

Neil Ray Hendricks

1922-2018



Neil Ray Hendricks  
August 1922 to January 2018

The Quaker signpost in front of Reno Friends Meeting House was hand-crafted twenty years ago by Neil Hendricks. It's a fitting reminder of Neil's many contributions to, and his kind presence in, Reno Friends Meeting over many years.

One of his daughters, Tina, shared the following from his early life: "Neil Hendricks was a child of the Great Depression. He and his brother grew up in the tiny village of Kiowa, Oklahoma, where their parents ran a cotton gin. They managed to keep the wolf from the door, but that hungry wolf could be heard snuffling at the windows. Maybe it was those boyhood hard times that shaped Neil into a lifelong ascetic, denying himself luxuries while generously donating to worthy causes."

As a young man Neil enrolled at Oklahoma A&M University in Stillwater, but soon left to join the Navy as the United States was entering WWII. Neil was stationed on Kodiak Island as an Aviation Radio Technician's Mate. Although Neil had not experienced combat in the service in Alaska, he later said that he regretted not having been a conscientious objector, although it would probably have meant prison. He spent the rest of his days opposing war and promoting peace.

In 1955, Neil and his first wife, Sylvia, moved their growing family to Austin, Texas, where Neil began working as an engineer for the language laboratories at the University of Texas. During those family years, Neil also returned to Stillwater and completed degrees in Art and Industrial Engineering. By the time he left Austin, he was director of all of the university language labs. He and Sylvia had eight children during their 23 years together. Neil was an active Friend in Austin.

On May 11, 1970, he married Yoshiko ("Yoshi") and began a new life in Reno, Nevada. His lifelong interest in music blossomed in Reno. He began building dulcimers and violas da gamba for a living and continued with this for 40 years. In this profession, he was able to combine his interests in music, visual aesthetics and solving engineering problems, as well as an appreciation for trees and exotic woods. He earned a reputation in particular for his bows. He and his friends shared music with Reno Friends on various occasions; their early music group was called the Nevada Barefoot Consort because they liked to play with shoes off.

Reno Friends remember Neil as a quiet but very busy activist, but it was only after his death that we learned he had been quite active for more than 30 years before we met him. He participated in the cross-country Great Peace March in 1986 and considered it one of the most important achievements of his life. Neil actively wrote letters to the editor on peace and justice issues, and seemed to have a knack for getting them published. In the 1980s, Neil went to Nicaragua to participate in a humanitarian project, helping to build a school there. He regularly attended peace vigils and demonstrations against capital punishment, and was honored with a



## **A Friends Memorial Meeting**

It is the custom of Friends (Quakers) to gather together to remember and celebrate the lives of community members who have passed away.

As with other Quaker meetings for worship we gather together and settle into a spirit-seeking silence. Whenever one is touched by the spirit, he or she may rise and share a ministry: a thought, a memory, sometimes a song that may be taken up by others in the group.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in this way. At a memorial meeting we focus our thoughts and prayers on the departed and their family members and freely share our memories and our celebration of these lives.

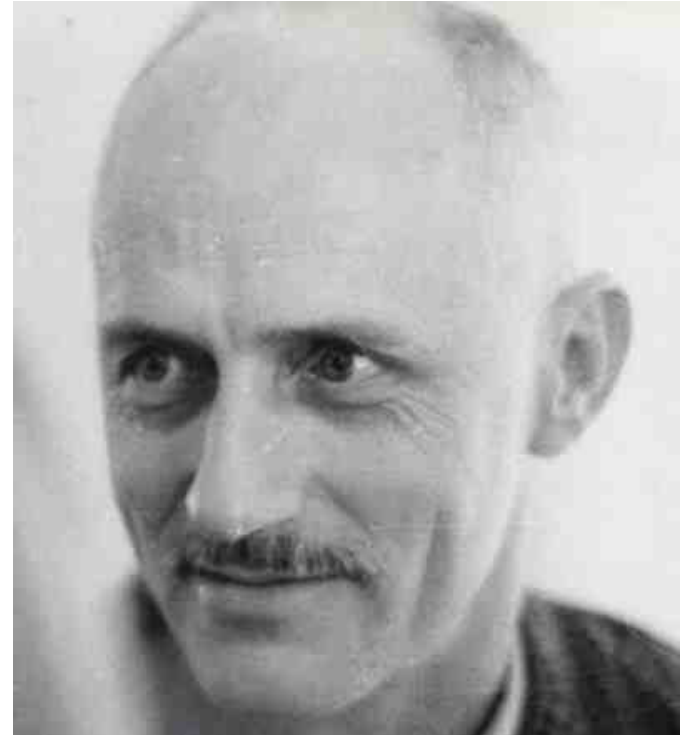
We like to pause in silence and reflection for a few moments, at least, between each message.

When an appropriate time has passed a friend will rise and shake the hand of the nearest person to signal the end of the meeting. All present do likewise.

We hope that you will stay for a while and share some refreshments and conversation.

# In Memory of Neil Ray Hendricks

*August 24, 1922–January 7, 2018*



**A Meeting for Remembrance and  
Celebration of Neil's Life**

*Friends Meeting of Austin  
April 7, 2018*

# *Neil Ray Hendricks*

*June 8, 1921—November 4, 2017*

Neil Hendricks was a child of the Great Depression. He and his brother grew up in the tiny village of Kiowa, Oklahoma, where their parents ran a cotton gin. They managed to keep the wolf from the door, but that hungry wolf could be heard snuffling at the windows. Maybe it was the boyhood experience of hard times that turned Neil into a lifelong ascetic, denying himself every luxury while generously donating to worthy causes.

The Second World War found Neil stationed in Alaska, serving as a Navy aviation radio technician's mate. He came home from the War in one piece, but the carnage of war sickened him. If he'd had it to do over again, he would have gone to prison as a conscientious objector rather than enlist. He spent the rest of his life writing anti-war letters to newspaper editors.

Someone found an old photograph that shows Neil's gentle side. The photographer snapped him smiling at someone outside the frame. He's holding his head cocked slightly forward, in that shy way that he had, and his eyes radiate warmth and benevolence. It's comforting to remember him like that.

*(For more about Neil, go to [neilhendricks.blogspot.com](http://neilhendricks.blogspot.com).)*

# Hope

*The great prospect for peace in the world is that, for the first time in history, the arms are in the hands of the peaceful peoples, whose economic and technical forces are superior.—Edmond Giscard D'Estaing, president of the French and Foreign Finance Company, before the International Congress of Chambers of Commerce.*

*War weary world, here's cause for hope!  
These weapons that you see, though horrible  
Belong, in large degree, to us who love the peace.  
To frighten devils is their main excuse.  
They're real, you understand, and made for use,  
But only as a last resort, and then regretfully.  
We'll bomb and burn and kill most ruefully  
With long-range good in mind.*

—Neil Ray Hendricks

**Fellowship**