with other philosophies of education.

Douglas has been an active author throughout his lifetime. Among his many writings are the following books:

The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal (Teachers College Press, 1971), in which he points to the influence of Presbyterian Scots on American education. This book contributed to a larger, ongoing discussion of Scottish-American relations.

The Computer in Education: A Critical Perspective (Columbia University Press, 1985), an edited collection of essays. His 1993 book, *Insight-Imagination: The Emancipation of Thought and the Modern World* (published by the Resource Center for Redesigning), argues that "a fundamental transformation of our ideas about knowing, our selves, and our world is not only possible, but necessary. The key to this transformation lies in an understanding of 'insight-imagination'—the involvement of the thinking, feeling, willing, valuing person in knowing."

In 1994, Douglas published *Faith and Knowledge: Main Line Protestantism and Higher Education* (Westminster John Knox Press), which calls attention to the almost forgotten theological renaissance of the 1930s and the involvement of mainline American Protestant churches in higher education.

Douglas Sloan's *The Redemption of the Animals: Their Evolution, Their Inner Life, and Our Future Together*

(Lindisfarne, 2015) is a thoroughly researched and masterful study of the relationship between animals and human beings. Using observations from his own life with animals as well as extensive research into past and current practices with animals, Douglas defines new ideas and imaginations for a better future with all living things on earth. (We can testify that during the time Douglas was conducting his research for this book, the facts of current practices in our standard treatment of animals hung like a shadow over him – the only time “curmudgeon” could ever be applied to this sunny, cheerful personage!)

Douglas Sloan participated in multiple RIWE colloquia over the decades since its foundation. In a 2019 colloquium, he gave a fascinating presentation on his work on this last book, addressing the needs and necessities around our attitudes towards and relationships with animals. In his customary style of engagement and teaching, Douglas engendered a mood of reverence and open inquiry, precipitating warm and robust discussion about our responsibilities toward all living things.

The festivities marking Douglas’ 90th birthday included an apt social engagement, in which participants pulled out of a bowl a written fact about 1933, the year of Douglas’ birth, and were tasked with incorporating their allotted fact into conversation. The party favors? Poems and wise thoughts from a broad and eclectic selection of Douglas’ favorite authors, poets, and philosophers. Each of the assembled guests departed the party with thoughts and artistry to carry us into the future.

The Research Bulletin would like to honor Douglas on this occasion by reprinting two of his past contributions to this journal, to which Douglas Sloan served as first editor.