

MEMORIAL MINUTE
Joan L. Griscom

Joan “Joanie” Griscom was born in Cambridge on May 26, 1930. She was educated at the Winsor School and Vassar College, earning three Master’s Degrees, one in English from the University of Minnesota, one in theology from Union Theological Seminary, and a third Master’s Degree from New York University. Joanie continued her education at New York University and was awarded her doctorate in Psychology in 1991. She was a dedicated professional, and her long career included serving as an educator and social worker with young adults, teaching college at William Paterson University, and research in Women’s Studies. Joanie published widely and was far ahead of her time in her enlightened understanding of issues of gender, sexuality and race.

Joanie loved music! She was a wonderful pianist and enjoyed playing Bach, Brahms, and Chopin, as well as Scott Joplin and Joseph Lamb. Her love of music was also evidenced in her deep commitment to choral music, singing both in professional and semi-professional groups. She sang for many years with Chorus Pro Musica and The Orpheus Singers, and had a lifelong association with the Longy School of Music. Joanie continued to study voice until shortly before she passed away, and shared her love of music both at FMC Women’s Silent Retreats and at Brookhaven. Joanie was delighted by her involvement in strengthening Brookhaven’s music program and she worked tirelessly with others to bring top quality guest musician’s to regularly perform there.

Joanie lived in Wanaque and Ringwood, New Jersey for many years and then chose to move to Brookhaven at Lexington where she had many deeply meaningful relationships with both residents and staff. She was an active and popular member of the Brookhaven community for 15 years. While at Brookhaven, she joined the local FMC worship group, subsequently becoming a member of Cambridge Friends Meeting.

Joanie had relayed that she had been drawn to Quakerism for years. She said that she had specifically reached out to FMC as a result of having read *An Epistle to Friends Meeting at Cambridge from the Meeting on Ministry and Counsel, May 16, 2010*. She shared that she had found the document very moving and that it spoke to her in a deep and personal way. Joanie

said that reading this document directly led her to want to become a member of Friends Meeting at Cambridge.

Joanie shared that she regretted not being able to come as regularly as she would like to worship at FMC, but sincerely valued her connection with the community, including serving for a period of time on the Care and Support Committee. She often drove with Chuck Woodbury, another FMC member residing in Brookhaven, to the Meeting for Worship at FMC. Joanie often said that she particularly cherished her times at the women's retreats, noting that she both valued the extended times of silence and the fellowship with women from FMC during these weekends together.

Her commitment to equality and social justice was apparent in her conversations. Joanie's innate curiosity led her to place an intense value on the benefits of open, frank and honest conversations, always ready to hear and explore ideas and deepen her own knowledge and understanding through conversations with others. Her extensive relationships spanned many generations and included people from all walks of life and from places all over the world. Joanie had a vast array of family members, both in her "family of origin" and her "family of choice." Joanie was predeceased by her former husband, Werner, and her devoted partner Marge. She was a member of numerous organizations and maintained contact with a wide spectrum of people. Joanie has been described as a "kind, wise, and delightfully unconventional person" and she described herself as someone who valued connections with family, friends and music more than anything else in her life.

Joanie passed away on March 2, 2017. Her love of family and friends, her passion for music, her commitment to deep and meaningful conversation, her intense commitment to women's issues, her desire for equality for all filled her life. Joanie's unquenchable joie de vivre will long live in the minds and hearts of those who had the pleasure of knowing her.