

Memorial Minute for Margaret McCoy
(Sep 26, 1917 - Aug 28, 2012)

Margaret was born September 26, 1917 in Pittsburgh, P A, the second child of Etta (Thompson) and Shields Craig Stockdale. She learned generosity, kindness, and the value of community from her close-knit family and network of cousins. Her brother Craig was a profound influence and life-long friend. When Margaret was a teenager, Craig gave her a priceless gift. Their strict Presbyterian parents disapproved of dancing, but when Craig gave his sister dancing lessons for Christmas, her parents relented.

Margaret graduated from the College of Wooster and later from the University of Pittsburgh School of Retailing, where she received her M. Lit. She worked for various employers in retailing. Craig wrote lovingly to her, cautioning her about the perils of the world of marketing and hoping that she would not become too caught up in materialism.

During the 1940s Margaret worked for various retail stores, while both she and Craig lived in Oakland at The Hunter House. Here, numerous young people lived and ate communal meals cooked by the woman who ran the boarding house. Socializing was easy, and long-lasting friendships blossomed. Margaret liked the living situation so much that she turned down numerous job promotions that would have transferred her to other cities. Her love of this way of life, with shared meals and many friends in close proximity, was part of her motivation to create a similar community for people in the older stages of life.

Margaret had a job interview at a law firm in which she felt she made a great connection with the interviewers. Afterwards, they called her and said, we liked your personality, your experience, and your background--but we wanted to hire a man. Angered and discouraged, she thought how will I ever find a job? Someone suggested that she go to the Sun-Telegraph (a Pittsburgh newspaper) and sell them on the idea of starting a retail marketing department. She did so, and she succeeded - not only in getting the job, but an increase in salary. Upon the death of Margaret's father in 1961, Craig and Margaret became joint owners of Allegheny Lumber and Supply Company and the Stockdale Hardware store.

In 1952 she married Dick McCoy, a charter member of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends and became a Quaker. She joined her husband in active participation and leadership in the Pittsburgh Friends Meeting. Margaret made a point to welcome and engage newcomers, and many members remember her as the first Friend they talked with on their first visit to our Meetinghouse.

Friends will long remember her for her steadfast service to the Meeting and for the strength, wisdom and love she brought to our community. Among Margaret's many leadership roles in the Meeting was helping foster the fledgling Pittsburgh Quaker community, which consisted of two community houses, one of which was intergenerational and a place where young and old could live simply and in community. The community was started in 1972 and lasted nearly 15 years.

Margaret and Dick were able to travel widely, visiting friends and family and exploring other cultures. In 1974, they attended the UN World Food conference in Rome as part of the Pennsylvania delegation.

Dedicated to both education and peace, she served on the boards of the College of Wooster, Pittsburgh Peace Links and the Pittsburgh World Federalists. She combined these passions in her commitment to Educators for Social Responsibility, and in helping develop a scholarship fund for employees at Sherwood Oaks.

Margaret, together with Sally Dewees and Jane Locke, was instrumental in the founding of Sherwood Oaks Retirement Community. It was the first facility of its kind in Western Pennsylvania, patterned after several Quaker retirement communities in the Philadelphia area. She served on many boards and committees during her nearly 30 years there and was beloved by residents and employees alike. Margaret's door was always "open" literally. She never locked the door to her apartment.

She loved to welcome newcomers. In her last months at Sherwood Oaks, Margaret held four housewarming parties to celebrate her new room in Personal Care, continuing, as always, to foster community. The warmth and kindness of her family stayed with her all her life, enabling her to embrace life with confidence as well as compassion.

Margaret died on August 28, 2012 and is survived by her daughter, Carolyn, born in 1954. Carolyn married Bill Sanderson in 1987 and Margaret became a proud grandmother in 1988 with the birth of Matthew, and again in 1995, with her namesake, Margaret Sanderson (nicknamed Margie).