



Jane Ortel
May 20, 1932 - October 13, 2022

When one imagines a life well-lived, it is likely that they imagine a life quite like the one lived by our dear Friend Jane Ortel. Her life was marked by intellectual curiosity, deep companionship, music, laughter, adventure, and lasting love.

Jane D. Ortel was born in 1932 in Narberth, PA. She attended Gettysburg College where she made lifelong friends in the Delta Gamma sorority, was a member of the academic merit-based Phi Beta Kappa Society, and most importantly met the love of her life, Wade Ortel. Jane and Wade married in 1955 and started their careers, she as a teacher and he as a physician. Wade's work led them to live above the Arctic Circle in Alaska, on Block Island (RI), and in Williston, VT. Jane and Wade shared a remarkable love story, rooted in mutual respect and common values for their 67 years of marriage. Jane was a devoted mother to their three children: Dee, Jo, and Jim. As a family, they enjoyed camping trips and other outdoor activities.

In mid-life, Jane rekindled an interest in Quakerism. When they retired to Block Island, she engaged in political activism with the Quaker community on the island. They became members of Westerly Monthly Meeting and were part of the core of the Block Island Worship Group which was under the care of Westerly Monthly Meeting. They met regularly for Meeting for Worship at each other's homes on the island. They subsequently moved to Wakefield, RI, on the mainland, to take fuller advantage of concerts and other cultural events in New England, and attended Westerly Meeting on a regular basis.

Jane was an active and participatory member. For many years, Jane and Wade hosted members of the Westerly Monthly Meeting for a summer luncheon at their home on Block Island. Jane was a gracious hostess and seemed to truly relish the opportunity to share her beautiful island with Friends.

When reminiscing about Jane, Friends inevitably smile. She was known and loved for her cheerful, positive spirit—even later in life when she dealt with health challenges. She had a genuine interest in others and made one feel that she was truly listening. Jane loved life and had an almost childlike wonder for the beauty and experiences this world has to offer. Alongside her diminutive stature and sweetness, Jane possessed a fierce intellect. Friends remember her genuine curiosity about spiritual matters; she seemed to always want to get to the root of something, in order to better understand.

