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Commentary

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When Mark Allam asked if I would help arrange a memorial service in the Manner of Friends for his beloved wife, Lila, I never dreamed I would be doing it for both of these precious people. The Allams had been like parents to me after my father's sudden death, through my mother's paralysis and after both were gone. Though this was the most difficult request Dr. Allam ever had made of me, how could anyone possibly say no to Mark.

And so, in the warmth of one of his daughter's homes, we discussed the opening remarks which would explain the format of a specially called Meeting for Wor-

ship to celebrate an individual's life. We agreed that I would encourage attendees to speak if they were so moved, ask people to respect the silence between messages for it too is a great source of strength, explain the traditional shaking of hands which closes a Meeting for Worship, and invite guests to join the family in light refreshments at the Allam House after the Memorial Service.

In making the request for a Memorial Service in the manner of Friends, Dr. Allam explained how much he and Lila admired the formal simplicity of the Quakers approach to celebrating a life. He observed that Lila always had wanted to join a Friends Meeting as a young person, but there never was one near where she lived.

While Dr. Allam was reviewing arrangements with me, we also reminisced about a Quaker Memorial Service at London Grove Meeting for Dr. Jacques Jenny which was especially significant for both of us. It was a Meeting for Worship at which both my father, Dr. Allam, and many others gave eloquent spiritual tributes. Though both men admired Dr.

Jenny, they did not know each other then. Later, when I came to New Bolton in 1976, they became fast friends.

Our conversation closed by discussing local members of the Society of Friends we knew who had been deeply intertwined with New Bolton and who could serve as a Committee of Oversight for the Memorial Service. The Quakers we

turned to were: Mr. Russell Jones, Mrs. Carol Pyle Jones Fry, Ms. Betty Edwards, Mrs. Florence Hanford, and Dr. Elinor Jenny. Later, Dr. Richard McFeely, who lived further away, was asked to join the group. These members of the Religious Society of Friends were

a great support in maintaining the simplicity of the specially called Meeting for Worship for Lila and Mark.

Although not a member of the Society of Friends, Dr. Allam exhibited many Quakerly attributes from his "Whittier" roots. (John Greenleaf Whittier was his relative). He treated everyone he met with respect and equality, a wonderful characteristic. In redirecting the School, he created a committee of faculty to guide and shape its future. Through consensus of conviction, together they moved the School's academic community forward into a position of preeminence in veterinary medicine. His great integrity and caring warmth pervaded all he did whether it was taking a risk, extending a friendly hand, or standing up for his beliefs.

Lila added a gentle touch of humor to any occasion and had a steadying tranquility which came for her from the enjoyable routine of working in fine needlework. Like the plants Lila nurtured in her lovely garden, many of the School's faculty and staff as well as its

community of supporters grew and flourished with her thoughtfulness. Now on the National Registry, the Allam House's interior decor is a reflection of her impeccable taste and her warm and welcoming spirit.

Mark and Lila were a terrific team devoted to each other and to their two supportive daughters, their grandchildren and great grandchildren. They also were deeply dedicated to the School, especially New Bolton Center. Fittingly, their choice to mirror the Quaker roots of New Bolton (which trace back to William Penn's land grant to the Pusey family) in the Memorial Service to celebrate their lives created a beautiful benediction for these two luminous and wonderful friends.

Catherine C. Larmore



Mrs. Allam, Mrs. Gay Robinson, Dr. Jacques Jenny, Mrs. Elinor Jenny and Mrs. Georgia Hofmann, 1970.

I first met Dr. Allam when I was a freshman in college and made an appointment with the Dean of the vet school to talk about veterinary medicine as a possible career for a young lady. At the time veterinary schools were not accepting many women applicants, with the notable exception being Penn under Dr. Allam's leadership. Dr. Allam encouraged me from the start and told me that he was starting a file for my future application that very day.

Once I started vet school he was always available offering encouragement and inspiration. He taught me how to drive his pair of carriage horses, May and Queen, and later helped me with my own pony, Breezy. I had more fun taking visitors around to show them New Bolton in the carriage.

The carriage has stayed with me — I drove my pony to Winterthur last Sunday.

Through the years my husband, Don, and I had wonderful lunches and brunches with the Allams. Mark and I would talk endlessly about horses and the vet school, and Lila and Don would go on and on about antiques. I will miss them both dearly, but I feel so grateful to have known them.

Betsy Reiver DeMarino, V.M.D., '80