

Memorial Minute for Evelyn Kirkhart (Wooster)

May 4, 1933 – January 5, 2024

Dr. Evelyn Kirkhart, a beloved member of Wooster Friends Meeting, died January 5, 2024, at the age of 90, due to complications of pancreatic cancer. Evelyn was born May 4, 1933, to Bertha and August Schroeder in Mansfield, Ohio, during the peak of the Great Depression, the second of two daughters. Despite her family's hardships, she was an outstanding student who loved animals, nature, and music. She played piano and organ at her church and wrote original musical compositions from an early age. Music was a great source of joy, expression, and inspiration throughout her life, and she often shared this love with her family and wide circle of friends.

She graduated from Mansfield High School in 1951 and received a BA in education from Kent State University, graduating cum laude. At Kent State, she met Robert O. Kirkhart. They married in 1955 and became foundational members of Kent Friends Meeting. She later completed her master's degree and PhD in clinical psychology. She practiced as a clinical psychologist in Cuyahoga Falls, Ashland, Wooster, and Thurman, Ohio.

She served as recording clerk of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting of Friends. She is remembered by meeting members as "a spark of light, joy, and peace, a guiding light to our Meeting. She helped

make meeting a place of comfort and refuge. Her joy, humor, and love were infectious.” Prayer and meditation have been part of her daily life for many decades, as have her humanitarian concerns and desire to find peaceful ways to resolve conflict. During a transitional time in her life, she gathered with others in a journey of faith, creativity, and exploration at Pendle Hill Quaker Center.

Evelyn was always an advocate for the underdog, and stepped up to help when others faced hardship. She, in good spirit, fulfilled her roles in life as sister, wife, mother, and grandmother with joy and humor, always exhibiting God's love. She approached her own challenges with endurance, humor, and thoughtfulness. Her laugh was embracing and distinctive: anyone who knew her could pick her out from a crowd without seeing her face. She loved nature and gardening, and swam regularly until her recent severe illness. She was generous with love and concern for people in all walks of life. She valued listening to others, understanding, connection, tolerance for differences, and especially forgiveness. In this spirit, she touched the lives of many people. No task was too big or too small. For all of these things, and so many more, she is deeply missed.

At the end of her life, as she wished, she was at home with hospice support, surrounded by her beloved animals and her children and grandchildren, who were comforted knowing that her love for them extended from their first breath to her last. She shared this love with everyone she knew, and those facing challenges everywhere.

Survivors include her sister, Miriam Schroeder; children Beth Kirkhart and husband Victor Yodaiken, Mark Kirkhart and wife Cyndi Kirkhart, Laurel Kirkhart and husband Michael Owens; grandchildren Jasmine Owens and husband Michael Long, Micaela Owens and husband Korin Miller, Aaron Yodaiken, and Chaia Yodaiken.

A celebration of Evelyn's life was held at the Tyn Rhos Church in Thurman, Ohio, on April 27, 2024.

Donations in Evelyn's memory may be made to the Ohio Valley Symphony in Gallipolis, Ohio, and Pendle Hill Quaker Center in Philadelphia [Wallingford], Pennsylvania.