

Memorial Minute for Claybourne Mitchell
1/13/1923 - 12/8/2017

Clay Mitchell attended Ann Arbor Friends Meeting from the early 1990s until 2016, when he moved to Virginia to be near his daughter. While he did not apply for membership with Ann Arbor Friends Meeting, his regular presence in meetings for worship anchored him in our Quaker community. Clay served for a time on the Care and Visitation Committee and participated for many years in the Scribblers Group, writing about science, travel, and personal history as well as pieces intended for children.

Clay was a modest man. Friends remember him as a gentle, kind person with a ready smile and friendly greeting. He rarely spoke about himself or his accomplishments, but they were many and varied, including awards and patents. After military service (where he was a Master Sergeant), he earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in physics from the University of Michigan. He then became one of the country's first Black executives in the field of engineering and worked in industry for many years. He eventually retired from Detroit Edison as Vice President for Planning, Research, and Environmental Protection.

In addition to his daughter, Faith, Clay is survived by his granddaughter Alexis and his longtime friend and companion, Jan Calle. His daughter noted that Clay "always encouraged others to follow his example by thinking and dreaming big."