

Obituary for Phil Balderston (Wooster)

July 26, 1938 – June 20, 2023

Life on earth for Claire Philip Balderston ended on June 20, 2023, at age 84. Born near Alburnett, Iowa, to Kenneth Raymond and Alma Agnes (Machacek) Balderston on July 26, 1938, Phil was the second of three sons. In addition to earning degrees in the biosciences from Iowa State and Pennsylvania State Universities, he served his national obligation with the Pacific Fleet and served part of his obligation to humanity in Latin America, under the care of the American Friends Service Committee. He was joined in marriage to Joyce Ann Moore, daughter of Frank Gifford and Ella Jane (Lewis) Moore, at Whittier, Iowa, Friends Meeting on October 15, 1966. They were members of Wooster Friends Meeting in Ohio for the remainder of their lives.

Phil was engaged in various aspects of agriculture his entire life. He loved his family and he loved the land. He was perpetually inspired by God's gift of humor and music to humankind. Meaningful artists and works included Antonín Dvořák, Henry David Thoreau, Dominick Argento's *Walden Pond* arrangement, Joyce Kilmer's "Trees," and John Cardina's *Lives of Weeds*.

He is survived by his wife, Joyce Balderston, son, Eric Balderston, and daughter, Beth Balderston. He was preceded in death by his parents and brothers, Keith Kenneth and Randal Wayne.

At his request, a natural burial was in the Highfields Cemetery located on the family farm in Knox Township, Holmes County, Ohio. Phil reported that he eagerly anticipated full knowledge of Truth in his next adventure and encouraged everyone to "Nourish a tree!"

Those who knew Phil within the Wooster Friends Meeting remember his simple and unequivocal kindness and his compassionate feelings toward everyone and every good cause. One Friend described him in this way: “He was lighted from the inside, a glowing lantern of ever-present attention.”

Those in Wooster Friends Meeting recall the wisdom Phil had developed by holding closely to Friends testimonies. He kept our business meetings grounded, especially at times when the rest of us might have decided too hastily or made a decision that was not quite in keeping with Friends’ tradition.

Friends also recall his memory for relationships. He and Joyce were the link with countless individuals who had come through our Meeting, starting in its earliest days (1950s). Phil and Joyce shared the serenity of their rural life and their beautiful home (built by Phil, with the assistance of dedicated friends) with Wooster Friends Meeting and Lake Erie Yearly Meeting by hosting retreats and youth events there over the decades. Whether in Meeting or giving a tour on his farm, Phil was a teacher. He taught by example, and he taught by storytelling that was actually instruction.

Phil made his life a testament to the kind, the everlasting, the simple and sustainable life, and left a message and a continuing example for us who remain.