

Adele MacVeagh Clurman Bourne
March 22, 1936-January 11, 2025

On January 11, 2025, Providence Monthly Meeting of Friends lost a vivacious, beloved member of our community, Adele MacVeagh Clurman Bourne, who passed away after living a full 88 years. In a full circle gesture, we celebrated Adele's memorial service on her birthday, in the company of her family and beloved twin brother, Charlie. We learned that Adele was a "surprise" daughter to her parents whose father famously exclaimed upon her birth, "Well we pulled that one out of our hat!" Throughout her life, Adele was affectionately known as "Rabbit" and now we understand why. With that auspicious beginning, our dear friend Adele made her debut into the world.

Adele would go on to become a gifted educator of literature and theatre arts, poet, playwright and lifelong ferocious social justice activist. Her life was abundant with theatrical performance, literature, nature, and art. Adele was known for her prodigious intellect, intense interpersonal focus, and laser sharp wit. As one Quaker shared, Adele had pluck, engaging full throttle in life with all its complexity. In the latter part of her journey, when she utilized a walker, she maneuvered with characteristic purpose and precision. Indeed, Adele was a force to be reckoned with, and she channeled that force for good in the world.

Adele was born and raised in the Episcopalian tradition in Bedford, New York in a family whose father served on Franklin D. Roosevelt's War Production Board and whose uncle and grandfather were US Ambassadors. When the family moved to Webster Groves, Missouri for her father's work, Adele founded her activist passion as a junior highschooler when she worked alongside her mother and other members of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church to desegregate Webster Groves schools.

Adele's activist career was fueled by her education at Bryn Mawr College, with its historically Quaker roots and emphasis on equality of all people. She was further galvanized in 1963 by her attendance at Martin Luther King Jr.'s *I Have a Dream Speech*. Adele honed her work for peace and justice as a member of Moorestown (New Jersey) Friends Meeting and was always the first to join a protest, spearhead a letter writing campaign, or care for a family in need. When she resettled and joined Providence Monthly Meeting, she quickly engaged as an active and steadfast member of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee.

Adele was especially valued as a source of advice and support to others as they pursued their particular social justice activities. One member recalls Adele, well into her 80's, making the trek to Boston and reveling in vigils to help preserve a children's hospital garden. Although the garden was sacrificed, Adele took the time to write in her bold

cursive to offer words of solace: “Even though the outcome wasn’t what you hoped, your efforts brought integrity to the process and that matters.” Indeed, Adele mentored many a soul, wrote poetry, and turned to the arts to advance the pursuit of social justice.

Adele served as a devoted, attentive member of the Pastoral Care Committee. She enjoyed reaching out to others in our community in need of encouragement with telephone calls, handwritten cards, visits, flowers, and meals. She was a good listener and made people feel special. She was comfortable connecting with others, engaging in conversation, and ever generous with her time and resources. She accepted people for who they were and refrained from judgment. She remembered people’s names and made note of newcomers and those who might be isolated, lonely, bereaved, or hungry. She was attuned to the human condition and took joy in serving the needs of others. At her memorial service, there were messages from her neighbors at Wayland Manor who recalled her kindness, open doors and warm hospitality, and sharing of food.

Adele had a remarkable energy and wholeheartedness that animated her and influenced those around her. She easily connected and made friends with those across the generations. She was funny, bold, quotable, classy, and entertaining. She spoke her mind, often eloquently, and served as a role model for many, including her grandchildren who took pride in their grandmother’s perennial youthful optimism and perspective. Adele could at once be serious yet lighten the moment with her quick wit, smile, and willingness to share of her own experiences. At a recent Christmas program, drawing on her background in theatre, she delivered a reading with verve and compassion that uplifted those present. Adele was comfortable in her own skin, upheld the dignity of all people, and envisioned a world of fairness and opportunity for all. She made good on this vision through her educational and social justice endeavors, everyday kindness, humor, and nonjudgmental positive regard for others. She embodied Quaker principles and testified to them throughout her life.

Adele is survived by her loving twin brother, Charlie, and her sister Priscilla; her daughter, Margaretta, and son, Andrew and their partners; vibrant grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and an extended family of nieces, nephews, and cousins. Adele generated joy, made the world a better place, and she will be remembered for brightening our Meeting and our world.

