

Joan Austin
June 18, 1921 - April 28, 2019

Friends Meeting at Cambridge lost a treasured member, Joan Austin, on April 28th, 2019, just a few weeks before her 98th birthday. An activist, advocate, and near neighbor of the Meeting, Joan found Friends in the early 1970s, and became a member in 1974.

Joan (Perkins) Austin grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut, outside New York City. Even as a child she felt a deep spiritual connection with the natural world. The youngest of four in a large blended family, she attended Presbyterian services like her much older siblings, but never adopted that tradition. She cherished the outdoors, especially the beauty of Mishaum Point in South Dartmouth, MA where her family spent every Summer.

Joan attended Milton Academy and Vassar College, and went on to earn her Master's in American History at Columbia in 1944. There she met her first husband, John Garraty. The couple settled in Michigan and had three children: John, Katharine, and Sarah. The family returned to New York when her husband was offered a position at Columbia.

For several years Joan taught second and third grades at private schools in New York and Connecticut. After her first marriage ended in divorce, she reconnected with John Austin, a former beau who had moved to California. They were married in 1966, and Joan and her younger daughter, Sarah, moved to Berkeley to live with him. However, it was a tumultuous time for all. As Joan struggled with her own emotional hardship and recovery, the marriage unraveled, and the couple divorced in 1970. Joan then moved to Massachusetts, first to Lexington, and then to Cambridge.

In addition to her twelve-step work Joan became active in Massachusetts in a variety of progressive causes. Notably, she served as Director of Common Cause Massachusetts during the Dukakis administration. She also supported the Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust near her summer home; Joan was passionate about the natural resources of the area, as well as its history.

Many Friends will remember her vocal ministry lifting up the wonders of nature; the miracles she found there spoke to her spirit. Yet Joan's generosity, hospitality, and compassionate presence nurtured the Meeting as much as her messages in worship. Living only steps from Longfellow Park, Joan gave tremendous energy to the Meeting, greeting attenders at the door, bringing fresh flowers, and tending the meetinghouse gardens. Over decades she served in many roles at FMC, including several stints on Oversight Committee (as it was then known), of which she was appointed clerk in 1999.

The committee met regularly at her house on Foster Place, a haven for Quaker gatherings. Joan hosted not only individuals, but potlucks and events; for years the West Cambridge Village group met for worship in her home.

Joan can be credited with several practices that still inform our community life today. She instituted the practice of checking in at the beginning of meetings, something that was particularly helpful to one member who was going through a difficult time in her life. In addition, under Joan's care, Oversight Committee established monthly meetings for healing on Thursday evenings. Joan also led a memorable forum on "Healing from Childhood Trauma: Turning in to the Healing Presence of God in our Community."

In 2001 Joan moved to Brookhaven, an assisted living community in Lexington that included several other Quakers. She attended the Brookhaven Worship Group for a time, but its silence did not speak to her condition and she stopped coming. However, she maintained contact with friends at Cambridge through periodic visits. When her daughter Katherine died suddenly in 2005, Joan turned to FMC for a memorial meeting.

In addition to her children, Joan had three grandchildren and played an active role in their lives from their births to her death. When she died, she also left two great-grandchildren, and another has been born since.

Just as Joan's presence was essential to Friends Meeting at Cambridge, so the Meeting was dear to Joan. Those who knew her respected her connection with Friends as they did her connection with the natural world. Though she suffered from alcoholism in her younger years, Joan always said that it was through Friends worship that she found the Higher Power that sustained her in recovery for the rest of her life.

Approved by Friends Meeting at Cambridge on February 14, 2021, Deborah Colgan, clerk.

Christine (“Chris”) Connaire
February 10, 1934 - September 5, 2019

If you didn’t know that Chris Connaire was a theater professional, you might have been able to guess. She dressed with flair, spoke crisply, with an enduring English accent, and was capable of making a grand entrance. But Chris was also always authentically herself: kind, generous to a fault, passionate about social justice. She was a force of nature engaging people from different walks of life with equal interest, concern, and enthusiasm.

Chris was born February 10, 1934 in Esher, UK, outside London. She was raised by her father and stepmother. One of Chris’s most indelible memories of living through World War II in England arose for her more than once in vocal ministry in Friends’ worship many years later. Participating in a civic program just after the war, her family took in a German prisoner of war for a time. It was Christmas, and in an effort to assuage the intense loneliness of the displaced German soldiers, children were taught at school how to sing “Silent Night” in German as well as English. Singing the carol in German with the stunned young man who had been dropped into their family circle deepened for Chris a passionate, lifelong pacifism.

Chris came to the United States, reuniting with her mother in pursuit of her education, earning a bachelor’s degree from Hope College in Holland, Michigan, and a master’s degree from Wellesley College. Chris was a co-founder of the People’s Theater in the 1970s. She was involved in helping racially integrate the theater and took the reins when leadership was needed. Later she served as director of the Cambridge Arts Council. She was an indispensable member of a small group of Quakers who met monthly to read plays aloud together for fun.

Stephanie Fox, a niece related “by divorce” remembered at Chris’ memorial that when she came to family events that included children, she “talked funny, wore odd hats, and was colorful and playful, arriving in costume with her kids.” She went on, “Chris had a calling to spark imagination in all and to express being brave. Chris treated everyone as co-equal.”

Chris became a member of the Friends Meeting at Cambridge 2008 and stayed engaged until her death. She ran the meeting’s First Day School (FDS) from 2010 to 2014 with a combination of tenderness and no-nonsense fierceness encouraging our youth to be their true selves—a blessing she had not always been afforded as a child. Perhaps it was a voice of authority declaring a girl’s “proper” place that empowered Chris to burst forth with her vibrant spirit. As FDS Coordinator she developed relationships with all the children and teens, speaking to their differing needs. Her infectious enthusiasm for her work with the youth, as well as the joyous Christmas pageants they produced together, kept the young people present in the minds and hearts of adults in the community. She made work into fun, enriching, and connecting our community at Friends Meeting at Cambridge.

Friends remember Chris' dedication to prison ministry, visiting incarcerated individuals as well as helping their transition upon release. Chris served on the board of Concerned Elders, Inc. -- a Massachusetts non-profit founded in 2014, now renamed the Community Re-entry Program. She was a consistent friend of prisoners, returning citizens and recent immigrants, sharing her life and her possessions.

Chris advocated for the needs of others in many ways. She modeled considerate, compassionate interaction with homeless people. Chris regularly led the meeting's youth in making meals for a nearby shelter. A Friend remembers the years, for a few weeks before Christmas, that Chris would stand at the rise of Meeting, and "invite us -- in her inimitable Chris way -- to drop money into her Santa's sack. She was raising funds for homeless women and children at the Y in Central Square. We could not respond to her request fast enough."

Chris's energetic generosity also took her back across the Atlantic several times to be with and, in the end, to ensure good care for her stepmother Kitty. The relationship had been a sustaining one in Chris's younger life and flowered as Chris made the faithful trips that taxed her budget but nourished her heart.

Another Friend remembered her pride in her son, Colin, and in his roles both in taking care of his family and as a police officer. She was proud of her daughter, too, keeping Celia's artwork within eyesight and talking of her impressive job.

An avid camper when she was younger, and swimmer even in old age, Chris embraced new adventures including marriage. She let her friends know that she was over the moon about Jonathon Fine, whom she married as soon as she turned eighty.

When a doctor informed her that she had inoperable cancer, she received the news calmly without tears. "I survived the bombing of London when I was a child," she told the doctor, explaining that she had faced death before and she was not afraid. During her long stay at the Miriam Boyd Parlin Hospice Residence in Wayland she had many visitors among Quakers, colleagues and family. From her bed she daily perused the New York Times and Boston Globe to keep abreast of world events. She became a favorite among the volunteers and staff. One volunteer said, "I learned how to die from her."

Chris died at age 85 Thursday, September 5, 2019. She is survived by her two children, Celia Connaire and Celia's spouse, John Budish, of Brick, NJ, and Colin Connaire and his spouse Nicole, grandchildren, and extended family. She was predeceased by her first husband, Joseph Connaire, and second, Jonathan Fine.

As she lay dying, Chris told Friends that she looked forward to rejoining Jonathan and telling him, "I'll tell him 'I told you so!'" that there was an afterlife. Shortly before her death she was looking up and was asked what she saw. "Jonathan." How's he look? "Good." Is he looking back at you? "Oh, yes!"

A Memorial Meeting for Worship was held December 14, 2019, at 2:00 PM at the Friends Meeting at Cambridge, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge MA 02138.

Approved by Friends Meeting at Cambridge, September 12, 2021, Ian Harrington, clerk.

Ghanda Virginia DiFiglia
August 25, 1938 - December 28, 2019

Ghanda Virginia DiFiglia grew up in Brooklyn, New York, in a large, close-knit Italian family. She spent many happy early years playing with cousins who would remain her close friends for life. She experienced Catholic grade school as quite rigid and stern, and it was a relief when she entered a secular high school. Her interests started to develop in history and civics, and she decided that a worthy and “faithful” life would be as a civic-minded citizen, taking action for justice and peace. In college, she developed a circle of friends who brought her joy and comfort throughout her life. Her early work with children with severe disabilities deepened her humanism by putting her in touch with the stories and experiences of others.

As an adult, Ghanda settled in the Boston area, where her work included careers as a teacher of special needs children, an educational writer, and a librarian. She retired as Department Administrator in the Philosophy Department at Harvard University. A poet and prose writer, Ghanda wrote several books, including a book of poetry and two children’s books. She served as coordinating editor for two books highlighting Unitarian Universalist leaders who worked on behalf of refugees during and after World War Two.

Ghanda joined FMC in March of 1985. Among the many roles that Ghanda played in the meeting over the years, she served as an interim Friend in Residence, in 1990, where she initiated staff meetings for mutual support. She served as Recording Clerk for two years, and was a steady and resourceful member of the clerk’s team. She served on Ministry and Counsel, with one year as co-clerk. Always concerned with the wellbeing and learning of children, she served on the Cambridge Friends School Trustees as well as serving the First Day School Committee for many years, often as co-clerk. She was a First Day School teacher, too, teaming up with Christel Jorgenson for several years to adventure together as teachers of the high school group.

Ghanda was especially interested in the intersection of faith and social action, and enjoyed dialoguing with congregations and other groups on that subject. In the 1980’s she was a founding member of the meeting’s Ad Hoc Committee of Concern for Central American Refugees. As a long-time member of the Peace and Social Justice committee (then “Peace and Social Concerns”), Ghanda’s service was legendary. As one Friend recalls, “she not only lent her gravitas as a well-grounded Quaker to the peace and social justice committee, but created the notes that helped us stay on track.” She created a new interfaith adult curriculum for peace education, gathered materials to support young people considering conscientious objection, and helped to initiate FMC’s monthly meeting for worship and witness in front of Textron, and later Raytheon, corporations that profit from creating weapons of war. A strong proponent of action for peace and justice, Ghanda was heard more than once to express impatience with Friends

over the time it can take us to commit to social action.

Ghanda's belief in the importance of dialogue across differences led her to spend time in Oasis of Peace, a cooperative village jointly founded by Israeli Jews and Arabs in 1972. She returned to inform us at FMC about the village's intentional peace-making.

Ghanda brought her skills as an artist and writer to her work for peace. For more than a decade, she wrote the Good Friday Peace Witness pamphlet, each year broadening the concerns expressed to include the environment, racial justice, and concern about antisemitic themes in some portrayals of Holy Week. Collaborating with several FMC Friends, Ghanda produced, wrote and directed a film on the ecological costs of war and preparation for war, called Urgent Peace. Of their work together on this film, one collaborator remembers that Ghanda "didn't put in a word that she didn't think a lot about." Independent to the end in service of her abiding commitments, Ghanda traveled to an antiwar march in NYC after her diagnosis with cancer; her family worried about this trip, yet knew that she was being true to herself. As one Friend said, "Her commitment to peace and social justice reflected in her witness over so many years will continue to serve as an inspiration to many."

In her seventies, Ghanda followed a leading to create a children's book in which the three Wise Men, back home after their sojourn in Bethlehem, receive the gifts of faith, hope, and love to share with the people of their cities. The result was *Home from Bethlehem: A Story of the Wise Men After They Came Home*. As one Friend wrote: "Talk about being faithful! It took years and years to get that wonderful, profound story illustrated and published. Nevertheless, she persisted! What a gift to the world." FMC children – and adults – return frequently to *Home from Bethlehem* for learning and inspiration.

Ghanda's long list of loves included writing and singing, attending plays and musical performances, and connecting with children as playmate and teacher. She studied Italian, did extensive genetic and genealogical research on her family, and made several trips to Sicily to track down her family's genetic history and to reconnect with long-lost relatives. She loved creating and savoring community, and enjoyed serving Italian dinners to gatherings of her wide intersecting circles of friends. As her niece Becca said, "The human connection was really strong for Gigi. Such a full Roladex! And she had so much going on!" Above all, Ghanda loved Becca and the family that they created together over many years, including Becca's husband Josh and son James. She loved being a grandmother to James as he grew; she got down on the floor to play with him, and joined his wonder at their science adventures.

Friends remember Ghanda as "a self-effacing, proper, traditional person... a deep and deliberate thinker... . . . passionate and meticulous about the facts... steadfast in wanting to tell the truth." We relished Ghanda's sense of humor. One Friend remembers: Ghanda and I were

talking about meeting for business and how some people knit. She said, “I wonder how people would feel if I just set up an ironing board in the back and brought my ironing?” We laughed and laughed at the visual image of it. I loved how her nose would crinkle up and her eyes would dance.” And we felt her kindness: “When I was 8, my parents flew to China for two weeks to adopt my sister.. Ghanda agreed to care for me and my brother while they were gone. I have always had a soft spot in my heart for her and know it was because of how kind she was.” Another Friend prizes that “during her last months of illness, Ghanda demonstrated such consistent grace and caring about the welfare of others even as she was battling health issues of her own.” Friends might want to listen to this [this beautiful piece](#) celebrating Ghanda’s life based on the rhythms of the Stone of Hope drumming circle.

Ghanda died on Saturday, December 28, 2019, in Arlington, MA.. During her final illness, the FMC hospice choir came to sing to her, which was a profound experience: music had always brought her comfort, and it did so at the end. Becca and Josh were with Ghanda and relayed that she “passed away quietly, surrounded by love.” Becca spoke of how strengthened she felt by the caring and support Ghanda received from her FMC community.

We miss Ghanda. We seek to live up to her vibrant, deeply considered and persistent witness for justice and peace.

Approved by Friends Meeting at Cambridge March 9, 2025, Christel Jorgenson, clerk.

Joan L. Griscom
May 26, 1930 - March 2, 2017

Joan “Joanie” Griscom was born in Cambridge on May 26, 1930. She was educated at the Winsor School and Vassar College, earning three Master’s Degrees, one in English from the University of Minnesota, one in theology from Union Theological Seminary, and a third Master’s Degree from New York University. Joanie continued her education at New York University and was awarded her doctorate in Psychology in 1991. She was a dedicated professional, and her long career included serving as an educator and social worker with young adults, teaching college at William Paterson University, and research in Women’s Studies. Joanie published widely and was far ahead of her time in her enlightened understanding of issues of gender, sexuality and race.

Joanie loved music! She was a wonderful pianist and enjoyed playing Bach, Brahms, and Chopin, as well as Scott Joplin and Joseph Lamb. Her love of music was also evidenced in her deep commitment to choral music, singing both in professional and semi-professional groups. She sang for many years with Chorus Pro Musica and The Orpheus Singers, and had a lifelong association with the Longy School of Music. Joanie continued to study voice until shortly before she passed away, and shared her love of music both at FMC Women’s Silent Retreats and at Brookhaven. Joanie was delighted by her involvement in strengthening Brookhaven’s music program and she worked tirelessly with others to bring top quality guest musician’s to regularly perform there.

Joanie lived in Wanaque and Ringwood, New Jersey for many years and then chose to move to Brookhaven at Lexington where she had many deeply meaningful relationships with both residents and staff. She was an active and popular member of the Brookhaven community for 15 years. While at Brookhaven, she joined the local FMC worship group, subsequently becoming a member of Cambridge Friends Meeting.

Joanie had relayed that she had been drawn to Quakerism for years. She said that she had specifically reached out to FMC as a result of having read An Epistle to Friends Meeting at Cambridge from the Meeting on Ministry and Counsel, May 16, 2010. She shared that she had found the document very moving and that it spoke to her in a deep and personal way. Joanie said that reading this document directly led her to want to become a member of Friends Meeting at Cambridge.

Joanie shared that she regretted not being able to come as regularly as she would like to worship at FMC, but sincerely valued her connection with the community, including serving for a period of time on the Care and Support Committee. She often drove with Chuck Woodbury, another FMC member residing in Brookhaven, to the Meeting for Worship at FMC. Joanie often said that

she particularly cherished her times at the women's retreats, noting that she both valued the extended times of silence and the fellowship with women from FMC during these weekends together.

Her commitment to equality and social justice was apparent in her conversations. Joanie's innate curiosity led her to place an intense value on the benefits of open, frank and honest conversations, always ready to hear and explore ideas and deepen her own knowledge and understanding through conversations with others. Her extensive relationships spanned many generations and included people from all walks of life and from places all over the world. Joanie had a vast array of family members, both in her "family of origin" and her "family of choice." Joanie was predeceased by her former husband, Werner, and her devoted partner Marge. She was a member of numerous organizations and maintained contact with a wide spectrum of people. Joanie has been described as a "kind, wise, and delightfully unconventional person" and she described herself as someone who valued connections with family, friends and music more than anything else in her life.

Joanie passed away on March 2, 2017. Her love of family and friends, her passion for music, her commitment to deep and meaningful conversation, her intense commitment to women's issues, her desire for equality for all filled her life. Joanie's unquenchable joie de vivre will long live in the minds and hearts of those who had the pleasure of knowing her.

This minute was read at a special memorial meeting at Friends Meeting at Cambridge on November 20, 2024 and approved at the subsequent Meeting for Worship with attention to business on December 8, 2024, Christel Jorgenson, clerk.

Patricia Anne Hogan
May 17, 1937 - July 4, 2018

Patricia Anne Hogan was known by several names. Most of her family called her “Pat,” or “Auntie Pat.” Her school and college friends also called her “Pat.” Our meeting knew her as “Trish,” and later, as she spent several long sojourns in Ireland exploring her roots, she adopted the Irish version of her name “Padraigín Áine Ní Ógáin.”

Trish’s face was incredibly expressive, even transparent. On Sunday mornings, as she entered the meetinghouse, walking to her usual seat on the facing bench by the fireplace, a radiant smile would so often light up her whole face, and indeed the whole room would brighten. Trish wore her emotions plainly on her face — joy, consternation, empathy, worry, anger, love. As reflected in her face, she could easily move through any number of these emotions in a short space of time.

One of her relatives noted that “Auntie Pat” lived her life joyfully and had a curious, independent, adventurous nature. She didn’t like to sit still — she was always on the go, taking classes, going to contra dances, traveling, or riding her bike. She thought nothing of renting a car and heading down to Connecticut for a holiday or up to Vermont for a weekend.”

Born in 1937 in Boston and growing up in Melrose, Massachusetts, Trish surmounted all challenges while living a very full and overflowing life as a happy and content ‘single lady.’ In her twenties, she traveled extensively in Europe and Nigeria eventually finding her way to the Experiment in International Living with its mission of creating a more peaceful and sustainable world through international exchange. She continued working for other educational institutions and in the corporate sector. She fought gender and age discrimination her entire career. As a financial aid officer, she advocated for awards that would increase racial justice.

Later, she reinvented herself by marketing software for petroleum engineers and creating forecasting services for financial and corporate institutions. One of her last jobs before retirement was working for Friends Meeting at Cambridge as the Meeting Secretary.

Her religious and spiritual life was grounded in Quakerism, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Irish Catholicism. She began attending Friends Meetings in the 1960s while living in Maryland. When she moved back to Massachusetts, she joined the Beacon Hill Friends Meeting in the early 1980s and transferred her membership to Friends Meeting at Cambridge in 1987. She was active in New England Yearly Meeting, serving on the Finance Committee and the New England Friends Home Committee. She was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) for 42 years. And, in her later years, she reconnected to the Irish Catholic spirituality of her youth, spending several summers in Ireland.

At age 49, Trish was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia and lived an amazingly full life for the next 31 years. Her illness did not slow her down or stop her from doing things. She often shared her updates, conversations, and the research and guidance she would get from her oncologist and dear friend Lidia Schapira. Lidia writes of their friendship in an article, “Finding Ways to Celebrate the Joys of Living Over a Cup of Tea.”

“Trish was one of my first patients. I was fresh out of specialty training in hematology and oncology, and Trish chose me as her doctor. Together we embarked on the long journey of managing an incurable illness. There were good years, when her leukemia was indolent and watchful waiting was the best approach. When the disease was stable, we had the luxury of talking about life, poetry, and travel during our routine clinic visits. Trish was fearless. She accepted her illness at age 49 and had decided to live her 2020-04-05 days as fully as possible and with confidence. Her mother had lived with the same disease for a couple of years before she passed at the age of 82.

“Trish taught me about coping with adversity and illness. It is absolutely true that oncologists learn about life, grief, and loss from their patients, and Trish has been my best teacher. I saw her move past the shock of receiving bad news time and time again. I watched her arrive at a state of peaceful, comfortable acceptance of what could not be changed. It was a state coupled with the determination to do whatever was necessary to keep on living as well as possible.”

Trish did not slow down when she retired at the age of 62. Her love of books and poetry led her to the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement where she taught and studied the literature of William Faulkner and William Butler Yeats, as well as the poetry of Jorie Graham, Seamus Heaney, and John Ashbery.

A founding member of the Cambridge Cohousing community in 1998, she was an active and engaged participant there until her death. If she was sometimes quick to vent frustration during the ups and downs of community life, she was as quick to acknowledge and reconcile. She showed a particular and generous concern for the children of the community as they grew.

A few years before she died, she began planning her memorial meeting. She was absolutely clear that she did not want the usual Quaker memorial meeting. The idea of people speaking out of the silence in remembrance of her just seemed way too placid. She wanted the memorial to be a celebration of life. She wanted (and got) a Celtic harp player, lots of music, singing, poetry, even preaching. And yes, she did eventually agree to include a few minutes of silent waiting worship. And people did speak, so very movingly, about her.

When she knew it was time to let go of the twice-weekly treatments that were keeping her alive, she faced death with courage and grace. She assured everyone that she was in a good place and everything was going to be okay. She was ready. Over the next few weeks, a stream of visitors came by her bed at Elizabeth Evarts de Rham Hospice in Cambridge. Some would read to her, some would just sit quietly, and some would engage her in deep conversation about whatever was on her mind at the moment. Trish knew she was loved and embraced by so many — her family, her co-housing community, her medical community, her Quaker community, her dear friends, and of course, by the love of Jesus. She was often in awe of the support and she truly felt blessed.

Trish died on July 4, 2018, held in love by her friends and family.

Approved by Friends Meeting at Cambridge, May, 17, 2020, Ian Harrington, clerk.

Lynn Lazar
January 14, 1936 - September 2, 2018

Lynn Patricia Chandler Lazar was born on January 14, 1936, in Oakland, California, to Scott and Marie Chandler. Lynn grew up in Oakland, graduating from Oakland High School and then moving down the road to Berkeley for college, graduating with a degree in Art History. Lynn's mother Marie worked at a credit union that played a significant role in helping the Oakland community socially and economically; as a child, Lynn would often visit Marie at work, listening to stories and absorbing the atmosphere of loving concern and practical action.

Lynn was briefly married to Roger Moss in the late 1950's. She subsequently met and married Edward Lazar, with whom she shared formative experiences of work for social justice and peace, along with two children, Sarania and Susie. Ed and Lynn worked on the Everyman Boat antinuclear protest in the early 1960's. Then, after brief stays in New York and Rhode Island, they traveled together to India to participate in the 1963 Delhi to Peking Friendship March. They came back to the United States, staying for a few years, then returned to India, living in an ashram, where spiritual growth was emphasized and the residents performed daily living tasks together. After the birth of Sarania, they decided that they should be closer to modern health care for the sake of their baby. They moved back to the Bay Area, then made their way to Cambridge, Massachusetts, when Ed accepted a job at the American Friends Service Committee.

The couple had their second child, Susie, while living in Cambridge. The entire family, Lynn, Ed, Sarania and Susie, became full members of Friends Meeting at Cambridge in 1972 (later on, Ed resigned and Sarania and Susie let their memberships lapse when they reached adulthood). Soon after, the marriage ended, and Lynn became a single parent raising her two girls; after 1980 or so, they lived in her house on Gorham Street in Cambridge, which was Lynn's address for the rest of her life.

Lynn was a strong woman who managed to balance single parenthood with a full professional life. Her girls were well-loved, and Lynn allowed them to be quite independent, but could be firm when that seemed called for. When the family faced challenges, they shared and processed their feelings in a circle, a practice that Lynn loved and urged on her friends the rest of her life.

In Cambridge, Lynn worked for Vocations for Social Change in Central Square, first as a volunteer, then in a paid position; she conducted counseling groups of young people and people in mid-career centered on how to bring social justice meaning to their work. Lynn was always intrigued about work; she loved reading and discussing Studs Terkel. (She was also continually introducing her friends to newfound favorite authors: John Paul Lederach,

Michele Alexander, and many others.)

After leaving Vocations for Social Change, Lynn went back to school to earn a certificate in counseling, and she started working as a drug counselor at The Third Nail in Boston. Later she worked at Transition House, an agency to help battered women. She participated in training police about domestic violence. For a short time, she worked as a temporary employee at Harvard University, then in a full-time job at the Aids Institute there. She then became involved in hospice work, and finally took up massage therapy, which she practiced until she retired. Throughout her work life, Lynn practiced and shared her enthusiasm for nonviolent communication.

Everywhere Lynn worked, she formed deep friendships and welcomed her friends into her home; there were many shared evenings nourished with tostados, curries, or other treats that she created out of whatever was in her tiny refrigerator, using a small toaster oven. As one friend said at her Memorial, “She made you feel like a rock star, just sitting and talking with her.” Lynn and her daughters seldom lived alone in the house—there might be women who were victims of domestic violence, Buddhist monks, or others who just needed a place to stay for a while.

Lynn’s first grandchild, Angel, son of Sarania and her partner Ernesto Osegueda, was born in California in 1999, and Lynn moved back to her home state to help out. In 2002, Lynn, along with Sarania’s family, moved back to Cambridge, where they lived in two apartments in the Gorham Street house. (Sarania, Ernesto and Angel still live there, and they are preparing Lynn’s old apartment for rental.) Meanwhile, Lynn’s daughter Susie had her son Jahli in 2000 and then her daughter Gianna, who attended First Day School at Friends Meeting at Cambridge for a while with her cousin Jordan, in 2008.

In her later years, Lynn spent much time volunteering with local non-profits such as Haley House, Louis D Brown Peace Institute, Boston Worker’s Alliance, Cambridge Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition, as well as Friends Meeting at Cambridge, where she was active with the Living with Dying Resource Committee, First Day School Committee, Youth Programs Committee, Ministry and Counsel, the Wednesday night Sharing Circle, among other groups. Everywhere she went, Lynn would volunteer to do work, but what she liked to do most was to talk with staff, volunteers, and clients, sharing her insights, listening and learning, and, above all, being a connection-maker (she would say, “You must meet so-and4 so; they are doing fabulous work.”). She spoke with friends about the importance of “going across the river” into Boston to talk to people with different life experiences, rather than staying on the Cambridge side of the Charles, talking among ourselves about social justice. Lynn had many ideas and suggestions for peace and justice projects that she urged on her friends, her committees, her groups, and a number of her ideas came into fruition.

Establishing a bail fund for the son of a friend was accomplished quickly and led to an ongoing Cambridge Bail and Legal Defense Fund. Her idea that Friends Meeting at Cambridge should apply to sponsor a Boston chapter of Quaker Voluntary Service caught on after a few months of talking and leg work by her and a couple of friends she recruited; it is going strong today. Sometimes, Lynn would be frustrated that she could not get people to join with her in working on her ideas (Someday Farm on Longfellow Park is far from being realized, for example). She would lament what she perceived as her inability to express clearly what her vision was or what next steps might be.

Lynn was, in fact, concerned that all she had learned and experienced in her very active life would be lost unless she could get it written down and organized. Her basement was crammed with papers; when her children suggested that she reduce the piles, she objected, “Those papers are HISTORY!” She tried to write systematically about some of the social justice organizations she had been involved in, but this was a big challenge for her. (She would have been delighted to know that some of her papers are now being archived at the University of Massachusetts.)

Lynn was fully active in worship at Friends Meeting at Cambridge. She was also a stalwart participant for many years in the Course in Miracles group that has met for years on Saturday mornings at the Meeting. She deeply lived the admonition to “Teach only Love, for that is what you are.” She believed strongly in the spiritual nature of human beings: “I am not a body.” Toward the end of her life, she spoke graciously and authentically about her life ending soon—about the joyous adventure she anticipated of transitioning to another state beyond death.

In June 2018 Lynn experienced a large stroke. She recovered rather well physically and she was amazingly cheerful and gracious; her sense of humor was intact. But she had difficulty reading, writing and speaking, which she dealt with in her down-to-earth way— “not complaining, just observing,” as a friend said. She would say, “I don’t remember your name, but I know who you are.” When she was trying to get a thought out and got stuck, she would sometimes say any old word or word-like sound, trusting that her listener could substitute an appropriate English word. A second, massive stroke in August 2019 led to her death a few weeks later.

At the lovely Memorial Meeting that was held to celebrate Lynn’s life at Friends Meeting at Cambridge in November 2019, friends and family members remembered her with many loving and admiring messages. For instance:

- Lynn gave us space, but guided us when we needed it.
- She was a mentor who taught empowerment.
- Lynn was a mama bear. She was shy, but she would get in the mud with you, meet you where you were. She knew how to zero in on the center of her friends’ lives.
- The year between her strokes was a gift to all of us. She was serene, but not quite ready to go, because, “we have more work to do.”

- Ways I will miss Lynn: her cozy home, her welcoming, the way she cooked, snacking on what she put out in tiny bowls, her welcoming home, endless patience, inquiries about my work, talking about important people, talking about peace marches, Petsi pies and scones, big picture ideas, her plans for how I could change the world, ginger cookies, walking the walk, food cravings, efforts to stop smoking. She was a truly good friend.
- I am always meeting people who knew and loved Lynn. She helped teach me how to love unconditionally; she was truly genuine in showing her love and faith: “It will be okay—don’t worry.”
- She showed up for people; she felt it was a responsibility.
- She showed me how love can transform into justice.
- She was flexible but persistent.
- She taught me that kindness is a strength, not a weakness, and there is a ripple effect of her kindness and insight.

Lynn Lazar, how we miss you! We feel your kindness and love, your joy in doodles and paper cranes, rippling among us. You are with us.

Approved by Friends Meeting at Cambridge, November 14, 2021, Tom Sander, clerk.

Mehmet Rona
October 18, 1939 - October 26, 2019

Mehmet Rona was born on October 18, 1939 in Adana, Turkey, the fourth child of Hikmet and Ziya Rona. Mehmet was a curious and inventive child. His sons tell of young Mehmet building a box kite from a picture in a dictionary: “To many, this would have remained just a dream. But to my father, ideas demanded action. And with the minimal information that box kites existed and what they sort of looked like, he was able to build one. One can only imagine the scoffs turning to smiles of amazement when the box kite soared.” Mehmet lost both his older brothers when he was still young, and his father, Ziya, a pharmacist, passed away when Mehmet was 14 years old. Mehmet assumed the role of protector of his mother and sister for the rest of their lives. These formative experiences of loss shaped much of the remainder of Mehmet’s life, although, as his sons attest, he “never dwelled on how bad it was.” He met difficulties with resilience and Humor.

Mehmet graduated from Robert College, an independent American high school in Istanbul, in 1961. A former Robert College classmate remembers him as “ a brilliant person with loveliness in his heart. He cared for everybody. He was born a teacher.” A family story tells of his next steps: Mehmet went to the beach on a day off from his work in a steel mill – work that built a stocky, weight-lifter strength in his body that lasted to the end. He learned of an entrance exam for studies at Princeton University in the far-away USA, took the exam without studying, got the top score, and received a full scholarship. He earned a PhD in theoretical physics from Princeton in 1966.

The wife of Mehmet’s thesis advisor at Princeton recalled, during Mehmet’s memorial meeting, that the first time he came over to meet his advisor, having learned that he and his family were Jewish, he apologized about Turkey’s neutrality until the very end of World War II. We hear in this story Mehmet’s balance of head and heart, the infusion of his academic brilliance with a deep, caring sense of responsibility to his fellow humans. He became a close part of his advisor’s family.

During his years at Princeton, Mehmet and Susan Rich met and fell in love with each other. They married in Istanbul in 1968, and had two sons - Yilmaz Rona (now of Upton) and Ilyas Rona (now of Chestnut Hill). They settled in Turkey, where Mehmet taught physics at Middle East Technical University in Ankara. A colleague from that time remembers Mehmet teaching elementary physics to two classes of five hundred freshmen each, and being tremendously well respected. “They were students from all over Turkey. These young men adored him.” According to his former Robert College classmate, “In Turkey people are still saying, “Mehmet! He was my professor!” Mehmet also loved mischief. On the day scheduled for a faculty photo, he posed as a Saudi mathematician in full head-dress and sunglasses, was given a VIP tour, and showed up in

the faculty photo.

By the late 1970s, the political situation in Turkey became precarious. Middle East Technical University was at the center of the increasingly dangerous confrontations. When the president of the university stepped down, and no other faculty member had the courage to take on the role given the threat of violence from an extremist political group, Mehmet agreed to step into the political fray as acting president. In this role, Mehmet needed round the clock protection, and there were several attempts on his life. A colleague remembers that Mehmet “saved the university as interim director, with humor and great courage. He showed great bravery during that difficult time.” Mehmet was famously absent minded, says his son Ilyas, but “his mind would be laser-focused on the right thing to do and his sense of duty when circumstances called for it.”

When the danger to their family became too great, Mehmet and Susan moved with their sons to Belmont, MA, where Mehmet joined the storied consulting firm Arthur D. Little in Cambridge (which became Tiax LLC in 2002). A gifted practical theoretician, he authored several published works on the physics of semiconductors and invented several patents, and rose to the position of vice-president. A caring soul, he helped his workplace community through difficult times, greeted coworkers with lively concern, gave guidance when asked, and served as Ombudsman for a number of years. One colleague from Arthur D. Little calls Mehmet “a perfect gentleman, and a mensch.” Another recalls seeing Mehmet in the halls: “He’d always check on us and ask about our careers. He was a trusted person in the organization.” Many ADLers remember him simply as their mentor.

In his forties, Mehmet suffered a serious motorcycle accident that left him with pain for the rest of his life and prompted a mid-life search for deeper meaning. Mehmet went through a challenging time internally. Despite his professional success and being so well-respected as a scientist and consultant, he longed for his life to have an impact that felt more meaningful to him. He separated from Susan in 1990, and moved to Cambridge. This longing also led him to deepen his religious quest, and to engage Christianity more and more fully. He thought to become a Catholic, and asked his close friend Michael Shanahan, whom he assumed to be Catholic, where he went to Mass. When Michael responded that he was a Quaker, Mehmet came to Friends, and found himself at home. He became a member of FMC in October of 2006.

In an interview with a student at the Harvard Advocate towards the end of his life, Mehmet put into words the dynamic faith at work in him as he sat in the meeting house, Sunday after Sunday, his well-worn Bible in his hand. “I am in love with God,” he told the young woman. My whole life, people have said I have a transparency for God. I leak my faith....My relationship with Christ is very intense. Meetings help me to organize that.” Friend Jessie Brown often recorded the words of Mehmet’s vocal ministry, so we can remind ourselves now of the messages that

came through him.

- ❖ Open your heart. Let God inspire you. Whether we conduct our life from fear or from hope is our choice. (2008)
- ❖ How does one get better at this? I am expectantly waiting! (2009)
- ❖ Can we remember for one another our own knowledge of the bright days, and rely on faith to remove the clouds? (2010)
- ❖ I've heard this admonishment, "Walk cheerfully over the earth, seeking that of God in every one," In my imperfect way, I hear it as an admonishment asking me to serve the needy, the hungry, the unloved. I hear it asking me to work on behalf of the community—and if I meet with failure, not to sulk, but to try again. (2010)
- ❖ There are wars, injustices, unspeakable cruelty... And yet, I am here. I have the sense that God wants good for all. Can I serve that purpose by being kind, loving, forgiving, here? Without sermons, thick books, catechisms, we can draw close to God. (2010)
- ❖ How do we prepare ourselves to be the pipe that resonates, that thrills to the mystery some call God, or Spirit, or the gathered meeting? We wait, listening, for that calling. It doesn't come always — but to make every attempt to make our souls ready, receptive, inviting to that tone, is our best chance.... (2012)
- ❖ To serve God is not like climbing Mount Everest, and shoving in a flag so that you're proved good! It's a constant process of humility—more like crawling up a surface of ice, hooking fingers, scrabbling, and not becoming furious if you lose altitude. (2013)

One Friend has said, "His faith wasn't about definitions or theology. He was about love. I hope his messages have fallen on enough hearts that we will carry that message of love forward."

Mehmet's service at FMC included a challenging stint on the Personnel Committee, to which he brought the wisdom of his experience as vice-president in a high-level technical consulting firm. He worried as this circle of non-HR-professionals tried to help FMC be a dependable, transparent and effective employer. During a particularly fraught period, when the committee struggled to do the right thing by both meeting and staff, he confessed that the task was grueling for him, "worse than a root canal." Later, Mehmet led the Grants Committee, where he was devoted to helping FMC give of our abundance to those in need.

Mehmet was also a founding member of the Wednesday Night Sharing Circle, a weekly mutual support group of Quakers and non-Quakers, many of whom have been in prison. In the circle, he spoke often of loving everyone present. When a circle member was having a hard time or a legal difficulty, Mehmet would volunteer his time and money to try to help. A member of the circle remembers: "He gave us the carved wooden cane from the Philippines that we use as a talking piece; one of the Circle participants always said that this talking piece contained the stories of everyone who ever held it."

Mehmet was a friend to innumerable ones of us at FMC. One Friend recalls that Mehmet reached out to him when he was new to the meeting and seeking a way to become part of things. “He took me by both my hands and blessed my presence here.” Another reports that “Mehmet was my spiritual friend and my protector. He helped me believe in myself and in what I was trying to do. He chose to help every possible way.” Mehmet had intense and intimate relationships in the meeting. In particular, he and Ann Foster experienced a deeply loving bond that endured over many years.

Mehmet’s generosity was felt beyond FMC’s walls. Those who socialized with him outside FMC report that he gave people money on the street, and regularly left half his meal at his regular restaurant for the waitstaff to give to nearby homeless people. He tutored at risk teenagers from East Cambridge, and work to end the constitutional deprivations wrought by our unjust bail system.

One of the more endearing aspects of Mehmet was his self-proclaimed imperfection, faults that he would own and humbly apologize for. Yet there was also in Mehmet a deep, private territory, an insistent, even stubborn, self-reliance, that even his closest intimates found it hard to get through to, but which they sensed was the source of much anguish and seeking in his life. This possibly traced back to the traumas of his youth and the loss of his brothers and father, leaving him as the sole protector of his mother and sister. It also made his final illness—that robbed him of both speech and movement—particularly difficult for him to bear.

Of this final illness, Mehmet’s son Ilyas remembers that “to the very end, my dad kept his individuality. In his final year at the Wingate nursing home, he was unable to speak or walk, and yet even in a wheelchair he could be his imperious self. He even led my aunt on an unauthorized tour of the administrative offices. He was popular among staff and residents alike. He forged unspoken friendships with the diverse population that was there. Until the very end, he told you how felt with his eyes.” Those of us who were able to visit with Mehmet in his last months are indelibly imprinted with the silent depth of those visits. As one Friend said, “Mehmet could speak without saying any words. When he looked at you it was almost unbearable, his visual transfer of love.” To this day, people at Wingate speak of him with deep fondness.

Mehmet left his earthly body on October 26, 2019. In his three decades among us at Friends Meeting at Cambridge, we knew him to be courteous, compassionate, generous, and alive to his Christian faith. We experienced him as a complex, cherished, and cherishing, friend. We give thanks for his time among us, and are grateful that he is at peace. “Mehmet was in an internal embrace: he loved God, and God loved him. He is in that deep embrace now.”

Approved by Friends Meeting at Cambridge on April 11, 2021, Richard Ristow, clerk

Roger Webb
November 10, 1934 – June 10, 2019

At meeting for worship in the spring of 2019, an older, white-haired man struggled to his feet to offer ministry at the Cambridge Meetinghouse and began by saying, “I was born a Quaker and I want to die a Quaker...” After a long absence from the Friends community Roger Webb returned home to Meeting, where his membership was approved by Friends Meeting at Cambridge (FMC) on June 9th, 2019, just one day before his passing.

Roger began attending Friends Meeting at Cambridge shortly after he came to Harvard College in 1952 and joined the meeting in November of 1966. In 1967, as a witness against the growing U.S. war in Vietnam, the Meeting provided sanctuary for a man who was a conscientious objector to war and absent without leave (AWOL) from the military. Perhaps due to the Meeting’s support of this act of civil disobedience reflecting the polarized politics of the day, or perhaps because his career and family began to take precedence, after a few years Roger drifted away from the Meeting, resigning his membership in 1979. Rejoining the Meeting 40 years later, Roger came full circle, returning to his Quaker childhood roots.

The youngest of four siblings, Roger was born into a Quaker family in Montclair, NJ on November 10, 1934 to Eleanor Miller and Nathaniel Conant Webb. During childhood he spent summers visiting family in Sandy Spring, MD, where he became immersed in his Quaker heritage. In the company of his "Gaga" (grandmother) and extended family, Roger attended First Day (Sunday) meetings for worship at the nearby 18th century Quaker Meetinghouse. He fondly remembered making up small games to entertain himself in the silence. Years later, in his adulthood, Roger returned to the Sandy Spring Meeting, where he was surprised to find it had been transformed from a rural farming community into a suburb of Washington and Baltimore.

After attending Montclair Academy and The Choate School, in Wallingford, CT, he graduated from Harvard College in 1958, with a two-year interlude in the U.S. Army from 1954 to 1956. He went on to Harvard Business School, graduating in 1961. Roger's marriage in 1959 to Anne Van Vleck, an art history major at Smith College, sparked his interest in historic architecture, the field which was to become his lifelong career and passion.

A pioneer in preservation real estate development in Boston, Roger established Restoration and Relocation Enterprises (RARE) in 1963, a historic preservation contractor engaged in adaptive building reuse and relocation. Among the projects he completed were the relocation of a Greek Revival style chapel to the Belmont Hill School and the relocation of numerous structures threatened with demolition to locations in Cambridge, Brookline and Belmont. In 1966, Roger established the Architectural Heritage Foundation to jointly conduct a feasibility study for the

reuse of the Quincy Markets in Boston. That feasibility study created the framework for the subsequent redevelopment of the markets by the Rouse Company into what later came to be known as the Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Roger's signal accomplishment was working with Mayor Kevin White to preserve the recently vacated Boston City Hall building on School Street. At the time, little value was seen in historic buildings, with the city in the midst of a sweeping urban renewal movement. The successful rehabilitation of Old City Hall for commercial office use, became a model for other preservation efforts and helped to ignite interest in historic preservation locally and nationally. Roger later helped to establish the non-profit revolving fund Architectural Conservation Trust, which evolved into Preservation Massachusetts, the statewide advocacy group for historic preservation.

Throughout his life, Roger maintained vigorous physical health. Once, after being advised by a sports doctor to take up yoga, he sought instruction at a small personal growth center in Watertown with yoga classes taught by Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder of mindfulness-based stress reduction. He later enrolled in a teaching program at the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health and continued to practice yoga daily, for nearly five decades. He was last documented doing a headstand in February 2016, to the delight of many.

Roger's love of family and friends pervaded nearly every activity and was the generator of numerous group trips and adventures involving multiple families and generations. Group sailing expeditions to Maine or the Caribbean were a favorite, particularly if they included dancing to a steel drum band. At any family wedding Roger was often the last to leave the dance floor. In retirement, Roger immersed himself in caring for grandchildren and took every opportunity to connect to the people around him. He continued to enrich his life by taking classes in painting, history and writing. Painting became a passion and he used his lifelong interest in the built environment to create voluminous travel sketches and paintings wherever he went. Roger was a lifelong seeker. In his 80s, Roger participated in a series of creative writing classes, during which time he crafted a series of memory essays entitled Cheers and Tears Over the Years: My Story. In it, he wrote, "My retirement about ten years ago and my divorce brought me self-discovery. I spent a lot of time getting to know myself more deeply. ...my life is still a work in progress. Even at 80, I am still evolving."

Roger died peacefully in the care of hospice and his three daughters Rebecca, Mary and Ruth on June 10, 2019. A packed, joyous, and deeply moving memorial meeting for worship was held for Roger at the Cambridge Meetinghouse on July 13, 2019.

Roger is survived by his ex-wife Anne Webb, his daughter Rebecca Webb and her husband Christopher Heye of Belmont, his daughter Mary Webb and her husband Sean McDonnell of Cambridge and his daughter Ruth Webb and her husband Matthew Bellows of Cambridge, and his eight grandchildren Peter, Austin, Kate, Margaret, Claire, Anna, Nelson and Roy. He

treasured his close relationships with his nieces and nephews.

Approved by Friends Meeting at Cambridge, January 10, 2021, Deborah Colgan, clerk.