

Anne Gardner Remley

September 10, 1930 - November 5, 2025

Anne Gardner Remley, writer and social-justice activist, passed away in Boulder, Colorado, after contending with a degenerative neurological condition for several months. She departed peacefully on a beautiful fall day as the full moon rose in the east.

Anne was born in 1930 in Chicago, where her father was starting his ministerial career in a little Congregational church. The family moved to Midland, Michigan, in 1936 for her father's next pulpit. Home of the Dow Chemical company, Midland also became a showcase for architect Alden Dow (son of the Dow founder), whose modern homes and churches inspired Anne's lifelong interest in architecture, art, and design.

Anne attended the University of Michigan from 1948 to 1955, concentrating on radio and television before earning a master's degree in Speech Communication. Happily, she met a student radio engineer, Fred Remley, who in 1952 became her beloved husband of 66 years. Fred and Anne raised two children: Paul is now a professor of Medieval English at the University of Washington, and Kate earned a PhD in Electrical Engineering from Oregon State University before working as an electronics engineer at NIST in Boulder, now retired after 22 years.

As a "nonworking" 1950s-60s mother, Anne devoted herself to creating a warm environment in the hillside home that she and Fred helped to construct in Ann Arbor. In addition to family activities and gardening, she also developed a lifetime interest in social activism, working for causes like civil rights and low-income housing. One of the first causes she engaged in was with the group People for Alternative Learning Situations



(PALS), championing Ann Arbor public school reform that included programs based on the model of "hands-on learning," which stresses exploratory projects that link history, science, math, and group interaction. Happily, this style of "open" school, K-12, remains popular in Ann Arbor.

After Paul and Kate graduated from high school, Anne worked for nine years as a writer-editor for the Ann Arbor Observer. Her journalistic focus was on education, and she won two School Bell Awards, honoring the best-written articles about education in Michigan. One of her most high-profile articles was about the pivotal 1979 federal court litigation (the "Black English" case) which centered on an Ann Arbor school's failure to accommodate the language needs of its African-American students.

Decades later, Ann Arbor School Superintendent Richard Benjamin, a supporter of open education, telephoned her to tell her how much he admired her work, calling it the best-written journalism he had ever read on education in Michigan. Anne cherished her involvement in educational reform, remarking that it brought her great joy to know that the impact it had on children would continue to resound into the future.

Anne's next step involved a focus on state-of-the-art support for people with Alzheimer's, like her widowed mother who entered a local Ann Arbor facility that was pioneering "family-style" care. In this model of care, the focus is on living in the

moment, which provides a calm, supportive atmosphere that reduces the uncertainty and stress of losing one's full cognitive ability. The facility supported research in the area of dementia care, leading to several enduring innovations.

Starting in the 1990s, Anne's focus on social justice expanded during her association with the Ann Arbor Quakers, where she worked for an end to mass incarceration and (after meeting several people from the region in 2001) for Palestinian human rights. After Fred's death in 2019, she moved from Ann Arbor to Boulder to be near her daughter Kate.

After a short period of loneliness in this brand-new community, she soon connected with new activist circles and dove into work to support pro-peace, pro-Palestinian human-rights causes, among other social-justice causes. She could frequently be seen on Saturdays at the corner of Broadway and Canyon demonstrating in support of Palestinian human rights. In 2023, she helped to start the Quakers' Intermountain Yearly Meeting's monthly Peace and Social Justice Roundtable meetings on Zoom that include nineteen Quaker groups across the mountain states.

Anne's vision was for a society that cares for the needs of all residents with subsidized healthcare, housing, and education for all. She felt that people in the US are suffering because their needs are not taken seriously by their country. Her worldview is sometimes called Democratic Socialism -- a term embraced by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

-- quite distinct from the "communism" it is so often derided as in public forums. Anne was very concerned about the evidently unchecked US military support for Israel and campaigned for years for peace. She passionately supported community police reform, such as the establishment of trauma teams comprised of social workers and medical personnel to aid people in distress--an alternative to bringing in the police as a first-line response to mental health emergencies.

Anne's other passions in life included family camping trips by Lake Michigan, swimming, theater, concert-going, and international travel with her late husband, Fred, whose career in television engineering included committees that negotiated standards to enable audio and video sharing worldwide. Anne's favorite words sum up her personality and her values: *Discovery*; *Exploration*; *Evolution* (she often said, "We are all part of the evolution of the universe"); *Social Justice*; and her favorite word to mark the end of an interaction: *Onward!* Anne's deepest wish was that we should all continue moving onward to make the world a more just and caring place.

Anne is survived by son Paul and daughter-in-law Fiona Robertson Remley of Everett, Washington, and daughter Kate and son-in-law Dylan Williams of Boulder, Colorado. Numerous Quaker Friends and activist colleagues are Anne's extended family, continuing to support her major causes and, in a very real way, extending Anne's work even in her absence. A memorial service is planned at the Boulder Friends Meeting House on December 13, at 10 AM.