



Virginia A. Gilmore

September 10, 1924 - May 4, 2018

Virginia Gilmore, 93, a longtime advocate for social justice, civil rights and peace, died May 4 in Vernon Hills, Ill., of complications related to Alzheimer's disease.

A memorial meeting for worship in celebration of her life will take place at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, July 22, at the Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting, 1904 E. Main St., Urbana, Ill.

Virginia Gilmore was born Sept. 10, 1924, in Flint, Michigan, the daughter of Louise and Gaylord Smith. After graduating from high school, she became a welder, joining the ranks of women in defense industries during World War II, symbolized by the Rosie the Riveter promotional campaign.

Always passionate in her beliefs, she left her welding job to join the Women's Army Corps because she wanted to do more to stop Adolf Hitler.

After the war, she went to college on the GI Bill at Alma College in Michigan, where she met her future husband, Gene Gilmore. They married and moved to York, Pennsylvania, where they visited a Friends (Quaker) Meetinghouse for the first time. They became members and were active in Quaker meetings in various locations throughout their lives. In 1963, they moved to Urbana from Syracuse, N.Y.

Virginia Gilmore participated in protests on behalf of civil rights, nuclear disarmament and an end to the wars in Vietnam and Iraq. She was active in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the NAACP, among many other organizations in Champaign-Urbana. She also served on the staff of then-State Rep. Helen Satterthwaite.

She was a kind and loving mother, grandmother and friend to all. She welcomed everyone she met with a warm smile and a willing ear. Along with her late husband, Gene, she helped and supported people in need throughout her life, and opened her home to many. Her generous nature and compassionate spirit were a gift to all.

She is survived by a son, Daniel Gilmore of Eugene, Ore.; a daughter, Louise Donahue (Patrick) of Libertyville, Ill.; daughters-in-law Denise Hauenstein of Chula Vista, Calif., and Holly Spencer of Eugene, Ore.; seven grandchildren, Melanie Peter (Blake), Kevin Donahue, Erin Gilmore, Thomas Donahue (Lindsay Schudel), Lewis Gilmore, Bailey Gilmore, and Colin Gilmore; and two great-grandchildren, Alexis Schudel and Willow Peter.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Gene Gilmore, a retired University of Illinois journalism professor; a son, Thomas Gilmore of Chula Vista, California; and all her siblings, Eva Brill, Grace Brown, Vernon "Bud" Smith and Chester Smith.

Memorials may be made to the American Friends Service Committee (www.afsc.org).