

There will be an acknowledgment of an annuity remainder bequest from Kathryn H. Mott to NYYM. Below is a personal history written by her daughter.

### **Kay Mott – A Life to Celebrate**

Kathryn (Kay) Hardin Mott of Kennett Square PA died peacefully, after a long decline, on January 22, 2020, one week shy of her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. She lived at the Kendal at Longwood Continuing Care Community her final 33 years. Kay Hardin was born on January 30, 1921 in Chicago to Grace Vollmar Hardin and Raymond Stephen Hardin and grew up on the outskirts of Evanston IL. She is survived by three daughters, five grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

Growing up, Kay had an active and happy childhood with her younger sister, Margaret “Peggy” Hardin Romer. Her family had a large menagerie including a pony (“Queenie”), a dog, a cat, a goat and chickens. Her father, an engineer, constructed a zip line and lots of other innovative play equipment. A huge living tree nearby had a hollow trunk large enough for a spacious club house. With the support of Kay’s mother, their home was filled with music as the sisters spent hours practicing their instruments.

In the spring of 1944, soon after graduation from college, Kay went to Santa Fe NM to help her aunt run a well-known dude ranch, the Bishops Lodge. It was there that she met a visitor to the lodge, John Colman Mott. John and Kay bonded over common interests including history, pacifism and civil rights, and quickly became engaged. They married in Chicago on July 22, 1944, and Kay moved to New York City, where John worked as an investment analyst. By 1948, they had settled in Ridgewood NJ.

They had four children: son Jeremy Hardin Mott (b. December 1945), daughters Margaret (“Margy”) Mott (b. October 1949), Jessica Mott (b. January 1954), and Bethany Joanna Mott (b. January 1957). Apart from a brief two years in upstate NY outside of Rochester from 1955 to 1957, Ridgewood NJ remained home until 1972 when they moved to the next door town of Hohokus.

Family continued to be important. After caring for John’s mother and Kay’s parents in the 1970s, as well as Kay’s sister during her final illness in the early 1980s, John and Kay moved to Kendal in January 1987. During their initial decade at Kendal, they made frequent trips to New Jersey, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Florida to visit their children and grandchildren. After John moved to Cumberland (assisted living) and then Westmoreland (nursing care) in the late 1990s, Kay moved to a smaller apartment closer to the Center, glad to have the close access and daily companionship with John without the burden of his full-time care. John

died in 2004 and son Jeremy died in 2012. Kay moved to Cumberland in 2011, and then on to Westmoreland in 2015. In her final decades, family visits remained frequent, but became increasingly based at Kendal.

Music was central to Kay's life, beginning with early childhood. Her sister was a child prodigy on flute and Kay frequently provided the piano accompaniment. Kay also played the cornet (serving as the morning bugler at summer Girl Scout camp), the violin, and ultimately the cello. As a mother, she arranged music lessons for all of her own children and helped them practice regularly, sometimes providing piano accompaniment. Playing piano, she led the weekly hymn singing at Ridgewood Friends Meeting. At her children's bedtime, she occasionally serenaded them by playing piano or cello. Even in her late nineties, she enjoyed music, especially Christmas carols.

Kay always had a love of learning, and excelled academically. At the age of 3, she started at the Lab School of the National College of Education where she spent five happy years, and enjoyed writing for the school magazine. At age 8 in 1929, family finances necessitated a move to the 2-room multi-grade country public school where she spent fifth grade. Starting with grade 6 she entered the Evanston school system. She spent four instead of three years in Junior High taking lots of electives in order to not be quite so young for her grade. After graduation from high school in 1938, she attended Oberlin College, majored in history, gained her Phi Beta Kappa her junior year, and earned her BA in 1942. She remained at Oberlin an extra year to acquire a MA in History. She later obtained a second Master's degree, this time in elementary education from Columbia Teacher's College, and then worked tutoring children with special needs. Until she reached her late nineties, she avidly read the New York Times every day and regularly watched the PBS News Hour. Nature documentaries remained a favorite in her final months.

Religious community, and peace and social justice witness also played an important role. As a child she actively participated with the rest of her family in the First United Methodist Church, where a noted pacifist theologian, Ernest Freemond Tittle, was pastor. Shortly after their marriage, John and Kay's search for a church led them to become "convinced Friends" and members of the brand new Ridgewood Friends Meeting. This meeting became the center of their social life, with its membership serving as part of their extended family. In Ridgewood, John and Kay were active in the fair housing movement and also helped local African-Americans build equity by forming a housing co-op in a former rental

apartment building. Together with other Quakers they also protested nuclear weapon testing and the Vietnam War. They supported their son Jeremy when he became a conscientious objector and later a draft resister and traveled to visit him at three different Federal prisons. At Kendal, Kay enjoyed making financial contributions to a wide range of nonprofits. She was a member and regular participant at Kendal Friends Meeting. When dementia led to her asking to go “home” and she was asked where home was, Kay responded that it was Kendal Friends Meeting.

Through much of her life, Kay served as “chief executive officer” for a variety of causes, mostly as a volunteer. As pre-teens during the Depression, Kay and her sister Peggy ran a tuition-free “music school” for neighborhood children, complete with formal recitals. While at Oberlin she was active in meal co-ops, a mock presidential convention, organization of academic symposia, and the local chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. While undertaking her master’s studies at Oberlin, she also managed the local co-op store. She then returned to Evanston, IL to manage the food co-op there. Due to World War II era labor shortages, she sometimes had to rise early to drive the delivery truck. As a parent, Kay arranged an active schedule for her kids, serving as logistical manager for various activities including music, swim, and dance lessons, and summer camp experiences. She also organized extraordinary family vacations from regular hiking trips in New England to more distant destinations such as the Canadian Rockies, the Virgin Islands, and England. Kay was active in Quaker committees within Ridgewood Friends Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, and Friends General Conference (where she helped to update the religious education curricula). She helped start an interracial community nursery school which was housed at the Ridgewood Friends Meeting and for decades served as its bookkeeper. She formed and led two interracial Girl Scout troops and shared her love of nature through camping trips with challenging scavenger hunts. She was also PTA president of the local interracial elementary school.

Kay had a longstanding passion for gardening. As a child, her family’s home-grown vegetables were essential sources of household food, and to help supplement the family income she sold gladiolas to passing visitors who were enroute to a nearby nursing home. Gardening became a key element of her life with husband John and their mutual parenting. All their children started gardening as preschoolers with sowing rows of carrots. For many years, Kay and John headed the lower gardens committee at Kendal. Garden tutelage continued into the next generation. Visits from grandchildren involved gardening tasks in the spring,

summer, and fall. With the help of oldest daughter Margy, Kay remained involved in gardening through her final years, including working on the lower Cumberland garden even before she moved there, and once at Westmoreland, focused on the central courtyard garden. Part of the fun of growing vegetables was sharing the harvest with others.

Even as Kay's physical and mental capacity diminished, her tenacity and "can do" attitude remained a constant. Despite frustration at not being in charge she did not wallow in despair, but rather doggedly tried to do whatever she could (and sometimes tried to do things that she could no longer do). She greeted people with warm smiles. She always got joy in offering help to others, and being useful wherever feasible, while expressing appreciation for the help she received from others. Hers was a life well-lived.