



Deborah Ingwersen Dear
June 18, 1934 – January 3, 2026

Debby was an active member of Westerly Monthly Meeting for several decades after moving to nearby Stonington, CT. She passed away at age 91 on Jan 3, 2026. Her intentional and caring spirit lives on in our community. Debby quietly did much for our meeting: tending to housekeeping, reupholstering cushions, and hosting gatherings to welcome new members or to share in deep social justice issues. With an artist's eye she loved spreading gentle beauty and extended her hosting gifts to opening our meetinghouse for Raging Granny rehearsals. She led us to crochet Afghans for Afghans and craft over-the-top hats with wide brims so we could maintain style while singing familiar tunes with pithy humorous and thought-provoking lyrics. Debby helped to "Occupy Wall Street", traveled with the Westerly chapter of the Raging Grannies to several "unconventions" and was delighted when a group of teenagers approached the grannies to get selfies with them!

Debby leaves a legacy of love; wife to Ed for 65 years and attentive mother of 4, grandmother of 8, and great-grandmother of 4. As her seven-year-old great-granddaughter said, "She listened and was the best Grandma ever."

We say that Quaker practice is based in revelation and Debby lived into that experience. An accomplished ceramicist, she was always observing and listening. On joining a pottery studio in New York City, Debby met fellow artists who had experienced the Vietnam War firsthand. She listened deeply to their stories. This experience led her to become an activist in the nuclear freeze movement. She attempted to recruit her church in Old Greenwich, Connecticut to sign on to a petition to ban nuclear weapons. The church refused and, as her son says, "Debby moved on to join The Stamford-Greenwich Friends Meeting." In the course of a protest in Washington D.C., she was arrested and held overnight. Through this process we imagine her calm and exact demeanor.

Her sense of social justice later informed her pottery work, and she began writing inspirational quotes on her pitchers and mugs. She gifted several of her lovely bowls to friends.

So, what was the spiritual well that fed Debby in her peace and justice work? Gunilla Norris (poet and potter) answers it best in her poem/prayer adapted for Debby's memorial service:

May the hands that shaped clay be received now by the deeper hands that shape stars and sparrows alike. May the wheel's long patience carry Debby into a silence that is not empty but listening. May every bowl she made, every cause she stood for, every life she widened, be gathered like fingerprints in the memory of the world. May the love she trusted - quiet, stubborn, unfinished - continue its work through us. And may we who remain learn again what she knew: that the earth is tender, that justice begins in attention, and that peace is something we practice with our whole lives. Amen.

Read and approved, Westerly Monthly Meeting, April 12, 2026
Read and endorsed, Southeast Quarterly Meeting,