

Raoul Kulberg
4 December 1930-2 January 2011

Raoul Kulberg was born in Cleveland, Ohio and travelled widely with his parents in his youth. He earned his BA in International Relations from Pomona College in 1952, later studied at Haverford College (1952-53), and finally took MAs in political science from The George Washington University and in political science from the former Federal City College (now UDC). His specialty was East Asian studies. During these years he held positions with the Veterans Administration, the International Cooperation Administration (now USAID), and the Department of State.

Although he served in the ROTC in college, he also came in these years to know the AFSC, and in time declared himself a pacifist. Moving to Washington in 1953, Raoul attended various churches here but found that Friends worship “offers the most help . . . in my own endeavor to search for the truth” (as he stated in his letter of application). He soon became active in the Young Adult Friends, the AFSC, and various conferences and projects related to peace and social justice concerns. He was approved for membership in June 1961.

In 1962 Raoul married Evangeline “Eve Anne” Johnson Brown at a ceremony at the Washington Ethical Society. They had known each other for about ten years, and besides two step-children by Eve Anne’s earlier marriage the couple produced three together. A birthright Friend, Eve Anne and two children were approved as full members of FMW in January 1981. Raoul was a devoted family man throughout his life.

Following his marriage Raoul worked as a librarian at The George Washington University and University of the District of Columbia. He was an active member of the Friends Meeting until at least 1990, serving on many committees and working in opposition to the Vietnam War. He wrote regularly on such issues as DC statehood and censorship, and volunteered with the Smithsonian Institution, AARP, the Ethical Society, and the Council for Humanist and Ethical Concerns.

He and Eve Anne travelled regularly and always took the greetings of this Meeting to our sister meetings in other states and countries. His other great avocation was film; a New York Times article of 1986 declared him “a storehouse of arcane facts on Washington films.”

Raoul attended meeting little in his last years, but older Friends remember him fondly. The Washington Post described him in 1998 as “a large, round retiree with a Santa Claus-like beard,” but more to the point a Meeting member recalled him after his death in this way: “He was a calm and gentle presence in a time much in need of those virtues.”

Hayden Wetzel
January 2014