

MEMORIAL MINUTE ON ERNESTINE ROBINSON

Died October 6, 1987

To me, fair friend, you never can be old
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still....

Shakespeare, "Sonnet 104"

Though she is now beyond this life Ernestine's beauty is still strongly with us, a beauty not subject to time's hourglass. Her life was filled with a beauty expressed by Wordsworth, "And then my heart with pleasure fills and dances with the daffodils."¹ Whether from the words of a Shakespeare sonnet or a Wordsworth poem, she would sparkle at the beauty of the English language and share its joys with thousands of students during her 57 years of teaching. She had the gift of inspiring her students, including the inmates of Bucks County Prison through her volunteer service, to accomplish things they never thought possible. The beauty of music also filled her soul whether singing on a minute's notice "Whispering Hope" at a surprise wedding during a church service, performing on her cello, or just listening. Humor also delighted her soul and she was quick to respond to a challenge. One of her ex-GI students at George School, being struck with her magnificent braided red hair, called out to her from his window, "Brunhilde!" "Siegfried!" she retorted.

What really gave her beauty its eternal essence was her abiding Christian faith. Having grown up in the Methodist tradition of her family, she became a Quaker at George School. She was deeply impressed by the guidance and example of George Walton. The beauty of the quiet strength and simplicity of Quaker worship and practise struck a responsive chord in her. She was a faithful servant of the Lord with a faith that reflected those enduring words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Ken Mammel

1 From "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud"