

2023 Memorial Minutes Illinois Yearly Meeting

Frederick G. Herczeg (1950 – 2021)

We celebrate the life of Frederick G. Herczeg, a beloved member of the South Bend Friends community, who passed away on February 5, 2021. Born in Mishawaka, Indiana, Fred spent many years in Southern California before returning to the South Bend area; he started attending South Bend Friends Meeting around 2010. Two years later he married Mary Beth DiGann-Herczeg, a member of South Bend Friends and Fred's high school sweetheart. Although Fred did not become a member of South Bend Friends, he was much affected by attending a Quakerism 101 group and thereafter was a regular attender. He and Mary Beth often hosted dinners for Friends at their beautiful home. Fred was also known to host Friends for the occasional day of fishing; Fred was an avid fisherman and liked to have company in the boat. Fred's welcome smile and warmth were a blessing at any occasion. Fred was adopted as a child, and one of his great joys later in life was discovering and getting to know his birth brothers. Fred sometimes found the Quaker process of consensus challenging, but he shared Quaker concerns for the moral health of society, and the focus of much Quaker ministry blended well with his own skills, including an ability to speak truth to power and a personality that could effectively deal with conflict. We are grateful for the time we had to share with Fred, and the friendships and good conversation he gave to all in our meeting.

Thomas Jacobs (1961-2023)

Thomas Jacobs was born into a farming family in Valparaiso, Indiana on December 25, 1961. In 1985 he and Roxy Thalmann were married in Valparaiso under the care of Duneland Friends Meeting. Tom died with Roxy by his side in Cape Coral, Florida on March 12, 2023 after a long struggle with early onset Alzheimer's.

Tom was first and foremost a farmer, with a love for the land, for the seasonal cycles of the natural world, and for animals. He completed a degree in engineering and worked for years as a project engineer, but he never gave up farming, first with his father, and then with his stepson Carey, until the family farm was sold. Tom's nature was to help others in whatever way he could. He was a quiet gentle soul who became a source of strength for step children, Heidi, Ron, Carey, and Darian, and later for their children.

While Tom never became a member of Duneland Friends Meeting, he was a faithful presence at many Quaker gatherings. He met a quite a number of Illinois Yearly Meeting Friends when he and Roxy hosted them at their home in Hebron. For many years Roxy and Tom hosted a Christmas meeting for worship for Duneland Friends at their home, as well as special gatherings such as retreats and service project work days. He was generous with his time and his skills and could be counted upon to help young Friends with woodworking projects and to be a quiet friendly presence.

When Tom and Roxy moved to Florida in 2017, Tom found welcome in the Fort Myers Friends Meeting and became a member there, where he was known for his kindness and helpfulness.

Douglas Kinsey (1934 - 2022)

Douglas Kinsey, artist, professor of art, and one of the founders of South Bend Friends Meeting, died at home in South Bend on May 21, 2022, after a year and a half of hospice care. Douglas was born in Oberlin, Ohio, on March 4, 1934, the middle child of Dan Chapin Kinsey and Dorothy (Gross) Kinsey. The extraordinary wealth of classical music and fine art in the tiny college town of Oberlin was the perfect incubator for his involvement in the arts. The tradition of social concern of the college and the town, along with his parents' involvement with social justice and the Religious Society of Friends, built the value system that he would express through his art. Because Dan and Dorothy acted as faculty sponsors for the Oberlin Friends Meeting, it began and took hold on the Oberlin campus. The service impetus was an early part of Doug's life as he went with his parents to the AFSC international seminars and workcamps that they led. He spent the summer of his junior year in high school building the foundation of a youth hostel in Germany with an AFSC program.

After graduating from Westtown Friends School, he returned for a BA at Oberlin College (1957) and continued for an MFA at the University of Minnesota (1960). Trained as an abstract painter under the process ideas of Abstract Expressionism, he found figures emerging and becoming essential to his statement. His concern for those in crisis, dispossessed by war or natural disaster, made him turn to news photographs as an inspiration, not to copy a photograph but to find a posture that might pique a composition and help him challenge and move his viewer. He had more than 70 one-man shows in America and internationally. He provided illustration for more than two dozen books, often books of poetry in which he worked closely with poet friends. Before his appointment to the art department at the University of Notre Dame brought him to South Bend, Indiana, he taught at Oberlin College, the University of North Dakota, and Berea College. His teaching achieved exemplary recognition, but he was most interested in seeing his students develop as individuals. His studio at Notre Dame and his home were famously open to students for counsel on art or on life.

The reflection of Quaker values in his life made some students interested in its source, asking him to introduce them to the Quaker meeting. He and his wife, Marjorie, hosted several series of meetings in their home. In 1978, a group of Quaker sympathizers in the South Bend community discovered each other and subsequently founded the South Bend Friends Meeting around the Kinsey dining room table. As the meeting grew, the Kinsey home continued to be an important gathering place for Friends. The meeting was an ongoing expression of Doug's values to which he contributed much work and wisdom. He was active in almost every aspect of the life and development of the meeting over the years, but his personal joy was in meeting for worship. His ministry, always succinct and ever provocative, is missed, as is he.

Alex Metro (1940-2022)

Alexander Joseph Metro, known in his later years as "Alex," was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1940. He died during a cardiac procedure on Wednesday, March 16, 2022, at University of Missouri Hospital.

Alex graduated from the University of Bridgeport in 1963 with a degree in English Literature; he was a proud member of Students for a Democratic Society. He worked as a scholarly editor at the American Institute of Physics and at Yale University Press, and later as a health care aide. He was known for his gentle spirit and deep curiosity. He was an avid distance runner, completing the New

York City Marathon in just over three hours. He loved baking, writing poetry, listening to jazz, and watching films. He may hold the record for most items checked out from the library in one lifetime.

Alex moved to Columbia, Missouri in 2017 to be near his daughter Rose and her family. He began attending Columbia Friends Meeting with them and came to be a special part of our community. He was eager to make connections and loved deep conversations. He also published a chapbook of his poetry, with proceeds going to meeting. Although a stroke in 2020 had limited Alex physically, he used his wisdom and deliberation to help meeting, participating actively in our decision to buy our new meetinghouse in 2021.

One of Alex's favorite quotes, from Dag Hammarskjold, expresses his attitude toward spirituality: "God does not die on the day when we cease to believe in a personal deity, but we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond all reason."

Evelyn Zerfloss (1925-2022)

Evelyn Zerfloss was born January 16, 1925 at her family's farm near Warsaw, Illinois. She was the youngest of nine children of Henry and Mary Limkeman Schmitt. After graduating as valedictorian from Warsaw High in 1942, she headed to Chicago to experience life in the big city. Her employer awarded her a work/study scholarship which she used to earn a BA from the University of Chicago in 1947.

In 1950, Evelyn met Karl Zerfloss and they married after a three-month courtship. They moved to Elmhurst, Illinois where Evelyn continued to lead an active life. She earned an MA in Psychology from the University of Chicago in 1971 and went on to teach Human Development at Elmhurst College for the next 20 years.

Evelyn was knowledgeable about and interested in all human experience. Described by her family as a seeker of the mysteries of life, Evelyn (and Karl) joined Downers Grove Friends Meeting in 2002. Her kindness and understanding were welcome elements to the meeting. Evelyn was generous and thoughtful with the granddaughter of a long-time member, helping her find her way forward in life. Evelyn also served on the Worship and Ministry Committee and the Peace, Environmental and Social Concerns Committee. Quaker Eight dinners at Evelyn and Karl's home were full of rich fellowship and tasty food. The Aging and Saging group, which Evelyn preferred to call "The Psychology and Spirituality of Aging," could count on stimulating discussions during the many years Evelyn was able to participate, elevating any conversation to a higher level.

Even in her last few months when she was confined to bed, Evelyn retained her interest in Downers Grove Friends Meeting, asking about the welfare of specific Friends and listening intently to responses. Evelyn died on March 1, 2022. She was preceded in death by Karl in 2016. She is survived by her daughters and grandchildren.