

MEMORIAL MINUTE FOR ANDY ZWEIFLER FROM ANN ARBOR FRIENDS MEETING

ANDREW ZWEIFLER

FEBRUARY 2, 1930 – DECEMBER 8, 2022

Andrew (Andy) Zweifler, died at home on December 8, 2022, surrounded by his loving family. He was a physician, an educator, a scholar, and a pioneer in addressing racial injustice in the medical field and his community. He was part of the Ann Arbor Friends Meeting community for six decades and held fast to Quaker beliefs and values in his life. As his wife, Ruth, said “Meeting was the well whose waters nourished his soul.”

Andy was a professor of internal medicine at the University of Michigan and a medical researcher with over one hundred cited articles. He thought innovatively about how best to educate medical students and created an Introduction to Clinical Skills course to train students in history-taking and physical examination that is still in place half a century later. This groundbreaking work was recognized by an award created by the University named the Andrew J. Zweifler Award for Excellence in Clinical Skills, given annually to a medical student.

Andy found opportunities to work on racial and social justice issues both professionally and personally. When he was troubled by the lack of diversity in the University of Michigan medical school, he worked with the few black faculty and administrators in the 1960s to increase enrollment and to support black medical students. He spent a sabbatical year at Meharry Medical School, a predominantly black medical school in Nashville, Tennessee, developing a cardiac screening clinic. In their neighborhood, Ruth and Andy worked with several like-minded couples to purchase a house to make it available as low-income housing. Later, he organized trips to bring humanitarian supplies to Nicaragua, helped found the group Physicians for the Prevention of Gun Violence with a fellow physician, and supported the work of the Meeting when it invited a refugee into sanctuary in 2018.

Together, Andy and Ruth created for their children and grandchildren a welcoming home whose doors were literally always open – not only to the steady stream of friends and their children's friends, who poured in from the school next door, but also to those needing a hand, a place to stay, and food to eat for a day, a week, or months, some for a lifetime. Many people in our Meeting remember Andy's warmth and smile, his interest in others and his practice of listening carefully, his messages in worship on ethics and human nature, and his love and care for his family and others. One Friend related an instance in which Andy attended a Meeting session on how people become members and remembers Andy's remark that you are a Quaker when you feel you are. Indeed, he spoke his beliefs through the way in which he lived his life.