



Neil H Hartman

February 6, 2018

Neil Harmon Hartman passed away on February 6th, 2018, in Medford, New Jersey, at the Medford Leas Retirement Community, he was 97. In addition to being a caring father and grandfather, Neil will be remembered as a dedicated teacher who impacted the lives of countless students and as a man who contributed to international understanding and worldwide peace.

Neil was born in Cedarville, Ohio on June 8, 1920, the fourth and last child of George and Lida Owings Hartman. He attended the Cedarville public school, graduating in 1937. He then attended Cedarville College, graduating in 1941 with a B.A. in Mathematics and Science. He was hired by the Marysville, Ohio school district to teach junior-high mathematics for 1941–1942, but they had him teach high-school science instead.

Growing up as a Methodist, Neil was profoundly influenced by his church. On the advice of his older sister, Doris, he attended a Quaker work camp in Michigan during the summer after his junior year of college (1940). At the camp, there was much discussion about what a Christian should do regarding the impending military draft. The following summer, Neil went to a work camp in Mexico to rebuild a school damaged by an earthquake, where there was also much serious discussion among the young men. The draft law had passed that summer and he was required to register upon his return to the U.S. He had decided that as a Christian he could not kill another man, so signed up as a conscientious objector (CO).

Registering as a CO was not easy, as there was much antipathy towards conscientious objectors. Indeed, the Greene County draft board did not grant him (nor anyone else) CO status. After several failed appeals, he connected with the National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO), who took up his case with the Selective Service. Eventually, he was granted CO status, a 4E classification.

After being drafted, Neil served in several different capacities for the Civilian Public Service (CPS). In 1943, he drove heavy machinery for an irrigation project as part of reclamation work in the 1930s dust-bowl region around Trenton, North Dakota. In October of that year, feeling he could serve his country better, he transferred to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to be an orderly in the men's ward at Byberry Hospital, a state mental institution. The conditions in the hospital were atrocious. One positive contribution the

COs made was to document and expose those conditions, which helped reform the system after the war. While in Philadelphia, Neil also volunteered as a human guinea pig for medical studies of Hepatitis at the University of Pennsylvania. Hepatitis was a serious health issue at the time and he wanted to help find a cure. He also wanted to show that he was not afraid to take personal risks, as the COs were often accused of being cowards. His last job while drafted was to work as a “seagoing cowboy” for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) on boats that shipped livestock to war-torn countries in Europe and Asia. When he was released from the draft in May of 1946, UNRRA hired him as a supervisor for four more trips. These early experiences fostered his life-long interest in other cultures and international travel.

In 1947, Neil began teaching mathematics at George School, a Quaker school in Newtown, Pennsylvania. There he met Venette Addison Shearer, whom he married in August 1948.

In July 1949, Neil and Venette moved to Toyama Heights, Japan, for three years to do relief work with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). While there, they ran a neighborhood center that provided services to the surrounding war-damaged area. The center ran a kindergarten and provided English and sewing lessons, dance classes, and other activities. It was there he learned to call square dances. Japan had a profound impact on Neil; the bonds he formed there were maintained for the rest of his life.

Upon returning to the States in 1952, Neil started teaching mathematics and religion at Moorestown Friends School (MFS) in Moorestown, New Jersey, and did so until his retirement in 1985. An integral part of the school community, he coached boys’ varsity tennis, acted in school plays, instructed the May Day dancers, organized the school’s alumni lobster dinners, and shopped for the school’s food cooperative, among other activities. He also continued his own education, obtaining a Master’s degree from Temple University. While reputed to be a stern, no-nonsense teacher who could be intimidating, he was also known for his dry sense of humor. He was proud that so many of his students went on to be successful and to “do good” in their own lives.

After retirement, Neil was the chair of MFS’s bicentennial celebration (1985–1986) and was on the School Committee (their Board of Trustees) from 1997 to 2005. He was greatly honored by MFS in 2012, when the school named a new classroom building after him: Hartman Hall.

Moorestown would be Neil’s home for almost 50 years, where he and Venette raised their family of three daughters. As convinced Quakers, the couple became members of Moorestown Monthly Meeting and were active in the life of the Meeting, serving on many committees.

For a teacher, a summer job was a necessity. During the early years, Neil worked as a manager of an ice cream stand, “Dairyland”, and in later years he ran a tennis camp and tutored. He satisfied his love of travel by packing up the family and hitching up the tent

trailer to explore different parts of the country each year. He remained close to his three siblings. Family visits and reunions always included tales of their childhood escapades, eliciting much laughter from the younger generations.

Neil's life darkened with the illness and death of his wife Venette, in 1975, and his daughter Holly Lynn, in 1978.

After Venette's death, Neil renewed his acquaintance with Marian B. Weinberger, a nurse whom he'd met as a young man at the 1940 work camp in Michigan. When they married in 1978, she moved to Moorestown and became a beloved part of his family and the broader community. After retirement, they had many adventures together, enjoying camping and Elderhostels both in the U.S. and abroad. They served on several Quaker committees, including the Friends World Committee for Consultation. Neil served as a tour guide at the historic Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia for the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. They eventually moved to the Medford Leas Retirement Community in 1998. In addition to his long-awaited return trips to Japan, Neil continued exploring new lands for many years, including the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, Denmark, Russia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Cuba, Bolivia, and Nicaragua. Neil and Marian's marriage lasted nearly 40 years, until her recent death in December 2017.

Neil continued his efforts for peace throughout his life. He facilitated cultural bridges on an individual level, frequently hosting international guests at the Hartman household. He participated in the 1960s civil rights movement, served as a draft counselor to young men during the Vietnam War, and participated in war protests and vigils well into his 90s. His life was as full and as meaningful as it was long.

Neil is survived by daughters Sandra M. Hartman Reid and Judith A. Hartman; sons-in-law Joseph M. Reid and Michael L. DeKay; grandchildren Kimberly L. Reid, Jamie Lynn E. Reid, McKenzie D. Hartman, and Addison D. Hartman; and six nieces and nephews.

A memorial service honoring Neil's life will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 10th at the Moorestown Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends, 118 East Main Street, Moorestown, NJ 08057. A reception will follow, in the Commons Dining Hall at Moorestown Friends School.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to either of the following:

Moorestown Friends School, 110 E. Main Street, Moorestown, NJ 08057-2949

www.mfriends.org

Heifer Foundation, the Seagoing Cowboys Endowment, 1 World Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72202

www.heiferfoundation.org

Cemetery Details

PRIVATE INTERMENT

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR 10. 2:00 PM (ET)

Moorestown Friends Meeting House
118 East Main Street
Moorestown, NJ 08057

Tribute Wall



“ *Neil H Hartman*

October 09, 2023 at 03:30 AM



“ *Neil H Hartman*

November 08, 2022 at 08:26 PM



“ *Neil was an amazing man , father, grandfather and friend who inspired others especially his former students and alumni of Moorestown Friends. Neil has certainly left a mark and will never be forgotten in many people hearts . Rest In Peace .
JoAnne Cohen*

JoAnne Cohen - March 11, 2018 at 02:30 PM



“ *Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of Neil H Hartman.*

March 04, 2018 at 06:16 AM



BF

“ How did he do it? For years, no decades, I have wondered how Neil Hartman commanded such a high level of respect in his classroom. Yes, like his obit said, he was a no-nonsense teacher. But, he was never imperious, nor overly demanding, nor threatening, nor petulant. All the same, understood was that we didn't screw up in Mr. Hartmann's math class, at least not intentionally. Was it simply a "Beware of the wrath of a patient man" mentality? Yeah, a little, but there had to be more.

And there was! But I didn't learn what that characteristic or quality was until I read his full obituary. Having just an average physical stature, I didn't know that the man who was teaching me cosines, and logarithms, and differentials was a humanitarian giant, whose life found its highest fulfillment through the elevation of the human condition.

The Bible says it best, "There is no fear in love, because perfect love casts out fear." 1 John 4:18. Because Neil Hartman lived the love-driven life, that life radiated a a certain compassionate fearlessness - a compelling, unspoken message that demanded the attention of even this immature, self-centered adolescent, although I had no idea how or why.

Barry Ford - MFS '66

Barry Ford - March 01, 2018 at 03:03 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Neil H Hartman.



February 22, 2018 at 10:20 AM