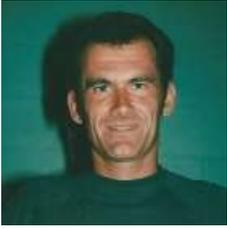


## Memorial Minute for Gary Sickler, 5/21/1941- 2/15/2013



Auburn Prison Preparative Meeting still mourns the loss of beloved Friend Gary Sickler who passed away at the outside hospital on February 15, 2013 after having been moved from Auburn Correctional Facility the day before. Gary started attending Quaker Meeting in 2002, and he served as co-clerk from 2011 until his death. Gary attended meeting very regularly, in fact was present less than two weeks before succumbing to cancer. He seemed to gain strength from the group although the weakened state of his body was evident. Gary considered himself to be an atheist although most of us who knew him considered his behavior to be more Christian than many who profess belief in God. Typically, Gary was very interested in the details of the various treatments he received for cancer and thankful for his good treatment at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse. He said they treated him like a human being. At the end, many of us were concerned that Gary was dreading the prospect of dying in prison, and he and his supporters worked to gain him compassionate release which was not to be. In the end Gary had made his own sort of peace, and in the eyes of those who knew him well, he had found acceptance of God in his own way.

Gary was respected as an old timer in prison, having been incarcerated since 1969. He was a tough guy, strong, energetic and self-confident, with an outstanding memory for anything that he had ever read, and that was part of his identity. Gary, though sometimes abrasive on the outside, was caring and would stand up for his friends even when they were wrong. Gary was an intense and openly secretive human being, an oxymoron but so true of Gary. He had severed ties with his birth family many years before and considered the people he knew while in prison to be his true family including the outside volunteers and some dedicated friends. It was important to him that the men in prison knew him as a "straight up guy", someone who would help you but would not be conned. Even those who shared a surface level friendship with Gary were left with an indelible impression by his personality. One member of our group shared that when he was with Gary, they were always happy to see each other, talked about his health and getting out of prison, shared gut wrenching laughs and would leave each other with well wishes. Many shared similar sentiments about knowing Gary. One of his good friends from Syracuse Meeting said that Gary was an example of a good guy in prison, someone he would have never grown to know and respect if he had not started going into prison. Most of us do not know how to put into words the feelings that surround our beloved friend Gary, but there was no doubt about the depth and sincerity of the friendship. There is a hole in our circle at worship where Gary usually sat, and we dearly miss him. The picture of Gary is from the 70's.

Auburn Prison Preparative Meeting, approved 2/1/2014

Khalib Gould, clerk

Note: The picture of Gary is from the 70's and provided by Annie Kerniski.