

Physician Observes Transfiguration

By Michael E. Tymn

Early in her medical career, the late Barbara R. Rommer, M.D. realized that most of her patients were unable to fully experience the joy of life because of their fear of dying. "That fact stabled at my soul," Rommer, then a Fort Lauderdale, Florida internist, told me in a 2000 interview. It also explained the motivation underlying her research in the field of near-death experiences (NDEs). From 1994 until her death in 2004, Rommer interviewed more than 500 people who had reported NDEs. She was the author of *Blessings in Disguise*, a book reporting on her research of the NDE.



Barbara R. Rommer, M.D.

Rommer said that her most intriguing interview was the fifty-seventh, conducted on February 7, 1996. Her interest in the afterlife implications of the NDE prompted her to take a course in mediumship at the Arthur Ford Academy, part of Delphi University in Georgia. Two friends, a registered nurse and a psychiatrist accompanied her. During one of the classes, Marshall Smith, an instructor, contacted Arthur Ford, a well-known medium who had crossed over to the Other Side in 1971.

"It blew me away," said Rommer. "I have to tell you that I am not easily led by the nose, not at all, but I'm telling you that Marshall Smith physically changed, visibly, right in front of the class. It was astounding. I had never seen anything like it and I was in awe."

Rommer later asked about the possibility of a one-on-one interview with Ford, with Smith as the medium. The request was granted.

"Marshall ceased to be Marshall as Arthur 'came in'," Rommer recalled. "Marshall is a tall person and fairly thin. I know this sounds ludicrous, but he became shorter and wider. As I had seen the transformation in the class, I was prepared for it, but still it was absolutely totally unbelievable."

At the time, Rommer did not know what Arthur Ford had looked like in his earthly shell, but she later saw pictures of him and said that Smith looked just like him. Moreover, Smith's voice also changed.

Ford, speaking through Smith's vocal cords, began to tell Rommer about dying and death. "Transition is one of the most simple of all things," he told her. "The minute the spirit leaves the body it goes into a transformation. It follows the thought of that person, the general thought of that person."

After several minutes of listening to Ford talk about dying and transition, Rommer asked him about people who had had NDEs and were told it was not yet their time. She wanted to know if they had actually died. "I had one exactly as you say," Ford replied. "I died, went over, and into a building. There were four men sitting at this big desk. They looked down at me and started talking about me. They told me it was not time for

me to come across. I protested and said, 'I don't want to go back.'...They said, 'You must go back.' I decided there was no choice. That's when I entered back into my body."

Ford explained that he came to the conclusion that he still had work to do. Rommer then asked him who does the judging in life reviews. "It comes primarily from within oneself," Ford responded, adding that the individual soul is the most severe judge of all.

Midway into the interview, Ford announced that someone else was present – Rommer's father. "Did your father like rocking chairs?" Ford asked.

"Sure, he loved them," Rommer enthusiastically answered. "He watched television in them, read the newspaper, read journals."

Ford then said: "What does he mean when he says, 'I told you so'? There's something about a ribbon or reward, a multicolored ribbon. A reward hangs on this ribbon. Do you recall anything like that?"

Rommer was startled again. "That blew me away," she admitted, explaining that in 1973, after she had been married for two years, her father gave her husband, Sonny, an engraved medal with a red, white, and blue ribbon for having survived two years with his daughter.

"Believe me, that was not in my obvious consciousness. If Marshall, Arthur Ford, whoever was right in front of me, was reading my energy, there would not have been the thought of what Papa gave Sonny in 1973.

"I never had an experience like that before," Rommer concluded. "I repeat that I am not easily led by the nose. But I believed it and saw it with my own eyes."