

Jerry was a Quaker, diagnosed with terminal cancer in his "midlife." As he was having a conversation with his wife and one of the friends from their spiritual community, he made the statement that he wished he could be present for his memorial service. That was all that needed to be said.

A "pre-memorial" was set in place. His comfortable easy chair was brought to the front of the worship room, and he was assisted to sit, facing the room filled with family and friends. There were so many folks present that there was standing room only, spilling into the corridor. In the tradition of Society of Friends service, those who so chose stood and spoke about their experience with Jerry.

The sharing started, moving from person to person, row to row. Each person shared how Jerry had touched his or her life. He learned how his acts of kindness, that were just a part of who he was, had unknowingly made an enormous impact on others. Everyone in the room was tremendously moved. His father-in-law of over thirty years said he learned things about Jerry that he had never known. I visited Jerry at his home a short time afterwards. He was still glowing, with the knowing of how his life had mattered to so many. He was basking in the love he had received. One friend's act of grace brought this gift to Jerry and brought great meaning for all of us to witness.

