

MEMORIAL MINUTE FOR CONSTANCE 'CONNIE' BIMBER

Constance “Connie” Mae Dowling Bimber passed away peacefully on September 28, 2021 at Kendal at Oberlin, Oberlin, Ohio. Connie was born and raised in Summit, New Jersey. As an only child, and after her father died when she was seven, Connie lived with her grandmother, her mother and two aunts. She derived a sense of gratitude from this time among women and carried a life-long interest in and concern for the welfare of women. Connie lived a full life that contained many challenges but also a life full of giving, service and purpose.

Thanks to a scholarship provided by the Summit, N.J chapter of the AAUP and lots of hard work on her part, she earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics at Antioch College, Ohio. She met her husband, Russell Bimber, while teaching a math class and they were married in 1952. After both had graduated, they moved to Painesville, Ohio where Russ had employment and they built their own house in 1953-54. While raising three children, Fred, Barbara and Bill, Connie was active in the League of Women Voters and co-founded the East Shore Unitarian Universalist Church. When the children were in school, Connie earned a bachelor's degree in education and a teaching certificate in 1968 from Case Western Reserve University and then taught math at Harvey High School for 10 years, while also acting as President of the Northeast Ohio Tri-County Council of Teachers. Retiring from teaching due to health problems, she again joined the League of Women Voters in Lake County and remained active in the UU Church.

Still searching for a spiritual home, Connie became a member of the Cleveland Friends Meeting (Quaker), and served for many years as Treasurer of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting (LEYM). She participated in the LEYM Spiritual Formation Program for many years. Also during this time, she worked with a local women's shelter and volunteered with the Blackbrook Audubon Society, the Painesville Adult Basic Literacy Education program and Amnesty International.

Connie and Russell moved to Kendal at Oberlin in 2000, where she joined the Oberlin Friends Meeting. She served the Meeting both as Clerk for many years and as Treasurer.

In addition to her Quaker and LEYM activities, Connie coordinated the Crop Walk for Church World Services and, as a member of the League of Women's Voters, served on the planning committee for the Oberlin Community Candidates' Night for many years, often as treasurer. As a Kendal resident, Connie chaired the Resident Care &Nurturing Committee, volunteered as a Supporting (Kendal) Friend and shopper for the Stephens Care Center residents, was treasurer of the Cardinal Gift Shop, and marched with the Lawn Chair Brigade. She loved bridge and was a champion bridge player. Together, she and Russ loved to walk the county park trails.

In the words of her daughter Barbara, Connie is remembered by her family mostly for the

example she set. She was a pacifist when it was not fashionable, during the Cold War she learned Russian hoping to build understanding between peoples, and at home she invited immigrants to dinner so her children would learn to accept and value people from different cultures. In times of racial unrest, she worked for the NAACP, often the lone white woman at the meeting. She believed that it was important to be of service to others, to strive to make the world a better place. Connie never shied away from speaking difficult truths, no matter the audience.

During her life Connie touched many lives and with each touching there was a story to tell, a story with a deep spiritual foundation for loving, giving, service and purpose.