

Memorial Minute  
Alice Blades Lacy  
December 5, 1920 to May 20, 2012

Alice was a very accomplished woman whose life spanned nine decades. She was born in Baltimore, Maryland. She left the family home to pursue her college education, attaining the Bachelor of Arts from the University of California at Berkeley and having been elected to the honor society, Phi Beta Kappa. Alice returned to Maryland as a single mother with her daughter, Annie, and continued her studies at the University of Maryland. She earned the MA and Ph.D. degrees in sociology where her fields were race relations, juvenile delinquency, and women's studies.

In 1956, she was appointed professor of sociology at Howard University in Washington, D.C. She became an active scholar in her disciplines and was named a member of the professional association, American Men and Women of Science. She was a popular classroom teacher and often invited students to her home for tea and conversation. Alice was a frequent consultant in her field, principally serving on a U.S. Senate subcommittee on juvenile delinquency. In 1961 she was appointed to President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. Alice enjoyed sharing her memories of the group gatherings with Mrs. Roosevelt at Hyde Park.

Alice was an activist in the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s. She met and worked with many of its leaders. She was designated a Marshal of the 1963 March on Washington led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Two years later she participated in the historic Selma to Montgomery March in Alabama.

Alice met John Lacy in Washington, D.C. They were married in 1958. The family now included four children, Annie, Mary Jill, Nina, and John Eben. They attended the Friends Meeting in Washington and the children attended First Day School.

Alice and John retired from their professional work in 1980 and went to sea, following a life long love of sailing. They qualified to captain their own 41-foot ketch, The Outrageous. For four years they lived on and sailed The Outrageous in the Caribbean Sea, often providing charter tours.

In the mid 1980s, they came to live in Bath, Maine. In 1993 they moved to a home they had designed and built on the Pemaquid cliffs in New Harbor. They attended Midcoast Friends Meeting and eagerly participated in the building committee of the new Meetinghouse. Alice lent her artistic talents to the interior of the building and is remembered for her clear and strong choices. To those who questioned her views about wall paint or floor covering, she would reply, "I know I am right. Trust me." Friends came to appreciate the warm tones of the walls and carpet that softened the bench's orange cushions.

Alice became a member of the Midcoast Friends Meeting in 2002. She was an active member of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, participating in community outreach programs and also joining in public protest events. For example, in the looming invasion of Iraq by our country, she joined the Standing on Bridges weekly protests and went to New York City for the final march on Fifth Avenue. In the mid-Nineties, she and John had also made a trip to Cuba to bring first aid supplies and medical equipment that they had solicited from local pharmacies.

Alice was devoted to the Meeting for Worship. She reminded us that as she settled into the silence she would glance at everyone in the room to feel the sense of the 'gathered' meeting. She frequently rose to share vocal ministry that always had an uplifting and compassionate message for persons –

individually as well as for all the people of the world.

At the rise of Meeting, Alice would usually find one person to engage in conversation to whom she would devote her full attention. She was sincerely interested in and had a gift for drawing out what was important in a person's life. As she became hard of hearing, she would find the Friend who had spoken in Meeting to ask him or her what their vocal ministry had been.

During all these years in Maine, Alice ardently pursued her lifelong interest and talent as an artist. She was a member of the Round Top Artists Center in Damariscotta where she taught and worked. She produced many paintings in oil, watercolor, or collage. She often invited and entertained Friends in her studio on the top floor of the Pemaquid Cliff home overlooking the ocean. Her painting of the March against the Iraq War on Fifth Avenue in New York City was prominently displayed there.

At this time, Alice also conducted a business venture, Alice LTD. She designed and sold miniature dollhouse furniture and decorations. She traveled to the Far East where her creations were made. She developed friendly relationships with the seamstresses and other craft workers whom she visited there.

Alice exhibited an artistic flair in her clothes and accessories. She was a tall, poised, and elegant woman, always beautifully dressed. She would sometimes admit that in this respect she did not follow Friendly custom because she loved beautiful colorful clothes and jewelry.

One of Alice's endearing attributes was her persistence. When she wanted something done it was difficult to turn her down. Yet she retained the poised manners of a Baltimore "lady." At nursing home visits, she would let us know she had needs and that we had stayed long enough by smiling and saying, "It is so nice of you to come for a visit."

Alice was in nursing homes for the last three years of her life. But even when she was confined to a wheel chair, she made an effort to come to Meetings for Worship, up to a time when she could no longer sit for an hour and would stretch out on a bench and fall asleep. Her last attendance at Meeting was on the occasion of her 91st birthday in December 2011 when the Meeting had prepared a lovely meal and bestowed her with flowers and presents.

Friends who visited her in nursing homes usually found her at a table or even in bed with her easel and paints. At the Boothbay nursing home, her attendants set aside a corner of the common room for a "studio" furnished with a table and easel and all her paints and papers at hand. There was a final meeting for worship with her at the nursing home in Freeport. A few Friends with John, John Eben and another resident sat with her in the silence. As the worship meeting was explained to a roommate, she smiled and smiled in deep appreciation for the Silence of Meeting.

Alice followed with determination the way of Peace and Justice in the world. She was a gracious, loving presence among us. We are grateful to have walked with her in Light and Love and Peace.

(Accepted at the monthly meeting of Midcoast Friends Meeting on the seventeenth day of the third month in 2013.)