

## **Memorial Minute for Michael Kay (1928 – May 31, 2014)**

Marvin Lawrence Michael Kay died on Saturday, May 31, 2014, at the age of 86. Mike was a resident of Kendal at Oberlin for the last 18 years of his life. He was an enormously courageous man, pancreatic cancer survivor, who fought the good fight throughout his life and never stopped believing in a brighter day.

Michael was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Sept. 13, 1927. After graduating from high school in 1945 at the age of 17, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II. Upon returning to civilian life, Michael attended Maryville College in Tennessee, receiving his BA in 1950.

Michael then attended the University of Minnesota and received his doctorate in American history in 1959. Michael focused much of his research, writings, and teaching in the area of African American history, specifically slavery during the colonial period. While attending the University of Minnesota during the spring of 1952, he met his beloved wife Betty Ruth. Their first date was at a Quaker Picnic at UM. They were married in New Orleans on April 5, 1953.

After returning to the University of Minnesota, Michael and Betty Ruth began their 43-year life together and began building their family of seven children. His work as an American history professor took Betty Ruth and family across the United States and around the world. Michael taught and did research at San Jose State University, University of Queensland in Australia, Alfred University in New York, and Westchester State College in Pennsylvania before settling in Ohio, where Michael taught at the University of Toledo for 25 years.

In addition to being a loving father and one of the foremost historians in his field, Mike committed his life to the ongoing struggle for peace and social justice. He attended the Oberlin Friends Meeting and was active on behalf of the Democratic Party, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, and the American Friends Service Committee, traveling to Guatemala and Colombia with Witness for Peace and protesting annually at the School for the Americas.

Michael is survived by his loving children, Mandy, Jonny, Danny, and Ceri, and his eight grandchildren, Jeremiah, Lindsay, Marcus, Jonathan, Taylor, Danny, Evan, and Willa. Michael will be greatly missed and will continue to inspire us all.