

# Memorial Minutes 1993

NEW ENGLAND YEARLY  
MEETING *of* FRIENDS

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1993

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### *James Guilford*

James "Justice" Guilford, 45, died December 17, 1992, in New Haven, Connecticut. Born in Panama City, Florida, he moved with his family to Utica, New York, at an early age. He spent much of his life in various prisons. He learned about Friends from a woman who visited the prison in Danbury, Connecticut, to conduct a silent meeting for worship. When he arrived at the Whalley Avenue jail in New Haven, he organized a regular meeting for worship in the jail, supported and visited by Friends from New Haven Meeting. After a few months, he was transferred to a prison in Concord, Massachusetts and then to Norfolk, Massachusetts. At Norfolk, he organized another meeting for worship, which continues to meet under the care of Wellesley Meeting, and helped to establish an Alternatives to Violence program in that prison. He also earned BA and MA degrees from Boston University, and taught classes in African-American history and culture. After repeated illnesses, he was diagnosed as having AIDS. When he was paroled in January 1992, he returned to New Haven, where he married, and he ministered to churches and African-American youth when his health permitted. New Haven Friends Meeting adopted the following minute in his memory: James "Justice" Guilford came to, and influenced, New Haven Friends meeting in unusual and extraordinary ways. His time with us was brief, yet our memories of his presence are lasting. He vibrated the soul and energy of the meeting as we struggled to understand the meaning of membership in our Monthly Meeting. He showed us how every being has tremendous possibilities and potential despite temptation and physical constraints. He opened us to the needs of persons with AIDS and to the challenges associated with this disease. He was a profound and sober gift to our meeting, and our meeting will never be the same. We lift his spirit gently towards the Light.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia, and by an extended family in Utica, New York.

— NEW HAVEN (CT) MONTHLY MEETING, CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING

### *James Joseph Toothaker*

"My creator has not told me I am of greater value than the grass, trees, rabbits, or woodchucks, who enjoy some of the vegetables I grow. Who am I, or who is any person, that we may assume the unknown. We are given life with all its potential joys, loveliness, and opportunities to live fully as human beings. To love and be loved, to share as others have shared their lives with us; to rejoice in the adventure of life and be thankful." (Jim's journal entry, First Month 1, 1977).

And such was the life and spirit of James Toothaker, a gift given, and life shared fully among everyone he met. On the occasion of his memorial service it was said that, "Jim's life was one of deep faith, obedience to his inner light, and service to God. A combination of Thomas

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Kelly and John Woolman.”

His life began in South Tewksbury, Massachusetts, Third Month 29, 1911, and from early accounts it was clear that Jim was a seeker and had a special understanding of the earth and living things. Whether tending his garden, observing nature, writing, or caring for people, his way was one of gentleness and love for the living.

James was accepted into membership among Friends at Lynn Monthly Meeting in 1952. He wrote in his journal that he had “...found completeness in now being a Friend which consumed my entire living.” Indeed, Jim’s gifts of ministry were recognized early on among Friends, and within a few years he was called to serve in the pastorate of Lawrence Meeting.

With the encouragement and constant support of Vernah, loving spouse and partner, and from their children, Jeffrey, Joyce, and Allen, way opened for Jim to serve Friends in many capacities. A period of study at Pendle Hill was followed by their decision for Jim to leave the employment of 23 years as a skilled craftsman and relocate their family of five to attend Guilford College in North Carolina. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies in 1963, followed by graduate work at Brown University in religion and sociology from 1963 to 1964.

In 1963, Salem Quarterly Meeting recorded James Toothaker as a minister in the Religious Society of Friends. His other monthly meeting pastorates included: Kernersville NC, 1960-62; Allen’s Neck, South Dartmouth MA, 1963-64; Sugar Plain IN, 1964-66; Worcester MA, 1966-68; and Mattapoisett MA, 1982-84. He was Interim General Field Secretary for New York Yearly Meeting, 1974-78.

How blessed Friends were to know James Toothaker in so many settings. He loved reading, from Socrates to scripture, and was fond of discussing the classics with people he met. Children knew him also. His instant grin, calming laugh, and peaceful countenance brought lap-fulls of children, and from his pockets came treasures to share, be it a stone, twig, or shell. Jim had a way of holding things, a never-ending sense of wonder, that drew people near. One child, upon tracing with width and length of his palm, said, “His hands are like shovels!”

Friend James was comfortable within the rich and varied tapestry of Friends, programmed or unprogrammed. He rejoiced in singing and seldom missed an opportunity to dance. His deep love and demonstrated affection for Vernah, partners for 56 years, was a joy to behold and an example for many. At the rise of meeting, or moments before leading the silence at pot-luck gatherings, his eyes would light up and he’d proclaim, “This is terrific! What a glorious day God has given!” We heard him and felt too, that it came from the Source deep within. His every movement, whether picking peas, walking and talking, or greeting Friends in meeting, was filled with spiritual grace and an easy manner.

On Third Month 6, 1993, James Toothaker died, his season among us completed. He once wrote in his journal that “from the time I was

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twenty, I had been searching for a more excellent way of life....” It is clear that this gentle soul, Friend, husband, father, and minister, had achieved just that. We thank God for his long life among us and for the gift of his spirit, still near.

— NEW BEDFORD (MA) MONTHLY MEETING, SANDWICH QUARTERLY MEETING

### ***Gregory Harrison***

Gregory Harrison died of cancer on January 26, 1993, at his home in Amherst, Massachusetts. A member of the Religious Society of Friends from birth, he studied at Harvard University, Harvard Divinity School, and Boston University School of Theology. He served Friends as pastor of Lynn Meeting from 1962 to 1964, as School Minister and Chairman of the Religion Department of Moses Brown School from 1969 to 1974, and as a member of the Moses Brown Board of Overseers. He also served on the Board of Oak Grove School. He served on Permanent Board from 1970 to 1980, and as its Clerk from 1976 to 1980.

Gregory Harrison was a pastor in several Methodist parishes during the 1960s, and from 1975 to 1987 was Associate Pastor at Wesley United Methodist Church in Worcester. In 1980 he was ordained as a deacon, and later an elder, in the United Methodist Church, and felt it necessary to resign his membership in the Society of Friends, although he continued to attend Yearly Meeting from time to time. In 1987, he became pastor of the Wesley UMC in Amherst, Massachusetts, a position he held until his death. Memorial services, which included lengthy periods of open worship, were held at the Methodist churches in Worcester and Amherst.

— A MEMORIAL REMEMBRANCE PREPARED FOR PERMANENT BOARD

### ***Dorothy Westgate Gifford***

Providence Monthly Meeting of Friends lost a respected and dearly beloved member with the passing of Dorothy Westgate Gifford on January 8, 1993, in her ninety-third year. She came to Providence when she began forty-five years of a distinguished career as a science teacher at Lincoln School, then under the care of the Yearly Meeting of Friends in New England. Previously she had held birthright membership in the Allen’s Neck Meeting and was a graduate of Moses Brown School.

Between 1952 and 1979, Dorothy Gifford served on eleven Yearly Meeting committees for a total of sixty-eight committee years, including long service on Permanent Board and on the Board of Managers of Investments and Permanent Funds. She served as Clerk of the Correspondence Committee. For over thirty years, she was a member of the Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund Trustees which distributes financial aid for Quaker concerns in New England, eventually clerking it.

Her cheerfulness, wit, and warmth nourished her meeting. Her clarity of mind to see the core of a question, and her fearlessness to speak to

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it, often helped Ministry and Counsel with difficult problems. She spoke frequently in meeting for worship, often early, with spirit, clarity, and wit, often speaking to the children with the highest respect for her hearers. Dorothy's great gift was a cheerful and generous spirit.

Her former students at Lincoln School recall that she had a place in her heart for those who struggled as well as the top scholars. The school looked to her for leadership in keeping Quaker ideals in all its affairs. Three national scholarship organizations recognized her with awards for her exemplary teaching of science, and her Alma Mater, Mt. Holyoke College, granted her an honorary doctorate. She is commemorated at Lincoln School by the Dorothy Gifford Science Wing and the Dorothy Gifford Chairs awarded annually to Lincoln faculty members for excellence in teaching.

— PROVIDENCE (RI) MONTHLY MEETING, RHODE ISLAND-SMITHFIELD QUARTERLY MEETING

### *Leslie H. Barrett*

Leslie H. Barrett, a former and founding member of Acton (MA) Monthly Meeting died on May 19, 1992 after a few weeks of illness and a short hospital stay in Greensboro, NC. He enjoyed life and people for over ninety-five years; was vital and clear almost to the end; and was able to say good-bye to all his family, Paul, Amy, and Margaret.

A service of remembrance was held Saturday, June 27 at "Friends Homes" in Greensboro where he had lived with his second wife, Margaret, for over fifteen years, "an active and beloved member."

Leslie Barrett was trained as both a teacher and a Friends minister, and was recorded as a Pastor under New England Yearly Meeting in 1925, when he married Winnifred Allee and moved to Worcester, Massachusetts. His teaching career, in the Arlington High School, spanned thirty years, from the thirties to the sixties, with four years out when he served as General Secretary for the New England office of the American Friends Service Committee in Cambridge, where Winnifred became Director of its renowned High School Programs of the post-war era.

In 1946, the Barretts bought a farm in Littleton, Massachusetts, remodeled the buildings, and developed a conference center and hostel, "Friendly Crossways," which is still serving the needs of church and school groups in the area and is also part of the American Youth Hostel program.

During the fifties, the Barretts gave much-needed leadership to the group of young families seeking guidance in their conviction who founded Acton Meeting in 1965. Leslie Barrett maintained his membership in Acton Meeting until Winni's death, and the influence of his generous support and interest may well continue to this day.

— ACTON (MA) MONTHLY MEETING, SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING

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### ***Elizabeth Ballard***

One of the founders of Hanover (NH) Monthly Meeting, Elizabeth Ballard continued to be active in its ministry for thirty years. Even following a stroke that left her partially paralyzed, she attended meeting regularly, transported in all kinds of weather by her devoted husband, William Ballard. For many years, she participated not only in Hanover Meeting but in Quarterly and Yearly Meeting, and in Friends General Conference. Elizabeth constantly raised her concerns among Friends and served on numerous committees. Her friends throughout New England were many.

Elizabeth Ballard was born on September 9, 1912 and died on July 15, 1992. She was the daughter of Vermont Senator Ralph Flanders and Helen Hartness Flanders. On June 19, 1932, Elizabeth married William Ballard. They moved to Norwich, Vermont, in 1934 when Bill became a member of the Biology Department at Dartmouth College. Elizabeth is survived by her husband, two sons, and two daughters.

A beautiful memorial service was held at the Norwich, Vermont Congregational Church on August 15, 1992. Her many musical friends and her children sang and played her favorite pieces. Her husband interspersed personal memories, recalling many of Elizabeth's wide-ranging and loving concerns.

The willingness of Elizabeth to share her musical gifts throughout the Norwich and Hanover area, and with Hanover Meeting, will long be remembered. She participated in and supported a variety of musical events in the community. We, however, shall particularly remember her Christmas programs with Meeting children, her singing ministry in meeting for worship, and the wonderful gatherings at the Ballard home. These memorable events occurred at Christmas time, or when welcoming the return of swallows in the spring, or whenever Elizabeth's hospitable spirit moved.

In her ministry, often directed toward the children, Elizabeth was effortlessly a poet, expressing an image drawn most often from nature, and then drawing the moral. After music, her great love was flowers. Elizabeth responded deeply to the oncoming of springtime each year; she always graced the meeting room with her garden's first blossoms.

Elizabeth's presence will long be felt, especially within Hanover Meeting. We miss her but remain grateful for having shared her spirit.  
— HANOVER (NH) MONTHLY MEETING, NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING

### ***Brenda Kuhn***

Brenda Kuhn died on First Month Tenth, 1993, in York, Maine. A lifelong Friend, she was originally a member of Fifteenth Street Meeting, New York City, transferring to Dover (NH) Meeting when she retired, and in 1991 to Portland (ME) Meeting when she moved to Gorham. The daughter

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of an artist, Walt Kuhn, she became an art patron and historian. She created and financed Cape Nedick Park, in York, Maine, as a memorial to her parents, providing recreation and art activities to the community. Active in politics, she was a delegate to the 1968 Democratic Convention.

Brenda Kuhn was the organizer of the first "mid coast" worship group, which met at her gallery at Kuhn House at various times. When transportation was available, she was a frequent attendee at Dover Meeting both for meeting for worship and meeting for business. On occasions when she felt the Clerk had failed to note her, she would vigorously thump her cane for attention, following it by "plain speaking." During the 1980s, she was the official photographer for the meeting.

Memorial services were held in both Dover and Portland meeting houses. At a meeting for worship held at her bedside shortly before her death, she closed the session with the following words: "The spirit goes on forever like the black and golden meadowlark, singing as he goes up through the clouds."

— DOVER (NH) MONTHLY MEETING, DOVER QUARTERLY MEETING