

Newtown Friends Meeting Memorial Minute

Esther Stapler Hart (January 19, 1935 – December 13, 2018)

Esther Stapler Hart was a lifelong member of Newtown Meeting, growing up on the family farm, Mirror Lake Farm, between Newtown and Yardley. Her parents were Robert K. and Mildred M. Stapler. She attended Edgewood Elementary School and graduated from George School and Endicott Junior College.

Esther taught Kindergarten at Friends School Haverford and then at Newtown Friends School for 25 years after she and her husband Steve moved to Newtown in 1956. During this time, Esther also taught First Day School for 25-30 years, ensuring that the children of Newtown Meeting were well grounded in Quaker faith and practice and in the meeting community. She raised her daughters Kathy and Susan in the Meeting. Esther and Steve moved to Pennswood in 2003.

Esther enjoyed serving as the liaison between Newtown Friends School and Pennswood, enthusiastically encouraging Pennswood residents to become NFS volunteers, and ensuring that students visited residents through a variety of opportunities.

Esther served as a docent at Fontheil Castle in Doylestown for 25 years, especially enjoying tour groups of local children. She also enjoyed membership at the Doylestown Country Club, golfing, travel and gardening. Her greatest joy however was her family: her daughters, granddaughters Abbie and Emily, and her sister Mary Nystrom, who lives at Pennswood and was Esther's daily dinner companion after Steve's passing. Her sister Ruth Eynon pre-deceased her.

Esther will be remembered most in the Meeting for her ministry of card-writing. All of us have received cards of sympathy, congratulations, encouragement and care from Esther on behalf of the meeting community, reminding us that even when we couldn't attend meeting, our community was thinking of us and holding us "in the Light." Esther added personal notes to each card which added a special touch of familiarity to each note. She was eager to learn about new members so that she felt she knew everyone, and always asked visitors for updates. She continued this ministry for decades even after she was unable to attend meeting or Care & Counsel meetings in person. She continued to send birthday card with teabags in them to fellow Pennswood residents until her passing. We will miss these gifts of love.