

## William E. Nelson Memorial Minute

Seattle native, William E. Nelson, an outstanding teacher, artist and political activist, died October 22nd, 1997. A member of the Port Townsend Worship Group for the past 37 years, Bill shall be remembered and sorely missed by the community at large.

Bill and his family started the first Port Townsend Quaker group around the wood stove in their home at the Old North Beach Cider Mill in 1960. They attended the Scarsdale Friends Meeting in Westchester County and the Beth Page Meeting in Long Island before settling in Port Townsend.

The Nelson's history with Quakerism on the east coast involved social action and the justice system. Bill and his wife were members of the Peace and Concerns Committee. They both worked to establish bail for minor offenders who might otherwise have remained in jail while waiting for their trial. Bill was a constant attender at local meetings and sometimes filled the role of gadfly when he felt an issue of moral or ethical conscience was involved. He was outstanding in service to others who were needy or in trouble.

His personal life style sometimes bordered on the spartan, in an effort to exemplify what he believed to be the most effective and peaceful means of diminishing inequity and global strife. He was an active protester of the Viet Nam War as part of the Quaker peace movement. Bill was outspokenly critical of the "Black Fund" and its potential for promoting war in other parts of the world.

Bill is survived by his wife Eleanor, his sons Robert and James, his sister Sylvia, and other family members.

The Port Townsend Quaker Worship Group hosted a memorial service and the Community Orchestra dedicated a concert to him featuring a performance on a violin he crafted.

A retrospective of Bill's art work painted on location in Port Townsend, Seattle, New York, Oaxaca and different parts of Europe is planned for June 26-28th 1998 at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. A cello, that he hand-carved during the last year of his life, will be on display as well as his violin--not only as unique works of art and music, but as symbols of his indefatigable spirit.