

Ruth Jones McNeill, 1949-2021

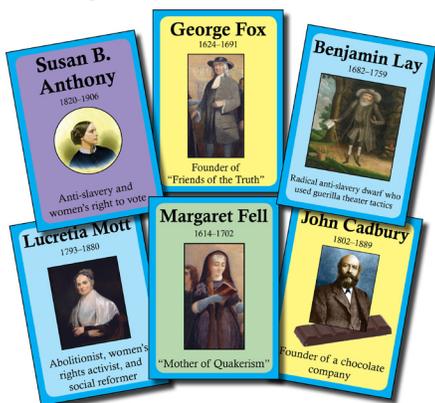
Memorial Minute

Ruth Netta McNeill, as she was known until her marriage, was born in Chicago on March 13, 1949. She died on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2021 in Corvallis, Oregon.

Ruth was born into an academic family and excelled in school. She attended Swarthmore College, 1966-70, majoring in anthropology. Her father wanted her to pursue a Ph.D; she wanted to enter the world of theater. Instead, she became a primary school teacher, first in West Hartford and then Boston. She was a very dedicated teacher and had a strong empathy for her pupils. She married Bart Jones in 1992, becoming officially Ruth Jones McNeill. They moved to Oregon in 2004 where she taught preschool before retiring.

She became a Quaker - a Friend - and found community in Corvallis Friends Meeting. Her involvement in the meeting included serving on Nominating Committee, and also on Ministry and Oversight Committee, where her leadership role included writing a pamphlet on introductory Quakerism intended for visitors to the Meeting and new members. Additionally, she helped to write the "History of Corvallis Monthly Meeting" that is found in the Meeting's *User's Manual*. She also served for many years on Library Committee, and it was in that role that Ruth showed her gifts of organization and scholarship, spearheading a major revamping of the committee and of the library itself. Friends serving with her on the committee found her

inspirational, diplomatic, and resourceful in dealing with this monumental task. She wrote an article about this experience, which was published in the November 2017 *Friends Journal*.



Above, a few cards from Ruth's Famous Quakers Memory Game



Ruth's love of learning naturally extended itself into exploring the lives of Quakers, and eventually into her invention of a card game, Famous Quakers Memory Game, which she collaborated with another member of the Friends meeting to publish and sell.

Other activities taking important roles in her life in Corvallis were Reevaluation Co-counselling, where she is remembered as a caring, capable, and dedicated teacher and co-counselor; involvement in Mid-Valley Hearing Loss Association as her own hearing deteriorated (she also helped make it possible for people with hearing difficulties to participate in settings where groups are speaking and listening); volunteering at Room at the Inn, the local overnight shelter for homeless women; and promoting universal health care in her work with Health Care For All Oregon.

Among the things she enjoyed were basketry; textiles, which she both admired and wove; words, which she read in abundance and spoke and wrote with precision; and museums and archeological sites, at both of which she demonstrated considerable stamina.

She battled cancer off and on beginning in 1989, showing a dogged determination not to allow it to define her existence. At one point she was informed that people with her diagnosis had a life expectancy of two to three years. Her response included a trip to Peru - with its wonderful textiles, archeological sites, and museums - and outliving that grim forecast by 20 years.

Ruth is survived by her husband, Bart Jones; two brothers, John Robert McNeill and Andrew Duncan McNeill; a sister, Deborah Joan McNeill; and eleven nieces and nephews.

Approved **5/9/2021**, Corvallis Friends Meeting