Memorial Minute for Howard Worrell Brod

Midlothian Friends Meeting

Howard Worrell Brod, a beloved member of Midlothian Friends Meeting, died at his home on April 12, 2025. He was 73 years old. Howard's love for his wife Sara Brod (Ginger) for 52 years, his three sons and six grandchildren, whom he adored, epitomized Quaker values.

The meetinghouse and grounds were Howard's second home. His handiwork, knowledge and expertise will live for many years because of his documentation and organization. Along with his family, Howard made Meeting an integral part of his life. He had the bold idea to purchase the current meetinghouse and helped to make it happen as a sacred space. His creative energy and maintenance of the library, religious education building, meditation circle, memorial garden, clerk's office, closets, tool shed, supplies, and needed furniture expressed his Quaker passion. He shaped many aspects of our beautiful space, allowing us to appreciate the beauty and hallowedness of nature. His eldest son, Brandon, wrote that he was "a devout Quaker, his work here was done, and done well."

With his steadfast, decent and unwavering kindness, his presence was warm and generous, and he expressed his faith through gifts of love and action. He lived as William Penn advised: "I expect to pass through life but once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again". Howard loved Quaker history and taught many Quakerism 101 lessons sharing his love of the subject.

Personal history is important too. The Brods came to Quakerism from the religious faith of the Jehovah's Witnesses. They discovered Richmond Friends Meeting and its open acceptance of many different believers. Howard's own acceptance of those with divergent views and his willingness to share the Spirit of Meeting was a testament to what he learned from a small poster on the wall of Richmond Friends Meeting, a message from George Fox: "to walk cheerfully over the earth seeking that of God in everyone." Howard modeled these words for the rest of his life.

Howard worried about the Meeting: trees falling, appliances and mechanical systems failing, the roof leaking; however, he especially worried about the Spirit in Meeting. Finding ways to help Midlothian's body of seekers became one of his missions and he was led to start *Circle of Friends*, a gathering each First Day before worship. While being deeply traditional in the history of Friends, he paradoxically thrived on non-traditional Quaker processes, and this little ministry was an original vision. He believed that the Spirit moves people to action. He never wanted to and never did serve as clerk but preferred to support others who did. Howard became Meeting's caretaker.

Justin Brod knew the pain of the cancer treatment his dad experienced but heard him clearly recognize it didn't matter because "other things matter more." Howard had inner resolve and strength. These qualities showed themselves in other ways in the life of Midlothian Friends. The Thrifty Quaker and Friend$hare are two concrete physical and legal feats that would never have happened without Howard's undertaking. The thrift store profits donated to charities and the Friend$hare non-profit foundation that provides financial assistance to non-Quakers thrive and bless our Meeting and the wider Richmond community with their generous grants. Knowledge of software allowed Howard to create financial systems for both meeting and the non-profit charities he fostered. His own spiritual journey epitomized simplicity, frugality and the gift of giving.

His youngest son, Dylan, experienced his father's superpowers, one of which was making signs. Howard valued his laminator. Another was his sense of selfless purpose in the way he lived his life. He had a way of making each person he met feel important. His humor helped others during their periods of personal doubts, failures or tragedies. He could lift people up. Howard was consistent and unwavering in his good qualities regardless of the situation. With coworkers too, Howard always lived his intention to arrive at consensus in every decision he had to make. He focused on what the end goal should be and guided others to this end.

Howard's love for our community, our place of worship, and our outreach to others flows out through those who have known him, who have shared in his success, and who have recognized his unwavering commitment. Many have learned from his humble heart.