

Polly Boyajian, beloved mother, grandmother, aunt, and friend, passed away on 7 August 2020 at Vashon Community Care where she had moved to be closer to her daughters. Polly was born in New York City and grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut where she enjoyed sailing and hiking. She attended Westtown School, a Quaker boarding high school, where she played on the lacrosse team, participated in the drama club, and began several lifelong friendships. Polly graduated from Earlham College with a BA in sociology and from the University of Chicago with an MA in social work. She made Hyde Park her home and served her Chicago community in numerous capacities.

Polly met Richard Boyajian at the 57th Street Meeting of Friends (Quakers) and at the U. of C. dinner cooperative at International House. They married in 1955 at Quaker House, where they were active members for the next 50 years. Their three children were born and raised in the Hyde Park neighborhood. Polly involved her children in creative pursuits and supported them in following their interests and goals. When they grew up and had families of their own, Polly loved visiting with her grandchildren, playing games, picking blackberries, and going on walks in the forest and to the beach.

As a social worker for twenty four years at the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club, Polly was instrumental in developing the Adult Day Center. She coordinated resources with families, trained the staff in positive methods for communicating with elders, and organized movement activities, memory games, and field trips. Residents from several surrounding neighborhoods benefited from her leadership and creativity.

The cooperative movement was a significant part of Polly's life. Polly and Richard were enthusiastic members of Evergreen Co-op (the apartment building where they lived for more than 30 years), Circle Pines Center (a cooperative family camp and educational center in rural Michigan), a child-care swap, and the local co-op grocery store and credit union.

Social change, civil rights, peace and justice, international understanding, working to resolve humanitarian and environmental challenges were central themes throughout Polly's life. She participated in Civil Rights demonstrations, anti-war marches, and events in support of the natural environment, including saving the lives of several trees. She stood up for immigrant rights and against the death penalty. She took her children in strollers to gatherings and marches, and later in life they took her in a wheelchair. Polly never missed voting in elections and the Washington primary on 4 August 2020 was her last act of exercising these important rights.

The family went on summer-long camping trips all around the United States and traveled extensively to other countries, visiting friends and relatives and sometimes other Quaker meetings, including La Casa de Los Amigos in Mexico City. Polly and Richard were musical cultural ambassadors to Romania in 1976 and to Poland and the U.S.S.R. in 1978, singing with the Chicago Community Renewal Chorus. Polly greatly enjoyed communicating with people from diverse walks of life and learning about different cultures. For many years she and Richard hosted international visitors in their home through SERVAS, and provided international students at the U. of C. a place to live. Some of these young people became close friends.

When they retired to Lacey, Washington in 2005, Polly & Richard continued their active participation in Quaker life at Olympia Friends Meeting. At the Panorama retirement community, Polly's artwork blossomed. She took part in "paint-outs" and created many beautiful watercolor landscapes and handbuilt ceramic pieces. Her whimsical animal figurines made social-political statements in support of human rights and environmental preservation.

Polly is survived by her children and their families: Laurel Boyajian, an acupuncturist and artist, Vashon WA (AJ Bastarache; Clarissa Boyajian, Josiah Sprute-Boyajian, Settemio Lawless); Holly Boyajian, a teacher at Chautauqua Elementary, Vashon WA (Harley Miedema; Emory Miedema-Boyajian); and Glen Boyajian, an architect, Penn Valley CA (Barbara Skalak; Zachary Skalak)

and many extended family members and friends.

A zoom memorial is planned for 7 August 2021

An in-person tree planting memorial is planned for 2 October 2021 at Olympia Friends Meeting

To get on the zoom-link list or for updates send an email to: pollysmemorial@gmail.com

You may make donations in memory of Polly to: Friendly Water for the World, American Friends Service Committee, or Western WA Fellowship of Reconciliation.