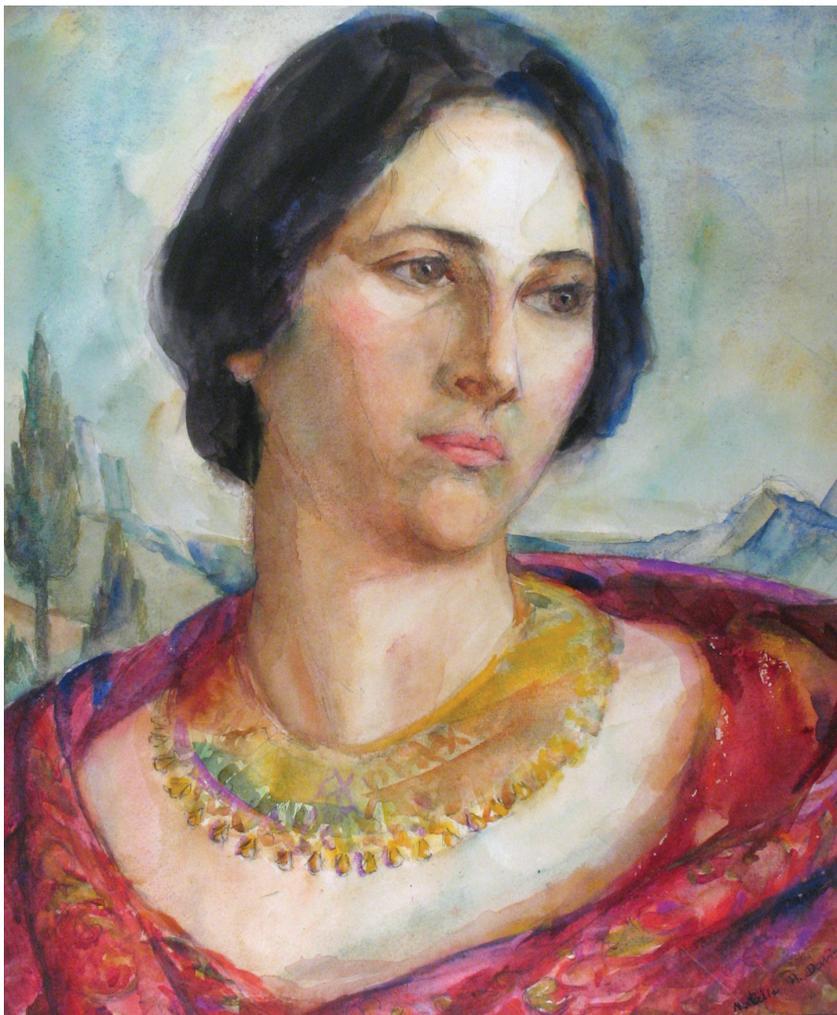


*The Emily Judson and John Marshall Gest
Professor of Global Philosophy
Inaugural Lecture*



Margaret Ralston Gest (1900–1965)

*Friday, April 29, 2011
Zubrow Commons*

Program

Friday, April 29, 2011
Zubrow Commons

GREETINGS

Stephen G. Emerson '74
President

INTRODUCTION

Linda Bell
Provost and John B. Hurford Professor of Economics

INAUGURAL LECTURE

Ashok Gangadean
*The Emily Judson and John Marshall Gest
Professor of Global Philosophy*

“Awakening Global Consciousness, Deep Dialogue,
and the Future of Liberal Arts Education”

*The Emily Judson and John Marshall Gest Fund was established
by Margaret Ralston Gest in 1977 in honor of her parents,
Emily Judson Baugh and John Marshall Gest.*

*Cover: Watercolor of Margaret Gest by Natalie Davis, ca. 1935.
Haverford College Library, Special Collections, Fine Arts Collections*



Ashok Gangadean
*Professor of Philosophy
Haverford College*

Having taught at Haverford for more than four decades, Ashok has been appointed The Emily Judson and John Marshall Gest Professor of Global Philosophy. He completed his Ph.D. in Philosophy at Brandeis University, and his early work focused on Logic (Science of Thought) and Ontology (Science of Being). Throughout his career Ashok has sought the primal, integral logic at the heart of human reason and also to elicit the deep dynamics of communication and dialogue between diverse worldviews. He has emerged as a pioneer of the new frontier of global reason, global ethics and global wisdom, seeking to clarify and excavate the common ground among widely diverse worlds, cultures, ideologies and disciplines. His courses range from Philosophy of Logic and Language, Global Ontology and Global Ethics to Hindu, Buddhist and Zen Thought in Global Context and Global Wisdom.

Active in diverse professional conferences around the globe, Ashok has published numerous essays and books seeking to demonstrate that human reason is global, holistic, integral, dialogic and intercultural in scope and power. His book *Meditative Reason: Toward Universal Grammar* attempts to open the way to global reason, and a companion volume, *Between Worlds: The Emergence of Global Reason*, explores the dialogical common ground between worlds and disciplines. *Meditations of Global First Philosophy: Quest for the Missing Grammar of Logos* seeks to clarify further the fundamental Logos or Universal Grammar underlying all cultures, religions, philosophies and ideologies. In his forthcoming book, *Awakening the Global Mind*, Ashok develops these themes for the general reader, and he discusses the central insights of this volume in a recently released a six-CD set. Ashok has also published extensively on the deepening of liberal arts education and is now preparing a volume on *The Renovation of Liberal Arts Education*.

Ashok has sought diverse ways to bring his findings on the fundamental Logos in human cultures, experience and life to the wider Academy and public. He is Founder-Director of the Global Dialogue Institute, which seeks to embody the powers of Deep Dialogue in all aspects of cultural life. He helped convene the World Commission on Global Consciousness and Spirituality, which brings together eminent world leaders to cultivate global vision and wisdom for the new millennium. Ashok is also Co-Chair of the World Wisdom Council, which focuses on the transformative power of wisdom to address the crises facing humanity today. For five years, Ashok has hosted "Global Lens," a television show in Greater Philadelphia that cultivates global literacy with the public. He has played a leading role in the development of the Margaret Gest Center since its launching in 1972 and has served as the Center's Director for the past three years.



Margaret's Vision for the Gest Center

Reflections by Miriam Thrall



"In her will written in 1955 Margaret Gest left the principal of her estate to Haverford College, in order that a center for cross-cultural study of religions and their surrounding cultures might be established . . . She had never had a moment's doubt as to the wisdom of her choice. She was, to begin with, familiar with Quaker approaches. She herself had belonged to the Wider Quaker Fellowship practically from its start. She knew that I had been a member of several Quaker meetings since I first joined the tiny Camden, New Jersey, meeting

in 1928. Margaret and her mother liked to slip into the rear seats of the old Haverford Meetinghouse to learn 'Quaker thinking' from such leaders as Rufus Jones, Douglas Steere, Thomas Kelly, Henry Cadbury and William Comfort. Both of us loved the whole Haverford campus with its old buildings and trees and its friendly library where for years we had been welcomed and I had been given all the privileges helpful to a hungry researcher . . .

"No real progress was made on the Margaret Gest Center at Haverford until the old Founders Annex was offered to me in 1970 for reconstruction. It was still a beautiful building although scarred by the years. The low eaves with their lovely dentils, the long front, the very way the whole building met the earth has always delighted me . . . By September, 1972, the alterations had progressed sufficiently to permit considerable use of the building, and immediately the Gest program sprang into exciting activity . . . The months from January to June 1973 have so teemed with projects that one feels as if the Gest Center had always been hostess to the College's desire for intercultural expansion. We should never forget that Haverford's wish had for years been fervent along these

lines. Rufus Jones, in earlier days, traveled from college to college preaching the need for cooperation if we are to secure the cultural and humanitarian advances the world needs; and later Douglas Steere emphasized this message to audiences throughout the world, while at home the hearth fires were kept burning by William Comfort and Thomas Kelly. It is pleasant to realize that the new emphasis which Margaret Gest had placed upon the work of young people would have rejoiced the hearts of these founding fathers."

"The last words of Margaret Gest still assure us: 'It's a splendid day for planting daffodils.'"

— Miriam Thrall, Philadelphia, 1973
(From the opening of her book *Margaret Gest Looks Forth*)



Reflections on Global Wisdom

Words from Margaret Gest:

"There can indeed be such a flash of recognition. But the divine cause of it cannot be comprehended even by the most brilliant mind: True God is beyond mind's reach. Thought ends in a mystery. But since, regardless of conclusion, one must start somewhere, let us begin with the assertion made by many philosophers in all ages that there is throughout and above the universe one final and abstract Power or Force. Ancient Chinese philosophy described it as something

'Which existed before heaven and earth . . .

It pervades everywhere and never becomes exhausted'

This Force, then, is assumed to be manifested in the world, transformed into myriad of mediums, tangible and intangible, moving through everything that exists. As it is written on the Egyptian papyrus, 'Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me. Cleave the wood and there I am.' The great mystics, Western or Eastern, agree largely with these views. The Force or Power they may also call Reality or the Eternal or the Absolute or the Transcendent or Brahma or Tao or God. These are antique names, perhaps, but it is hard to find better ones."

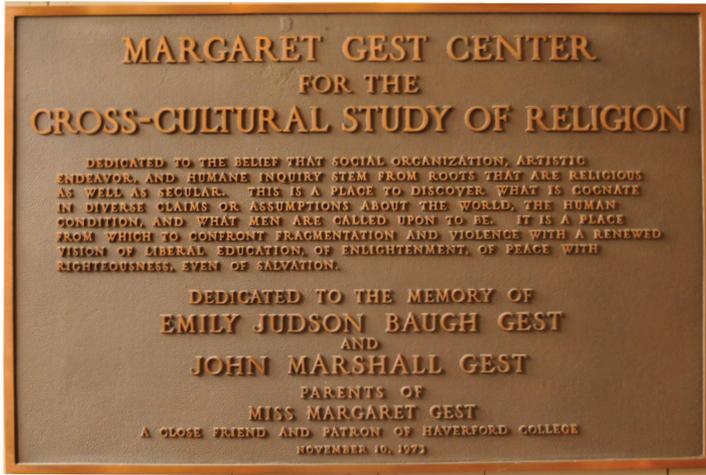
— From "Common Ground" (Ms. Gest's foreword to her manuscript on the History of Religions)

Words from Rufus Jones:

"We want someone — in fact many scholars — who will deal with the august moral principle of life, a principle as essential to a great social order as gravitation is for a cosmos, with the same patient research and authoritative conclusions that have characterized the laboratory study of the atom or the cell. It is quite obvious that a sound ethical theory can be promulgated only as one aspect of a solidly constructed theory of the universe. It is high time in our educational life that there should be a new center of interest in this mother source of all our wisdom, a majestic philosophical interpretation of the universe. We must get out of the welter of contending schools and rival theories, and arrive at a commanding philosophy which speaks to our age with a note of reality."

— Rufus Jones, *A Call to What Is Vital*

This plaque, which appears at the entrance to the Gest Center, honors the generous individuals who created the Gest Center for the Cross-Cultural Study of Religion:



“Dedicated to the belief that social organization, artistic endeavor, and humane inquiry stem from roots that are religious as well as secular. This is a place to discover what is cognate in diverse claims or assumptions about the world, the human condition, and what men are called upon to be. It is a place from which to confront fragmentation and violence with a renewed vision of liberal education, of enlightenment, of peace with righteousness, even of salvation.”



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