

Bhanté and Judy Skutch's tooth in Tiburon

Among the special people with whom I became acquainted from the 1970s onward was Judy Cohen Skutch Whitson. Bhanté was invited to their home just outside of Tiburon, California near the top of a ridge with remarkable vistas.

Both of us could tell that Judy, ever the gracious hostess, was uncomfortable because of a painful tooth. Bhanté asked me to set up the dichromatic green light in the guest bathroom near the front door.

The image in my memory is of Bhanté praying and gently massaging Judy's neck and jaw. The event lasted about 10 minutes. Judy's demeanor and appearance; her renewed vitality were evidence that Bhanté had helped evoke her healing responses.

Judy confided to me later that day that this was the first personal experience of a healing that she had experienced. She had been witness to many remarkable events that occurred to Bob Skutch, Jerry Jampolsky, Bill Thetford, Brendan O'Regan, and Edgar Mitchell; this was the first time she experienced directly a healer's presence and effects.

The Foundation for Inner Peace that Judy helped found publishes The Course in Miracles. Jerry Jampolsky and Diane Cincerone have the Center for Attitudinal Healing in Sausalito, California. All were involved with the formation of the Institute for Noetic Sciences, collaborations with Willis Harmon and others at Stanford Research Institute and Bill Tiller at Stanford.

We left Judy and Bill Whitson and returned to the Mill Valley house at 11 Marian Ave, Mill Valley, that Richard Snyder made available to me on occasion from the mid-1970s onward.

Bill Whitson had a career at the United States Armed Forces Academy in the greater Washington DC area until he became actively involved with The Course in Miracles. At that point, he moved West with the group in Tiburon including Judy and Bob Skutch's daughter Tammy.

“The **Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS)** is an American non-profit [parapsychological](#)^[1] research institute. It was co-founded in 1973 by former [astronaut Edgar Mitchell](#),^{[2][3][4]} along with investor [Paul N. Temple](#),^[5] and others interested in purported [paranormal](#) phenomena,^[1] in order to encourage and conduct research on [noetic theory](#) and human potentials.^{[6][7]}

The Institute conducts research on topics such as [spontaneous remission](#),^{[8][9]} [meditation](#),^[8] [consciousness](#), [alternative healing](#) practices, [consciousness-based healthcare](#), [spirituality](#), [human potential](#), [psychic abilities](#), [psychokinesis](#)^[9] and [survival of consciousness after bodily death](#).^{[10][11]} The Institute maintains a free database, available on the Internet,^[2] with citations to more than 6,500 articles about whether physical and mental health benefits might be connected to meditation and yoga.^[8]

Headquartered outside [Petaluma, California](#), the IONS is situated on a 200-acre (81 ha) campus that includes offices, a research laboratory and a retreat center (originally the campus of [World College West](#)).^[12] Its current director is Cassandra Vieten. Other researchers associated with it include [Dean Radin](#) and [Rupert Sheldrake](#).

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History



Edgar Mitchell, co-founder of the Institute of Noetic Sciences

Edgar Mitchell has reported that on his return to Earth, after the 1971 Apollo 14 moon landing, he had an experience comparable to [savikalpa samādhi](#).^{[2][13]} He also says that he conducted [ESP](#) experiments with earthbound friends during spaceflight.^[14] In 1973, along with investor Paul N. Temple and some others,^[15] Mitchell co-founded the Institute of Noetic Sciences.^[3] [Willis Harman](#) served as president from 1975 until his death in 1997.^{[16][17][18]}

The word *noetic* derives from the Greek *nous*, meaning "mind or ways of knowing."^[19] Writing in [The Huffington Post](#), the Institute's director of research pointed to philosopher [William James](#)' 1902 definition of the word as:

... states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain; and as a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority. ...^[11]

The Institute figures prominently in [The Lost Symbol](#), a work of fiction by best-selling author [Dan Brown](#).^{[2][20]} [Twitter](#) postings on the day before the book's release led Institute director Marilyn Schlitz to purchase the book and read it in one sitting. She told [NPR](#) that she found ten experiments conducted by the real-world Institute referred to in Brown's fictional account. NPR reported that after its publication "traffic to [the institute's] website ... increased twelvefold", applications for membership increased and "journalists from places like Dateline NBC — not to mention NPR ..." were seeking interviews with Schlitz.^[21]

The Institute confers the Temple Award for Creative Altruism,^{[22][23][24]} biennially.^[25] The \$25,000 award fund is divided among recipients selected by an independent jury.^[25]

Research

Projects sponsored by the Institute include a bibliography on the physical and psychological effects of [meditation](#) and [yoga](#),^[8] and a [spontaneous remission](#) bibliography.^{[8][9]} The Institute has also conducted a number of [parapsychological](#) studies into [extra-sensory perception](#),^[8] [lucid dreaming](#), [telekinesis](#),^[9] and presentiment.^[26]

According to [The Roanoke Times](#), the Institute is "... devoted to exploring psychic phenomena and the role of consciousness in the cosmos."

[The Roanoke Times](#) also noted that co-founder Mitchell's assertions "... have often been criticized by skeptics."^[3] Told "your research goes into a number of territories that are regarded with skepticism in some circles", Mitchell replied:

That's what's fun about it. We're breaking down barriers and finding things. That's what science is all about: new discovery. ... There's nothing that we have done or have demonstrated that doesn't have good science behind it. Skeptics be damned.^[3]

The Institute is listed on [Stephen Barrett's Quackwatch](#) website, for its research on fringe topics.^[27]

Documentaries and publications

In 1994, [TBS](#) broadcast a three-part, six-hour documentary based on work at the Institute, entitled *The Heart of Healing* and narrated by actress [Jane Seymour](#).^{[28][29]}

Since 2009, the Institute has published a semi-annual bulletin, *The Noetic Post*.^[30] From 2003 to 2009, it published a quarterly magazine, *Shift: At the Frontiers of Consciousness*.^[31] “