

In Memory of Brian O’Leary

Eulogy by Joel Garbon

On Friday July 29, 2011, our planet lost a high-profile visionary and champion advocate of a global new energy revolution. Scientist and author Dr. Brian O’Leary, for decades a leading and impassioned voice for the new energy and planetary sustainability movements, died peacefully at age 71 at his home in Vilcabamba, Ecuador as he rested in the arms of his beloved wife Meredith.

Brian O’Leary was an energetic and colorful personality, and his life story displays a long list of notable achievements— Eagle Scout, Ivy League professor of astrophysics, Apollo-trained astronaut, energy policy consultant to Congress, advisor to presidential candidates, author of numerous books, gifted piano player, and a staple of the global lecture circuit on issues of peace, justice, and sustainability. But among all his many activities, O’Leary was most recognized and appreciated for his tireless and passionate appeal for a transformation in the way humanity generates energy— moving away from destructive, polluting fossil fuels and nuclear power and toward an embrace of revolutionary new energy technologies.

Having visited the laboratories and workspaces of dozens of pioneering energy inventors world-wide, examining their research and witnessing their proof-of-concept experiments, O’Leary himself was transformed from a mainstream establishment academic scientist to an ardent and outspoken advocate of maverick scientists and frontier physics. He was a fearless critic of conventional energy policy, and of the corrupting influence of “profit at all costs” on corporate and governmental behavior, which O’Leary felt was at the heart of the widespread devastation of our planet’s ecosystems and the impoverishment of much of humanity itself.

Brian O’Leary was a complex man. And he was my dear friend and a valued mentor. I was privileged to have a close and intimate friendship with him that allowed me to view his feelings in a most personal way. Brian was social and gregarious, but at times sullen and brooding. He needed to both carry his urgent message out to the world and to retreat from that very same world. He was full of concern for the plight of our despoiled environment, and compassion for those peoples most damaged from the effects. He was very vulnerable to heartbreak and grief at news of the latest environmental debacle—whether it be an oil spill, a coal mine disaster, the plundering of Amazonian rain forests by oil and mining interests, rapid depletion of marine fish stocks, the Fukushima nuclear nightmare, among others. Each bit of despairing news about the planet’s state of health appeared to cause Brian a great deal of psychic, and even physical, pain.

His love for the Earth and desire for peace and justice motivated his vigorous activism. But his personal energy was often depleted by the specter of a world with time running

out, and further drained by his indignation at those corrupt influences he felt were most responsible for the dysfunctional state of world affairs. At these times, it was typical for Brian to cloister himself away while he recovered his energy and processed his feelings of grief and outrage. Often a new essay would spring out of his despondency.

I am very grateful to this man. In 2002, it was Brian who invited me to join him in crafting a new grassroots movement that would focus on educating the mainstream public about radical new energy solutions and the urgency required to embrace them. That collaboration with Brian and some close colleagues resulted in what is now known as the NEW ENERGY MOVEMENT, an educational nonprofit which I have served ever since. And while the work of NEM has been personally fulfilling and hopefully of some significant impact on the awakening of our planet's citizens to new solutions, my gratitude to my mentor goes far beyond the work itself. For it was Brian who introduced me to several who have become dear friends of mine, and many other friendships have sprung directly from the work of NEM. It is these relationships that have so enriched my life and that I prize so much, because they are real and enduring in the face of a world that is changing rapidly, and whose outcome is beyond our ability to predict.

It is more than a bit ironic that Brian's earthly torch was extinguished at a time so close to the anticipated commercial release of the Rossi cold fusion technology, since Brian was such a vocal advocate for that class of breakthrough energy inventions. Perhaps the time for advocacy and education is waning, to be soon superseded by the launch of multiple, robust over-unity energy technologies into the public domain. If true, this would surely bring that warm and delighted smile back to Brian's face.

In any case, I'm sure he will continue to inspire those left behind to continue our work on behalf of a planet in peril. Our world has lost a man of peace, a leader, a champion, a friend of the Earth. It was a sign of this man's depth of feeling, his expressive heart, that he could sign his messages to his male friends "Love, Brian." I always appreciated that.

Peace to you, Brian. We'll miss you.
And I love you too, my Brother and my Friend.

Joel Garbon is president of the NEW ENERGY MOVEMENT, a founding member of NEW ENERGY CONGRESS, and co-author with Jeane Manning of *Breakthrough Power: How Quantum-Leap New Energy Inventions Can Transform Our World*.