Obituary

Hanna K. Still

Hanna K. Still died peacefully in her home on July 11, 2012, shortly after turning 87 years old. She died of natural causes. At the time of her death, she was surrounded by loving caregivers and a hospice nurse and put forth a tear and a smile.

Hanna is widely known in many circles in Eugene and Cottage Grove for her work in peacemaking, conflict resolution, storytelling, and building intentional community, and for her involvement in the Church of the Brethren, the Society of Friends (Quakers) in her later years (becoming a member of the Eugene Friends Meeting) and the interfaith community. She was a proud founding board member and keen supporter of Wellsprings Friends School in Eugene. As a board member and contributing editor, she wrote the "Dear Hanna" advice column in the Eugene-based multicultural children's magazine, Skipping Stones, for more than 20 years. She mentored students and nurtured a women’s group.

Hanna and her husband, Doug Still (deceased) moved to Cottage Grove in 1974 in hopes of participating in an ideal community that was in its formative stages. Although they did not move into the Cerro Gordo community, they stayed in Cottage Grove for the sense of community they each found and came to cherish there. Hanna was a long-time board member and supporter of Aprovecho Institute in Cottage Grove and went on to become a founding member of the Tiara Intentional Neighborhood in South Eugene.

Hanna was born in 1925 in Prague, Czechoslovakia. She lived most of her early childhood in Vienna, Austria. Her family believed the rising Nazi regime would likely view their Protestant family as having tainted DNA, so they sent Hanna and her brother Peter to attend a Quaker boarding school in England for half a year. This was a life-changing experience for Hanna. The family immigrated in 1939 to New York. Although new to the English language, Hanna graduated high school as a member of the National Honor Society. She attended the only college to which she applied, Swarthmore College, where she majored in psychology. One year later she entered McCormick Seminary in Chicago, where she earned a Masters Degree in Church Social Work. Hanna and Doug Still married in 1950.

In her close to four decades of marriage to Doug Still, she fearlessly collaborated in the work of Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers movement in California, the civil rights movement on the South side of
Chicago, public education reform efforts in Washington, DC, and the promotion of alternative energy in the Pacific Northwest. Hanna and Doug were united in their optimism that faith, determined effort and an understanding of power dynamics in regional and national politics could and would lead to needed social change in the United States. Hanna brought to bear on these ambitions her superior intellect, extra-ordinary insight into the human condition, empathy for others, a willingness to skip sleep, and an ability to be creative, playful and to "think outside of the box."

All who knew Hanna were touched by her natural interest in relating to children and in facilitating their development into fulfilled members of this world. The Wellsprings Friends School community was the recipient of Hanna’s energy for youth. Countless young people and their parents have been affected by Hanna’s commitment to them. She was an agent of change who nurtured individuals, communities and organizations and who helped them find the courage within toward the deep, the profound and the possible. She quoted wise words of the sages and routinely gave books to all she knew -- reflecting her commitment to inquiry of the mind and of the soul. She will be missed by her family and friends in Eugene, Cottage Grove and everywhere.

Although Hanna and Doug’s marriage ended in divorce, they later reestablished their friendship. Hanna is survived by her brother Peter Kenmore of San Mateo, California and her three children -- Dean, of Cottage Grove, Oregon; Gregory, of Larchmont, New York; and Eleanor, of Silver Spring, Maryland -- and by their spouses Kim, Jean and George, and by five grandchildren, Victor, David, Allyson, Katherine and Max.

A Celebration of the Life of Hanna Still (in the manner of Friends) was held in Eugene, Oregon on Sunday, August 5, 2012. In lieu of flowers the family suggested that donations be made to Wellsprings Friends School, 3590 West 18th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97405.