



**Smithfield Monthly
Meeting
of the
Religious Society of Friends**

Memorial Minute for Rhoda Elsie Mowry (1940-2024)



On Sunday mornings at Smithfield Meetinghouse, sunshine streaming through the wavy glass of the windows creates a beautiful pattern on the walls. The sacred dance of light spoke to Rhoda Mowry's heart throughout her lifetime. From her favorite pew, she witnessed this weekly gift from the Divine, finding in it a message of God's presence that sustained her faith. When our historic windows required repair, Rhoda's devotion to this simple beauty moved us to

ask that each antique glass pane was returned to its exact position, preserving the precise quality of light that had nourished her spirit for so many years.

The windows were important to Rhoda, and Rhoda was essential to Smithfield Friends. A Friend whose roots ran deep in our Quaker soil, she embodied the calm and constant presence that anchors a Meeting community. Born into a historic Rhode Island Quaker family, whose legacy lives on in street names, historic taverns, and conservation areas throughout our state. Rhoda carried forward generations of faithful witness with quiet dignity and unwavering commitment.

Her service to our Religious Society spanned decades and crossed every level of Quaker organization. At Smithfield Monthly Meeting, she served with distinction as Clerk of the Meeting and Clerk of Ministry and Counsel, shepherding us through seasons of growth and challenge with patient wisdom. Her leadership extended to Rhode Island Smithfield Quarterly Meeting, where she served as Clerk, and to New England Yearly Meeting, where she contributed faithfully to the Permanent Board for many years. Rhoda took particular joy in welcoming newcomers to our Meeting, extending the warm hospitality that draws seekers into our circle of worship. Her friendship enriched countless lives throughout New England Yearly Meeting, and she remained an active and cherished member of the United Society of Friends Women.

Proud of Smithfield's programmed tradition, Rhoda supported our pastoral ministry and regularly participated in gatherings that strengthened bonds among programmed Meetings. Her commitment to this form of Quaker worship reflected her deep appreciation for the many ways the Spirit moves among Friends.

Rhoda Elsie Mowry was born in Woonsocket to Stanley Mowry, Sr. and Dorothy Lapham Mowry, and throughout her life she maintained strong ties to her hometown community. After graduating from Woonsocket High School in 1957, she pursued higher education with characteristic determination, studying at Boston University from 1957 to 1960 before earning her nursing degree from the University of Maine at Augusta in 1978. Later, driven by a calling to serve others in new ways, she returned to school at Rhode Island College, completing both her bachelor's degree in 1992 and master's degree in 1993 in social work. Her professional life reflected her deep care for human wellbeing. As a registered nurse, she served patients at Roger Williams Hospital and other healthcare facilities with compassion and skill. Transitioning to social work, she brought the same dedication to her roles at East Bay Mental Health Center and St. Joseph's Hospital's partial hospitalization program, where she helped individuals navigate mental health challenges until her retirement.

Beyond her professional and spiritual commitments, Rhoda embraced life with enthusiasm and curiosity. She was an accomplished bridge player who delighted in the game's strategic challenges. Her adventurous spirit made her the perfect companion for spontaneous journeys. She would happily set aside her plans to embrace an unexpected opportunity for exploration. In quieter moments, she found creative expression through watercolor and oil painting, and she approached cooking with the same attention to detail that Julia Child advocated, finding joy in preparing memorable meals for family and friends.

Rhoda's legacy lives on in her beloved family: her children, Deborah Wood-LaSalle and her husband James of Coventry, and Frank Stanley Wood of Waterville, Maine; five grandchildren, Alexandria, Anastasia, Adrianna, Taylor, and Samantha; two great-granddaughters, Elizabeth and Charlotte; and many nieces and nephews who treasured her presence in their lives. She was preceded in death by her brother Richard Mowry. Her brother Stanley Mowry Jr has subsequently passed away this year.

As we remember Rhoda Mowry, we give thanks for the light she brought to our Meeting and to all who knew her. Like the morning sunshine that painted patterns on our meetinghouse wall, her faithful presence illuminated our community with steady warmth and gentle beauty. As Friends, we hold her memory in the Light, grateful for the gift of her life among us.

SMITHFIELD MONTHLY MEETING, JULY 6, 2025
SOUTHEAST QUARTERLY MEETING JULY 7, 2025