

## **Hodgkin, Margaret Rose Woodward 19 February 1937 – 1 May 2020**

### **A Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Margaret Rose Woodward Hodgkin**

Margaret Rose Woodward was born 19 February 1937 to Margaret Gillespie and Gwynne Eric Ernest Harcourt Woodward. The third child and first daughter, Margaret had four brothers, Jack, Alan, Keith and Bill and a sister, Marie, who died at the age of two.

From the age of four, Margaret wanted to be a teacher.

At Highgate Primary School and Perth Girls High School she challenged inequity, sexism and racism.

Margaret found a religious and emotional home at St Margaret's Presbyterian Church in North Perth, largely because of a wise and kind minister there. She taught Sunday school from when she was 12 years old and led youth groups from 15 years old.

Margaret's love of singing led her to the Perth Philharmonic Society, and later to the UWA Choral Society. Singing in choirs remained an interest throughout her life – singing was very much her "happy place", and she did her best to pass on her love of music throughout her life.

A St John's Ambulance Brigade Cadet, a member of the WA Naturalists' Club, a cricketer with the Willow Women's Cricket Club, a leader of a YWCA youth group, and a member of the Student Christian Movement, Margaret led a busy social life through service.

Margaret met Graham Hodgkin at an ASCM Easter Camp in April 1955. They married legally on 28 April 1956 at St Margaret's Presbyterian Church.

Because she married, Margaret had to resign from her teaching course and the young couple began their married lives with a £426 6s 11p debt.

Margaret and Graham moved to Northam for Graham to teach and their first child, Marie, was born 4 November 1956.

In 1957, the family moved to Hobart for Graham to work at Friends School. Margaret did her best to support Graham, but Perth was a long way away and Margaret missed her family. She returned to Perth with Graham following.

Susan was born 23 July 1958, Alan 9 January 1960 and Beth 13 January 1962. The family moved to a house in DalGLISH at the beginning of 1963 and Jonathan was born 28 May.

Margaret, at 26 years of age, had five children. Money was tight and Margaret took on a variety of pyramid sales jobs selling Tupperware, cookware and dinnerware and World Book encyclopaedia. She began a women's craft group which met regularly and formed lifelong friendships across multiple cultures and religious beliefs. At the same time as all of this, she helped her father with a succession of small businesses.

In the middle of this activity, Judi was born 24 May 1968.

In 1970, Margaret returned to Claremont Teachers College to do a one-year course which enabled her to graduate with a degree in primary education. Her lecturers introduced her to 'greats' such as John Holt, Ivan Illich and Paulo Friere and her interest in alternative education was fired.

Margaret joined a group of educators to found the Trinity Remedial Clinic working with children who had specific learning difficulties at Trinity School on Saturdays and in the school holidays. Around her was gathering a group of people interested in alternative education. They met at each other's homes to talk about books they had read and ideas they wanted to investigate.

In her first full time teaching position in 1971, at Weld Square Primary School, Margaret found like-

minded people – Gemma Flynn and Paul Barker. But conflicts with the principal resulted in them all being transferred as a disciplinary measure at the end of 1972.

Margaret heard about the large open space classroom at Loreto Koolyangarra Primary School and, with the support of Sister Margaret Mary, enjoyed two years there.

In 1974 Margaret joined the Music Branch working with four schools in an innovative programme focusing on Orff and Kodaly music methods in the classroom.

Throughout this time, Margaret was still working with the children at Trinity Remedial Clinic. Families begged her to think about starting a school and in 1975, KIDS Open Learning School opened at the YMCA in Parry St, Fremantle, then in St Aiden's Church in Claremont and then into the Fremantle Education Centre.

KIDS School, in all its various forms and locations, was to be Margaret's key work for the majority of the next 40 years. An extension to KIDS School was Margaret's belief that children who were troubled or in trouble would find peace in her family. Somewhere around 60 children lived with the family for periods of 6 months to 7 years, including Jane who became another daughter.

For many years, Margaret and Graham undertook a yearly trek across the desert to Australia Yearly Meeting. Margaret always felt very much at home with Australian Friends. When Yearly Meeting was in Perth, Margaret did a great deal to help its running in a variety of roles.

At the local level, she contributed strongly over many years to children's programming, served as both WARM and Mount Lawley Local Meeting Clerk, and as Mt Lawley Purseholder. She attended both W.A. Council of Churches and their Heads of Churches meetings as a Quaker representative for many years. She supported working bees, contributed generously to Quaker projects, and supported her children in their Quaker life and work.

In 2009, Margaret took leave from KIDS School to be with Graham after he was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia, but returned to the school after his death.

In 2015, KIDS honoured Margaret in a celebration of the school's 40 years and Margaret reluctantly retired.

Margaret was a complex person who wanted to be generous, needed to be loved and inspired others to be their better selves. She was always a person of decided opinions. Margaret fearlessly and often fiercely expressed her beliefs and values, even if those values were in opposition to the outside world, and stuck to what she felt was right.

As a teacher, Margaret was always passionate about education. She always believed in people's inborn ability, desire and need to learn. She would say that you don't need to be in school or to be taught in order to learn.

Margaret Rose Hodgkin died peacefully and quietly in Sir Charles Gardner hospital at about 9:30am on Friday 1 May 2020, surrounded by family in the room and on Zoom.

## **Minute of Record**

WARM has received the Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Margaret Hodgkin prepared by Susan Margaret and Marie Martin. We are grateful to receive this testimony to the Grace of God in the life of our friend. Margaret came into membership of the Society of Friends 9 September, 1956. It is difficult to capture in words the life of our generous F/friend. West Australia Regional Meeting Minutes, 1 November 2022, Minute 01-11/2022.

## **Minute of Record**

Our Friend Margaret Woodward passed away on 1 May. We hold her family in the Light. Margaret's funeral is being held on 12 May from 10.30 to 11.30. F/friends are invited to join by Facebook. We ask the Clerk to circulate details to F/friends. We ask the Membership Secretary to adjust our records.

West Australia Regional Meeting Minutes, 5 May 2020, Minute 9.