

Celebration of the Life of Phil Volk, July 10, 1952 to July 18, 2025

Philip Harvey Volk passed away peacefully on July 18, after a remarkable life of service. He was born in Detroit, the youngest of three children, and raised in Livonia. He was educated in Livonia's public schools, and went on to Oakland University, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in 1977.

From the time he was in high school, Phil was starting lifelong organizing for peace, social justice, and the environment. During the Vietnam War he was a dedicated participant in the antiwar protest movement. He also became active in the United Farm Workers, writing news articles and speaking at meetings and rallies. For the Teamsters Union he was a labor organizer wherever he was needed.

He was tirelessly active in the Michigan Democratic Party in various positions, chairing its Energy/Environment Caucus, the LGBTQ+ caucus, linking with the Washtenaw Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network, and the statewide Anishinaabe Caucus Political Committee.

Phil worked creatively and diligently to support minorities and low-income people. He was a member of NAACP. He worked in the Brown Chapel (AME) food pantry for years; he supervised construction of the chapel's raised garden beds, and taught the children how to raise the food that they donated to the needy.

Phil's spiritual life was the sustaining foundation of his energy. He was active in Ann Arbor Friends Meeting for nearly thirty years. He was rooted in daily reading and reliance on the Bible for direction and inspiration, and in Meeting he co-led the weekly Bible study group. Acting on his faith, he was convener of the Peace and Social Justice Committee, a senior member of the Earthcare Committee, and co-chair of the Indigenous Action Group. He was a founder of Michigan Quakers for Environmental Action, as our chief liaison with state legislators. And for some years he was an active member of the Friends Lake Cooperative Community, sponsoring visits to the lake for disadvantaged groups from Ypsilanti.

There was always energy to give needed support to individuals, including his friend Jeffrey Hunter. In his final years, Phil lived in the Ypsilanti Towne Center, where he led the Gardening Committee, organized a weekly Quaker meeting for worship and spent time with new friends from varied backgrounds.

In his later years, he put his love of nature into landscape painting. He loved roses and was a member of the American Rose Society. He was a voracious reader, and published a volume of poetry. He had cats as companions, especially Patches and Mickey. Most of all, he loved kids, chatting and laughing together; as an avid chess player, he delighted in teaching them the moves.

Phil is survived by his brother Carl (Judy), and their children Paul, Carl, Kristin and Derek, and his adopted son Rob Hastings (Jen) and their children Allyssa and Aaron.