

Edna R. Ivash

1925 - 2009

Edna Ivash
(January 30, 1925 – January 24, 2009)

Following a hip fracture nearly two years ago and a difficult but courageous struggle with her many medical problems, Edna passed away on January 24, 2009. In six more days she would have been 84. She is survived by her husband, Gene Ivash, and three wonderful children, Carol Gabele and her son, Kevin, Tom Ivash of Austin, and Cathy Ivash and her family Mark, Alex, and Erik of Galveston.

Edna was born January 30, 1925 to Cora and Charles Russell in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where she was raised, attended public school, and met her husband Gene when they were students at the University of Michigan. They were married in 1953, and had a wonderful and loving life together for 55 years, mostly in Austin, interspersed with stays of varying lengths of time in such places as Oak Ridge in Tennessee, Berkeley and La Jolla, California, and abroad in Bangkok, Thailand, Cambridge, England and in India. Particularly memorable were Bangkok, where they lived for 15 months with their very young daughter Carol (who was only three months old when they left Austin), Cambridge for a month and La Jolla where they resided with Carol, Cathy, and Tom for seven months, and frequently gamboled on the lovely beaches nearby on the Pacific coast.

As a student in Ann Arbor Edna enjoyed writing poetry and became the class poet in her high school. In Austin she pursued an interest in painting and sculpture, revealing a natural talent in art. Edna received a bachelor's degree in education at the University of Michigan, and subsequently, a master's degree in psychology at the University of Texas. She taught public school briefly in Michigan and Austin. She later worked as an auditor for the IRS when her children grew older. She also taught English as a foreign language at Alliance Française while she was in Bangkok.

In 1958 she and Gene began attending Friends Meeting of Austin and were jointly accepted into membership in May, 1958. She enjoyed teaching young Quaker children during weekly meetings for worship, and for a number of years also served on the finance committee. Quiet and unassuming, with a gentle humor, she lived a principled life.

In time she developed a special and strong interest in meditation, particularly one emphasizing inner sound and inner light, as taught by a teacher in India. Meditation was not easy for her, although she persisted. In a journal she kept she once wrote "I pray for faith and commitment," and then added, "and as much love as I can bear."

I saw the infinite love of God. I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but also an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. And in that I saw the infinite love of God; and I had great openings.

- *Journal*, George Fox, 1647

O my heart! Let us go to that country
where dwells the Beloved, the
ravisher of my heart!

There Love is filling her pitcher from
the well, yet she has no rope
with which to draw water;

There the clouds do not cover the sky,
yet the rain falls down in gentle
showers:

O bodiless one! Do not sit on your
doorstep; go forth and bathe
yourself in that rain!

There it is ever moonlight and never
dark; and who speaks of one sun
only? That land is illuminate with
the rays of a million suns.

- *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*, Poem 77

Living together, husband and wife remain united,
But are like separated lovers
Having intense longing for the true Lord.

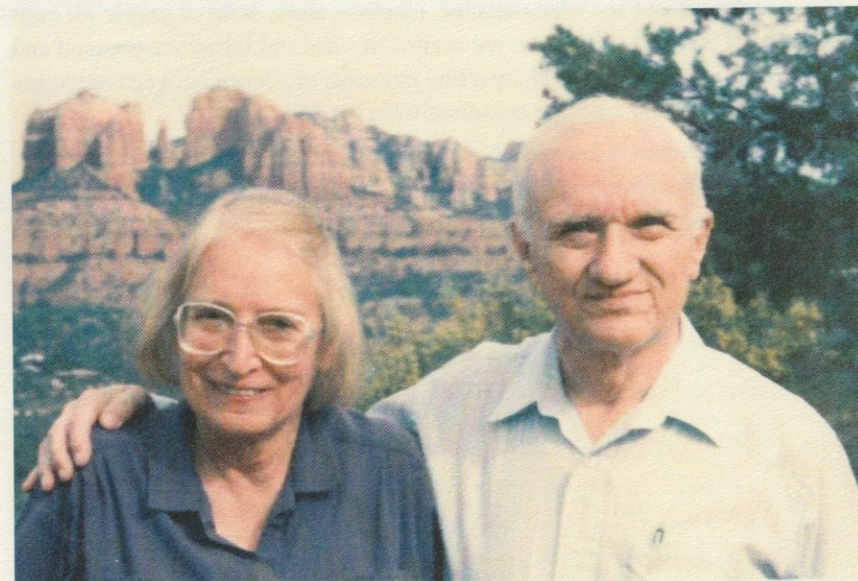
- Based on a translated poem of the Indian mystic, Darya Sahib

You have not danced so badly, my dear,
Trying to kiss the Beautiful one.
You have actually waltzed with tremendous style,
O my sweet,
O my sweet crushed angel.

- From *I Heard God Laughing* of Hafiz, trans. by Daniel Ladinsky



Edna Ivash



Memorial Celebration, February 7, 2009

Welcome

We are pleased that you have been able to join us today for Meeting for Worship. Quakers refer to their times of worship simply as Meetings. Today we are here for a special Meeting for Worship in Memorial Celebration of our friend Edna Ivash. In such a Memorial Celebration we gather, in the presence of God and one another, to remember and honor Edna.

Quakers worship in and through silence. We gather together in silence, in which we listen within ourselves for the voice of God, to nudge us. And perhaps give us a few words to share with others. That is what we will be doing today. We will sink down into silent worship and share with one another and joyfully celebrate the life of Edna Ivash, daughter, sister, wife, mother and friend.

So what messages will we probably offer one another today? Let us remember that all of us live as part of a great tapestry of life. So, it seems right that today we celebrate Edna's life, to gain a fuller understanding of the fabric of her life by inviting all of you, in our own personal ways, to share stories, memories, songs, and prayers. Remembering is an act of bringing about a wholeness, a fullness. When we re-live and relate memories of those we love, we gain a greater understanding of who they truly were.

We will begin with a few moments of quiet so that we can all reach down toward that of God within us and see what message, memory, story, song or prayer we might want to share. If you feel so led, you are invited to stand and introduce yourself and share. And as we proceed, let us enjoy a few moments of silence between messages to that we can ponder and take into ourselves what has been said.

After an hour or so, when it seems that everyone who wishes has had a chance to share, a member of the family will end our Memorial Meeting by turning to a neighbor to shake hands, and all of you are then invited to do likewise – greet your neighbors.

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