

MARJORIE JANE MIKESELL November 14, 1925 – June 15, 2019

Marjorie Jane Mikesell died in Eugene, OR on June 15, 2019, at age 93, after a full and active life. She was born in Florida, November 14, 1925. Her family soon moved to Chappaqua, NY, where the family had cows, chickens and large gardens. Marjorie had six siblings. Two died in infancy. Her beloved brother Richard, seven years older to the day, died in a sledding accident at thirteen, a loss she grieved the rest of her life. She studied at Wilmington College in Ohio, majoring in biology. Apparently she was an exceptional student; she was mentored by her professor, and graduated in 1947, on track to becoming a scientist. Instead though, she married John Risley, a veteran and forest biologist, and raised two children, Daryl and Rachel. She divorced John, and in 1971 married Alfred Mikesell, an astronomer.

Her talents and interests were wide ranging. She was a skilled homemaker, cooking, gardening, sewing and entertaining. For seven years she lead a 4-H club. She was deeply involved in music, playing violin and viola in orchestras and chamber groups. She was an artist, painting in oil. She read widely, and with her second husband traveled extensively, including several solar eclipse trips. Most important to her, she was a lifelong Quaker, active in the Meetings for Worship where she lived—Chappaqua, Albany, Washington DC, Tucson, Olympia and Eugene. When she was a child a Sunday school teacher told her, “God is Love,” and she tried to live by that creed her whole life. She would tell that to everyone when explaining her beliefs she had no credo other than that.

She was active on the North Pacific Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee for a while. Her perspective on different Friend’s capacity for growing into a proposed job was always true.

She supported son Daryl Risley on his journey to become a Conscientious Objector during the Vietnam War. She was an advocate for Civil Rights and Native Americans. Other unexpected activities: she learned to fly and was an NPR radio host for a while!

"In addition to her two children, she is survived by eight stepchildren, 19 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren (including "steps"). Also surviving her are her siblings, Donald Dean and Virginia Clark. Al Mikesell died in 2008, after 38 “perfect” years of marriage. As her daughter Rachel wrote, she “was an amazing woman, a great wife, mother, stepmother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, sister and friend to many!”