

Newtown Friends Meeting Memorial Minute for Mildred B. (Millie) Sparks

(February 13, 1925 – May 29, 2018)

Millie Sparks was a cherished member of Newtown Friends Meeting. She and her husband Donald (Don) Sparks joined Newtown Friends Meeting in 1950 as newlyweds and new residents of Newtown, after Don was exposed to Quakerism through the Wider Quaker Fellowship in England and then as a student at Haverford College. They raised their three sons, Don Jr., Robert (Bob), and James (Jimmy), in the Meeting.

While her positive personality, even-keeled nature, and sartorial style were all memorable, Millie will be best remembered for the musical contributions she made for decades as a piano accompanist. Each Sunday hymns were sung before the start of meeting for worship and it was Millie who provided the rousing chords that elevated the choir of shared song. Many more appreciated her dedication in the 60s and 70s as the pianist for the Neshaminy Valley Music Theater.

Millie and Don hosted “friendly eight” dinners in their Dolington home, happily participating in the social life of the meeting. She served on the Meeting’s Scholarship Committee and volunteered for Meals on Wheels.

For years Millie was both the bookkeeper and front office staff at Newtown Friends School, another role where her pleasant demeanor was an asset and a central part of her legacy.

In retirement, she and Don would spend part of the winter on Sanibel Island off the Gulf Coast of Florida, where they entertained NFM members David and Mary Lou Gould, who would drive their RV south to escape the cold. Eventually, Don developed dementia and Millie acted as his primary caregiver at their home in Buckingham Springs for several years. After Don moved to Buckingham Valley Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, Millie moved to Friends Home in Newtown. Even as she, too, developed dementia, she continued to play a fine game of bridge. Through the final years of her life, Millie remained upbeat and gracious, with a smile for all.