

Memorial Minute for Bill Powell 1947-2017

Approved at a meeting for business held 1/13/2019

William H. (“Bill”) Powell was born January 7, 1947. He came from a long line of Quakers in New Jersey, at the old Hancock Bridge Meeting House (built in 1756), where his ancestors were members. This Meeting House is now also called Alloways Creek Friends Meeting House, and it is located in Hancock’s Bridge, Lower Alloways Creek Township, Salem County, New Jersey. One ancestor had been a surveyor for William Penn. Bill was a member of Lansdowne Meeting in Upper Darby, PA.

Bill attended George School, a Quaker boarding school in Newtown, PA, and he was on the swim team. Bill told his membership clearness committee that George School gave him a lasting grounding in Quakerism. Bill graduated in 1965. Bill attended many other meetings over time, including Pima and then Phoenix meetings. His attendance at Tempe Meeting went back to Danforth Chapel days.

Bill came to feel that Tempe Meeting was his home. He said he was moved more spiritually in Tempe Meetinghouse than in any other meeting he’d been in. He also said the Meeting members and attenders gave him the freedom to speak spiritually, or as a prophet. He quoted “There are two spirits in the world—the spirit of light and the spirit of darkness. When you try to connect to the spirit world always call on the spirit of Light rather than the Spirit of Darkness.” He said he matured from that view (like George Fox) and experienced this light as the spirit of Jesus Christ. In later years, Bill reflected on challenges in his family life and wrote a book “Consent and Worth is the Core of Happiness” that he hoped would teach others who might have similar family problems. During his life, he also had other personal triumphs and was proud to say that he stopped drinking on 11 September 2001.

Bill worked with his dad, Harold H. Powell, in Powell Electronics in New Jersey for about 10 years. Although he didn’t stay in the family firm, he later showed some of the entrepreneurial skills for which his father became well known. He worked for Frito Lay for several years and was a substitute teacher in the Maricopa school system. He founded a business in 1994 selling electronic component parts. He also ran an on-line business called Pow Wow Sales which sold evaporative coolers (including an automotive version), solar ovens, a permanent calendar of historical events, and business promotional items. His website contains photos and information about Arizona. He also researched historical and genealogical topics. In retirement he made pins and refrigerator magnets dealing with Friends’ testimonies, and many members remember him fondly whenever we see the ones he gave us. He was an exceptionally gentle and kind soul with a calm and loving presence.

Although it was a long drive, Bill attended regularly until ill health made the long drive impossible. He was a long time regular attender; he became a member on June 4, 2017. Bill was unable to make it to Meeting during the last 6 months of his life, and greatly appreciated visits to his home from Tempe Friends.

He died September 26, 2017, at the age of 70. He is survived by 3 daughters: Anne Marie Cooper, Becky Tobin, and Jeanette Powell.