

MEMORIAL MINUTE for
LILA EVANS CORNELL, 1924 - 2021

Lila Cornell, 97, a member of Pittsburgh (PA) Friends Meeting, died peacefully on February 16, 2021, at Sherwood Oaks Retirement Community, Cranberry Twp., Pennsylvania. Lila was born on February 11, 1924, the only child of itinerant farmer Morris Evans and his wife Golda (Loy) Evans.

In 1945 she married Elliot Cornell, an electrical engineer, in Cleveland, Ohio, where they raised three children: Laurel, David, and Dean. After a period of religious seeking, Lila and Elliot found Cleveland Heights Friends Meeting in the late 1940s. They became active Friends, participating in all Meeting activities, as well as Vietnam War vigils. They supported Laurel's studies at Friends World College and regularly attended Friends General Conference Annual Gatherings.

Upon Elliott's retirement in the late 1970s, they moved to Media, PA, where Lila worked for Friends General Conference and, later, for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, while participating in Media Monthly Meeting and transferring her membership there. Then in 1981 they moved to live with F/friends at Sherwood Oaks, north of Pittsburgh, where they became active in Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting and the Sherwood Oaks Worship Group. Lila participated regularly in Spiritual Formation groups, was an active volunteer for the Sherwood Oaks Landscaping Committee for many of her 40 years at Sherwood Oaks, and took up art, leaving behind many landscape paintings. She led an active and intellectual life, with John Calvi and Euell Gibbons as two of her many inspirations. Elliot passed away in 1992.

During the time when Lila was actively participating in Pittsburgh Friends Meeting, to which she transferred her membership in August 2014 from Media Monthly Meeting, she was a member of the Peace & Social Concerns and Ministry committees at different times. She was especially dedicated to the work of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and clearly interested in the anti-racism work of the Meeting in recent months. She was also part of the first group of PFM members who attended the opening Spiritual Formation retreat in Barnesville, OH, in 2001, an experience that stayed with her all the rest of her life through the activities of her own local spiritual formation group. In addition, she participated in the Meeting's Spiritual Healing group for many years.

In 2006 Lila married Richard (Dick) Baker of Sherwood Oaks, a retired Presbyterian minister, with whom she spent ten golden years. They shared their extended families and their interests in traveling and music until his death in 2016. In addition to frequent family visits, she was able to keep in touch with her grandson Morris in Japan via FaceTime and later Zoom.

In her last year she bore with great dignity and fortitude the recurrence of a cancer that had first afflicted her in the 1980s.

She is survived by her daughter Laurel Cornell, son-in-law William White, sons David and Dean Cornell, grandson Morris Cornell-Morgan, son-in-law Jim Morgan and wife Mary King, Dick's children Holly Rasnick, Kent Baker, and Mimi Baker, and many close friends.