



## **Not in Vain**

**Dedicated to**

**Robin McLaurin Williams  
(July 21, 1951- August 11, 2014)**

Dear Robin,

I trust that in some special way these thoughts will reach you. I join the millions of people who did not know you personally and yet loved you none the less.

You made me laugh, chuckle and sometimes cry, all within a brief time. I was dazzled by your quick wit, your hilarious and odd sense of humor which was sometimes so off the wall. I was quizzical at your moments of madness and free association. I was touched by your sad countenance when you would contort your face with such emotional pain.

In 1992 British Director, Terry Gilliam described that you had the ability to go “from manic to mad to tender and vulnerable.” Gilliam went on to say that you were “the most unique mind on the planet. There is nobody like him out there.”

On August 11<sup>th</sup> I found out about your demise by two bipolar patients who are sober in their addictions. One in the morning and another one in the afternoon. They were both quick to add as they told me the story that they were continuing in their sobriety and not suicidal.

I was not surprised to learn that you described your upbringing as imprinting you with an acute fear of abandonment. You explained that this gave rise to a “Love Me Syndrome.” Likely you attempted, but never came to terms with this core issue in your life. Perhaps this was an important contributing factor to your depression and addiction illnesses.

Part of your genius was the ability to use comedy for laughter and quickly spin into that sad, forlorn but lovable look. Who among us doesn't have some familiarity with feeling unloved and wanted to hide it or laugh it away?

Of course Jonathan Winters would have been your mentor. He was a talent born out of mental anguish such as yourself. During the 1970's and early 1980's cocaine addiction became your passion. You partied alongside John Belushi. What a great time you must have had together until his wild ways and addiction led to his death. You commented that Belushi's death and the birth of

your son, Zac, inspired you to quit alcohol and drugs. “Was it a wake-up call? Oh Yeah, on a huge level. The grand jury helped too.”

You started drinking again in 2003 in Alaska. In 2006 you went into substance abuse rehabilitation. After 20 years of sobriety, addiction raised its ugly head again and you entered that dark space. You relapsed again and sought treatment in mid-2014 at another rehab facility.

Your contributions to comedy, theater and film are outstanding and in addition to that you supported your friend, your pal Chris Reeves after his injury. You helped our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and you supported many charity causes.

We can all learn from your tragedy how addictions and depression can lead to death. They are the silent stalkers that can steal the best of us from life. I don't know your personal struggles, but I treat, and I have treated many who battle with those demons – not everyone escapes the tragic outcome that you chose. Statistics show that every day in the United States we lose at least 108 people who choose to die by suicide.

How painful for your family and for those that knew you and loved you. In your shyness, you hid behind the mask of your humor and characters. I suspect that your personal pathos must have remained largely hidden from the light of the treatment that was available because of your barriers to connect personally.

What we can and should learn is to respect the power of addiction and depression, and the need for treatment and support after rehabilitation. I have seen AA save many addict's lives. For those who cannot see their way to a higher power, rational recovery can be very helpful.

Many addicts need psychotherapy to deal with the wounds of the past as it affects their lives today.

Sobriety is the first step, but not the only one, on the journey towards health. When medication is needed, it can play an important role in the treatment of Depression, Anxiety and Bipolar Disorder. These conditions commonly occur with addictions. When medications aren't fully effective, I have treated patients with Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation in my clinic and witnessed the benefits.

In the silent stillness of our own thoughts we say goodbye to you. We are sad and shocked by your loss. You have given us another powerful example of how addictions and depression can be lethal and the need for those to seek treatments who suffer these maladies.

Never to be forgotten,

**H. J. Schulte, M.D., D.F.A.P.A.**  
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*(Referenced from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin\\_Williams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin_Williams))*