

## Memorial Minute for Richard Kenneth Lee

January 19, 1949 -- August 5, 2018

Richard Kenneth Lee was born in Greenville, Michigan to Dorothy Primrose Morgan Lee, a war bride from Frampton-on-Severn, Gloucestershire, England, and Kenneth Lee, of Greenville, on January 19, 1949. He was raised with his mother's Quaker values (though not in a Quaker meeting) and he was strongly aware of Spirit and "that of God in everyone" from the beginning. He was drawn to healing from an early age; he and his sister would attempt to heal the injured animals that were often brought to them. He attended school in Greenville, which was then a small town surrounded by farms. His English accent and awareness of the world beyond Greenville caused trouble for him in school, but he had many good times and magical experiences while growing up there. As an older teen he worked at the original Meijer grocery store, which was located there, and developed a fondness for the countryside and the nearby Amish and Mennonite farming communities that lasted for the rest of his life.

Richard was introduced to the formal Quaker meeting for worship for healing by his English maternal grandmother, Florence Rose Morgan, a Quaker healer, whom he visited several times in Frampton-on-Severn in his late teens and early 20's. She taught him to use his spiritual gifts of healing and kenning (spiritual knowing) following the traditions she had inherited through her family and her community directly from George Fox and James Naylor. When Richard was 22, she formally passed on her healing gifts: "I was sitting in a chair; she knelt in front of me, put her palms on my knees and put energy into me."

In between visits to England, Richard attended Michigan State University, receiving a BA in History and Education in 1971 and an MA in European History in 1980. He also completed the coursework for a PhD in British History. He was employed by the University's Office of Supportive Services as an Academic Guidance Counselor from 1984 to 2013. He specialized in counseling first-generation students from a variety of backgrounds: Chicano/Latino, Native American, Haitian, Hmong, and international students. His support of his students included addressing their challenges in the majority-white university, extensive tutoring and providing supper on Sunday nights when the dining halls were closed, because he knew they could not afford to eat otherwise. He taught study skills and conflict resolution and assisted in planning outreach events. He was active in the University's LGBTQ community and was deeply involved with the Mennonite Fellowship. He represented the Religious Society of Friends on the University's Religious Advisors Association, supporting greater inclusion of Muslim and Jewish advisors.

In the early 1980's Richard began attending Red Cedar Friends Meeting (LEYM) and recorded his membership on September 7, 1986. Over the years, he served on the Membership and Outreach, Worship and Pastoral Care and Nominating Committees. A gifted teacher – especially of Young Friends -- he taught Quakerism, Quaker history, branches of Friends, worship etiquette and testimonies in First Day School and Adult Religious Education. He was strongly led to the study, practice and teaching of healing prayer. *George Fox's Book of Miracles*, a reconstruction by Henry Cadbury of healings that had been deleted from Fox's *Journal* for fear of persecution, had become available and confirmed healing prayer as a practice of Early Friends. In the mid-1980s, He began holding occasional meetings for worship for healing in his home and teaching a healing prayer workshop at Lake Erie Yearly Meeting.

In 1994, Richard established a regular monthly meeting for worship for healing in his home under the care of Red Cedar Friends Meeting in Lansing, Michigan. In 1995, he again visited England, where he interviewed elderly Friends who had lived into the tradition. He also joined the English Friends Fellowship of Healing and collected their published materials, and attended Britain Yearly Meeting to speak on the Peace Tax Fund, where "his contribution was much appreciated," according to Clerk S. Jocelyn Burnell's endorsement on his Travel Minute. For more than 27 years he taught interest groups and workshops on meeting for worship for healing at Lake Erie Yearly Meeting and the Friends General Conference Gathering. He also contributed articles on the topic to *Towards Wholeness*, *Friends Journal* and *Quaker Life*. Designing experiential exercises to strengthen

participants' gifts for healing and kenning (especially kenning on sound which bears a relationship to the practice of keening for the dead), he did much individual healing work and consulted on spiritual matters.

In addition to his work with Quakers on healing prayer, Richard served on the Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Nominating, Peace Education and Earth Care Committees. He was LEYM's representative to the Friends World Committee for Consultation, and attended the Triennial in July, 2000. He co-coordinated the FGC Gathering Men's Center for six years and served on the Gathering Workshop Subcommittee in 1998 and 1999. He served on the American Friends Service Committee Peace Education Committee, Regional Executive Nominating Committee and as a Member of the Corporation. He was also an active member of Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns.

Richard had a different and unique relationship with every person he knew. He enjoyed taking friends on adventures back to his beloved Greenville and the Amish and Mennonite farming communities nearby. He liked to cook and enjoyed Indian food (possibly because his great-great grandmother was from India) and shopped for Indian and British ingredients at the local Indian market. Frequent junk store shopping for things to keep and things to give away meant that his house was always filled with amazing things – Tobey mugs, Navajo sand paintings, amber necklaces, antique toys and many, many clocks –all of which he kept dusted and properly set as long as he was able. (The changes to and from Daylight Saving Time required a major effort.) The “care” packages of knick-knacks and toys acquired in the junk shops plus a large amount of chocolate that he sent to the FGC Gathering Staff for entertainment and encouragement in the spring, when their preparations became intense, were much appreciated.

In some ways, Richard saw more deeply into the people around him than most of us do, and with his healing and teaching gifts he touched many, but it was a constant source of disappointment to him that others did not see the world and relationships in quite the way he did. Sadly, he was sometimes overtaken by grievances that he could not seem to get past, especially as his health deteriorated and his considerable weight limited his activity. An ongoing, loving relationship of several years offered the possibility of real happiness, but a fall in his home in May, 2018, caused a neck injury that went undiagnosed for weeks. One complication followed another and Richard died, quadriplegic and miserable, on August 5, 2018 in Sparrow Hospital (Lansing, MI). The Friend who had brought healing and peace to so many was without resources to find peace for himself and raged ferociously “against the dying of the light” and at his visitors and the hospital staff. Even so, the staff often remarked on the number of devoted friends and visitors he had. His Memorial Meeting was well attended and messages were given by family, former students and friends of every age and from every period of his life – the youngest person to speak was nine years old – and ended with the keening wail of a Native American flute.

Two pictures that hung in Richard's living room where the Meeting for Worship for Healing took place speak of his Quaker faith: *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Edward Hicks and *Presence in the Midst* by Doyle Penrose. Richard will be missed by the Red Cedar Friends Meeting community and a much wider circle of family, former students and friends.

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