

# FRESH POND MONTHLY MEETING

OF THE

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

5 CADBURY ROAD, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02140

## Memorial Minute

### Nancy Lloyd Shippen

Nancy Lloyd Shippen was a steadfast gardener of the nascent. She nurtured her family, her dyslexic grade school students, the men she served in prisons, and the seeds of peace around the world. Where others might see rocky soil, Nancy saw fertile ground and tended it fearlessly.

Nancy died peacefully on January 20, 2022, from light chain amyloidosis, which had affected her heart. She succumbed after a 2-year struggle which deeply affected her freedom and independence.

She was born in Washington, D.C., on April 5, 1949. She grew up in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, the middle of three daughters of Natalie Brooks Sears Shippen and Edward Shippen.

She attended Greenwich's elementary and middle schools, and went to high school and graduated from Rosemary Hall, where she was active in drama and gymnastics.

As a girl she had many interests, including ballet, choral music, youth theater, and horses. She loved animals. She always had a dog, a cat, or sometimes, both. She was frequently involved in a craft, be it needlepoint, making mobiles, macrame, or origami.

She graduated from Goucher College, after majoring in psychology and child development. After graduation she spent a year in Europe, working for and living with the Sisters of St Joseph at their school in Edinburgh. During this time she searched for a spiritual home, and found her life's home in the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), which she joined upon her return to the US.

Her childhood struggles with dyslexia, at a time when it was little understood, left a lifelong imprint. She was imbued with an interest in and empathy for children with learning disabilities. After teaching in private schools and at the St Anne's School in Arlington, Massachusetts, for several years, she obtained a master's degree in special education from Lesley University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

While at St Anne's, she met her husband William (Bill)How, with whom she shared an attraction to the wilderness, folk music, folk dancing, and social justice. They were married at Cambridge Friends Meeting, Cambridge, MA., on August 7, 1982.

Nancy and Bill settled in Acton, MA, and there raised their two children, Bharat Seth and Pauravi Brooks. Nancy and Bill, with their children, were founding members of Fresh Pond Meeting in January, 1989, and were faithful attenders and servants of the meeting until both of their deaths. (Bill preceded Nancy in death in June, 2009.)

Nancy taught literacy, particularly to children with difficulties reading, in the towns surrounding Acton while her children were growing up. In the early 2000s, she began to be "disturbed" by a profound leading to love her neighbors. The family lived at the end of a cul-de-sac with many neighbors with children, which provided her kids with street playmates for years. However, the leading did not leave her.

After driving past the Concord prison daily for years, Nancy had a profound realization that the inmates there were her neighbors. This led to her founding the 501c3 which she entitled "Our Prison

Neighbors”. The drive to growing the organization, and doing its work-- spending time with incarcerated people--eventually led her to leave teaching children. She sought and received a support committee from Fresh Pond Meeting. She found and used the tenets of the Quaker-founded Alternative to Violence Program as the backbone of her work. She organized weekends with “outside” volunteers participating with those “inside” to learn and unlearn the emotions and experiences underlying violent behavior. She organized book discussion groups on spiritual and personal growth and taught basic personal finance in prisons. She was always recruiting and extolling the benefits of extending oneself to people whose lives had been intertwined with trauma, and landed in prison.

Nancy was ultimately involved with the Alternatives to Violence Program at the executive level nationally. After losing Bill to brain cancer in 2009, Nancy became further involved internationally. She reveled in spending time with people from all sorts of cultures, doing healing work in prisons and elsewhere. She traveled several countries including Kenya, Guatemala, and Nepal. Her preferred professional title, when asked, was Professional Peace Maker.

Nancy is survived by her son, Bharat Seth Shippen-How, his wife Sarah Shippen-How, and their sons Cobi William Shippen-How and Kabir James Shippen-How, her daughter Pauravi Brooks Shippen-How, her older sister Suzanne Zimmermann and her younger sister Nina Brooks Shippen. She is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews and their children, with whom she remained influentially involved as they grew and reached adulthood.

Nancy's celebration of life was held on June 18, 2022, at Framingham Friends Meeting in Framingham, MA. It was a rich event, with messages from many, including a former inmate, testifying to her positive effect on the trajectory of their lives. We cherish the breadth of her gifts to us.