

Memorial Minute for Ellen Flanders

Ellen Flanders was born on December 11, 1927, and grew up in Chappaqua, Westchester County, in New York State. Although her mother had been a Birthright Quaker, she and her siblings were raised without any religious affiliation. Music played a very important part in her life as she grew up, as each member of the family played instruments, and they all sang together. Ellen learned to play the piano, recorder, and violin, and cultivated her lovely singing voice.

Ellen later married John Cummings Lindop. They had 6 children together: John, Tim, Chris, Mary, Francis and Alex. She worked at the New York State Department of Transportation as an editor. Her husband John later passed away as a result of an automobile accident. With the inheritance from her parents of a 10 acre wooded lot and some money, Ellen and her children built the family home in New Lebanon.

Ellen came to Quakerism during the Vietnam War, when she and her son John joined Old Chatham Meeting, in search of like-minded people. She later married Frank Morrison, who had 2 daughters: Anna and Rachel. The family then moved to Albany and joined Albany Friends Meeting, where she became involved in the Sanctuary Movement for Central American refugees. She traveled to Central America with Peace Brigades at a time when religious workers were being murdered in Nicaragua. After a relative of hers got into trouble with the law, she began her involvement in prison work, wanting to “help straighten things out.” The Alternatives to Violence Project grew out of this desire, and became perhaps Ellen’s most significant and long-lasting legacy. She and her friends Janet Lugo and Larry Apsey wrote the first curriculum for AVP facilitators, and became core members of the Education Committee. Ellen mentored dozens of other facilitators, and helped the program to grow from one or two workshops in 1975, to over 300 workshops twenty years later. Ellen served as clerk of Northeastern Regional Meeting between 2000 and 2002. At Albany Friends Meeting she was very involved with planning the annual Peace Camp, which enriched the lives of many local children. She was also active in the Pro-Life Movement, and spoke out against abortion. She was opposed to the death penalty, and worked hard to bring this issue to the forefront of the political scene.

In her later years, Ellen split her time between living on the West Coast with her son John and family, and staying here in the Capital District with her son Francis and family. She enjoyed making music and spending time with her family and friends, especially her many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She passed away on September 23, 2015, in California. It is impossible to overestimate the influence she had on the lives of so many people, country-wide. We honor both her person and her legacy, in the manner of Friends that she so loved.