

Newtown Friends Meeting Memorial Minute

Robert Morris Appelbaum

1921-2020

Bob and Betsy Appelbaum moved to Newtown and became active in Newtown Meeting and George School in the late 1960s. Bob continued to work at his family business International Products Corp. in Trenton, NJ which made industrial lubricants and household cleaning supplies until he sold it in 1981.

Bob maintained his membership in Trenton Meeting, reflecting his dedication to a small urban meeting. He had been raised in a Jewish family in Trenton. He graduated from Trenton High School and then Bucknell University in 1948 after serving in the Army during WWII. Bob and Betsy married in 1949. They had 4 children: Lorraine, Patricia, Alan and Martha.

Bob was dedicated to Quaker values and to the mission of helping the poor in Trenton and Mercer County NJ. This led him to be a founder of Mercer Street Friends Center in 1958, converting an old meetinghouse into a community center in the heart of Trenton to serve area residents. Over the years, MSF evolved to include a food bank, preschool, and community school. Other initiatives included a charter school, home health services, job training and after school program. Bob served on the Board and supported the organization in many ways over the years.

In 1982 Bob and other Quakers formed the Peace Center in Langhorne, PA, promoting peace and nuclear disarmament while making efforts to reduce bullying and other violence in our local communities.

Bob enjoyed foraging for wild foods, especially mushrooms and enjoyed fine foods. He liked sailing, canoeing and singing bass. He completed crosswords in ink when he read his daily papers. Bob was especially proud of his garden, often sharing its abundance, and delighting in having the first red tomato of the season.

Bob served on the George School Committee for many years, as well as Newtown Meeting building and grounds committee. Bob also served on the Newtown Township Planning Committee with an intention of planned growth.

To balance his generosity, Bob also had an irreverent sense of humor and a contrarian side that enjoyed stimulating discussion.

Bob will long be remembered for sharing King James Bible passages as his ministry in meeting, as well as for his big smile and great hugs steeped in pipe smoke.

Susan Woodman Hoskins