

Memorial Minute for Sol Metz
(May 5, 1943 - June 25, 2012)

Sol Metz was born on May 5, 1943 in Detroit, Michigan. He studied computer programming at Wayne State University in the early days of computer science and continued in that field for the rest of his career. In 1967 he married Rosemary DeLuca, and with her had four children: Diana, Marta, Andrew, and Liza. The marriage ended in divorce, and Sol married Linda Wotring in 1998 in a Quaker ceremony at Friends Lake. Together, Sol and Linda enjoyed years of peace and justice activism, travel, and classical music. They had subscription tickets to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and regularly attended productions of Michigan Opera Theatre. Sol played violin with orchestras in the community, and in later years sang with the Washtenaw Community Chorus, the Comic Opera Guild, and the Fine Arts Chorus. Sol devoted his life to social justice activism, which he approached from a deeply spiritual perspective. Some of our Meeting's first memories of Sol were from the ecumenical demonstration in the mid-1980s at the Williams International plant in Walled Lake, Michigan, where engines for Cruise missiles were being manufactured. On Easter Sunday, Sol joined Doug Hamm, Dorothy Whitmarsh (now Henderson), Carfon Fultz, and Fr. Peter Dougherty, among others, in blocking the entrance to the plant. After repeated arrests for "trespassing" the judge told the group that they could go home if they would promise not to return. Since Sol and most of the others would not promise, they were sentenced to the Shiawassee County jail. After a few weeks they were released, and later the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that these sentences were not legal.

Sol was dedicated to the Meeting, which he came to as an attender in 1971 and joined in 1983. He served on a number of committees including Peace and Social Concerns, Committee on Central American Refugees, Palestine-Israel Action Group, Hospitality, Contributions, Ministry and Counsel, Membership and Outreach, Environment and Social Concerns, Care and Transportation, and Quaker House. He was Forum coordinator for a year, worked with AFSC on prisoner reentry issues, visited a prisoner as a spiritual counselor for many years, and took responsibility for hanging the anti-death penalty banner whenever there was a state-sponsored execution. In meeting for worship, Sol often spoke of his Jewish roots, the compassionate messages of Jesus, and his concerns for justice. Friends remember at-shirt he often wore that displayed a quote from Brazilian Archbishop Helder Camera: "When I give to the poor they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a Communist."

Sol first visited Palestine in 2002, where he witnessed the effects of Israel's Occupation firsthand. When he returned in 2005 as a volunteer with the Holy Land Trust, he saw two Palestinian women mourning in the ruins of their house, which Israeli Occupation forces had just demolished. He silently sat with them in sympathy and solidarity and asked after a time if he could take their picture, which he later circulated widely. Sol spoke in Ann Arbor of his anguish at such home demolitions, saying, "These acts were carried out by Jews in the name of Jews everywhere. I saw these acts as a betrayal of the Judaism I had learned about as a child."

Through such experiences Sol came to believe that criticism of Israel was his duty as a Jew. After his first, formative trip to Palestine, he joined Jewish Witnesses for Peace and Friends in a weekly vigil outside the Beth Israel Synagogue. The action drew strong criticism from some members of the

Ann Arbor community and disagreement with some members of Friends Meeting as well. But Sol felt that Jewish support for the Zionist enterprise - the making of a Jewish state on Palestinian lands - was deeply destructive to Judaism. Sol participated in many other campaigns and demonstrations in support of Palestinian rights, and helped write a Minute in 2011, adopted by the Meeting, in which AAFM joined an international boycott of products made in illegal Jewish settlements and divested from corporations supporting Israel's Occupation.

Sol volunteered with Peace Neighborhood Center right up until the time of his hospitalization. This was a bright moment each week for Sol, a time of uplift and hope, working with lively, curious youngsters who had so much of their lives ahead of them, helping them make progress in their school work. Sol had little hope for a positive outcome from his Palestine work. He was totally committed to it and intended to carry it onward regardless. But working at Peace each week gave him a tangible experience of success, something positive amidst all the sorrow of the Palestinian struggle.

When Sol died on June 25, 2012, after a short bout with cancer, a friend arranged for two olive trees to be planted in Palestine in his memory. She hoped that planting these living, growing symbols of peace would be one of the many ways Sol's work would carry on, bear fruit, and live to witness the peace that we all wish we could live to see.