

Minute 4-17-22:01- The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the following memorial minutes for John Stabler.

John Roberts Stabler was born in New Rochelle, New York in 1932 to Norman and Elizabeth Stabler. John was born into a family of many generations of Quakers. Both his maternal grandparents and his parents met each other at George School and spoke using “thee” and “thou” to John. His mother was a devout Quaker who taught him the value of studying hard in school and getting an education, as well as the importance of always trying to think for oneself.

He made a lifelong attempt to follow two adages. One from Horace Mann: “Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity,” and the other from Socrates: “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

As was expected of all four Stabler boys, he got his first job at the age of 14. After struggles in public school following his parents’ divorce, John attended Mount Hermon, a Christian prepschool for boys in Massachusetts. The support and encouragement he received from his teachers helped him greatly during the emotionally turbulent times of his high school years. It was here at Mount Hermon he realized he had the potential to excel academically and learned how to learn.

After high school, John was part of an AFSC work camp in Missouri where he assisted a traveling rural librarian. He attended Johns Hopkins for a year during the Korean War during which time he applied for and received conscientious objector status. He transferred to Antioch College where he thrived on their work/study program and gained insights into the people he met in many varied work situations. He also met his future wife, Joan (Jody) Obrist and earned his undergraduate degree in psychology.

While at Antioch, John was required to write an autobiography as a way to self-understanding. This was a very powerful influence on his life, resulting in his request that all of his students write their autobiographies and John’s writing biographies of many of his family members.

Although gaining CO status, John later felt that he needed the structure of the service as well as feeling guilt that someone else had gone into the service in his place. He volunteered for the Army and spent two years in Texas as an intelligence testing specialist using his psychology training before attending Southern Methodist University for his master’s degree and The University of Texas in Austin for his doctorate. His children, Suzanne and Michael, were born during these years.

John began teaching college-level courses in 1957, as well as doing research at Louisiana State University. In Baton Rouge, John and Jody were founding members of the Baton Rouge Friends Meeting. He was recruited to teach at Georgia State University in 1969. Over his lifetime, he estimated he taught over 8,000 students, won research grants, and headed a committee to increase the racial diversity of both faculty and students at Georgia State. Teaching was his way of making a difference in the lives of others and was something he loved and valued.

While in Atlanta, John and the family attended the Atlanta Friends Meeting for a time, but stopped when their teenage children, Suzanne and Michael, were not happy with the teen group. In 1991 after he retired after nearly 40 years of teaching, John and Jody returned to the Atlanta Meeting. John gave service faithfully as a volunteer to

mow the lawn for many years.

John and Joan made many trips to Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, Malta, Greece, Alaska, China, Thailand, and Bhutan. While traveling, he always made a point of sharing his enjoyment of his travels by sending dozens and dozens of postcards with funny observations to family members back home. One of his greatest pleasures was playing and spending time with his four grandchildren, taking them on vacations and to the many entertainments around Atlanta. Many of them remember the fun of discovering and exploring with Granddad the many fancy hotel restaurants and skyscrapers downtown. John was also blessed with eight great-grandchildren.