



Photo by John Snyder

Eugene England, in 1998, in his BYU office.

## Godspeed Gene England's recovery

*On 21 February 2001, Eugene England unexpectedly collapsed and underwent emergency surgery to remove a cancerous growth and several cysts in his right temporal lobe. Gene continues radiation treatment, and he is doing well in physical therapy for his weakened left side. He and his family are grateful for the many messages of love and encouragement and humor they have received. Gene feels strengthened and blessed by the love of good friends.*

*Individuals may write to Gene and Charlotte by e-mail at <gene.charlotte@attglobal.net>. Visit the Sunstone website <Sunstoneonline.com> to share your comments about Gene, to read comments by others, and to read the family's periodic e-mail updates on Gene's condition. Below is an excerpt from a letter sent by his childhood friend and BYU English Department colleague, Bert Wilson, who is currently in Finland.*

**I**F YOUR HEAD weren't already swollen from your surgery, it would certainly swell now as solicitous letters, calls, and e-mail messages keep pouring in from around the world, each writer or caller claiming a piece of you. . . . But I have a claim on you that none of them can match. I have known you since we were both five years old. Who else can claim to have lain with you on the canal bank behind your home and pulled the legs off water skippers? Who else has memorized with me the shortest page in our fourth grade history book so we could mass produce it to meet the punishments Miss Salvessen meted out—one page copied from the history book for each of our misdeeds. . . ? Who else has faced you with a loaded rubber gun across the narrow space of your dad's grain silo? A wonder we didn't blind each other! Who else has hiked with you through the Cedars and cleansed ourselves at Downatta? Who else knows of your passionate and unrequited love for Marjean Ware? Who else has traded comic books with you? Who else has lain out with you under Idaho's star-studded skies and dreamed dreams of grandeur?

Others may have better claims than I on your scholarship, your razor-sharp mind, your thousand and one entrepreneurial schemes and projects . . . but no one has a better claim on a life-long friendship that has brought me much joy. You have preached many a sermon in essay after essay, but your greatest sermon has always been your own life, a life that has on many occasions merged with mine. . . . —WILLIAM A. WILSON