

*A Gathering of Friends to Celebrate
the Gift of Irene Elizabeth McHenry*

Circle of Love

1946



2026

Irene Elizabeth McHenry

*Friday, May 1, 2026
Historic Arch Street Meeting House
320 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106*



*Like a still flame in the hush of dawn,
your light revealed a quiet peace,
not outside, but deep within us, waiting to be seen.
You helped us recognize the calm
we never knew we held.*

Order of Service

Gathering Music

"For the Beauty of the Earth" by John Rutter

Welcome in Memory of Irene from Randy Granger

Michael M. Koehler reading from:

"Twelve Moons of the Year" by Hal Borland

Beulah Trey leading sing-a-long (*please stand & join in*):

"What a Wonderful World"

Written by Bob Thiele & George David Weiss

John McHenry reading (*please stand & join in*):

Psalm 23 - Irene's Adaptation

Open Sharing of Memories

Opening and closing by Ginny Christensen

Gordon Granger reading:

"Forsythia" by Ada Limón

Willa Granger leading the reading (*please stand & join in*):

Mourner's Kaddish - Adapted by poet Marge Piercy

Closing Music

"Look at the World" by John Rutter

"What a Wonderful World"

Written by Bob Thiele & George David Weiss

I see trees of green, red roses too.
I see them bloom for me and you.
And I think to myself: What a wonderful world.

I see skies of blue and clouds of white.
The bright blessed days, the dark sacred night.
And I think to myself: What a wonderful world.

[Bridge] The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky
Are also on the faces of people going by.
I see friends shaking hands, saying, "How do you do?"
They're really saying, "I love you."

I hear babies cry; I watch them grow.
They'll learn much more than I'll ever know.
And I think to myself: What a wonderful world.

Yes, I think to myself: What a wonderful world. Oh, yeah!

Irene McHenry – A Circle of Love

Irene Elizabeth McHenry was born January 24, 1946, and raised in York County, Pennsylvania. She was the daughter of Ira McHenry and Lois (Fine) McHenry, both of Benton, Pennsylvania. Irene passed away peacefully at home on March 11, 2026, after a year-long battle with liver cancer.

Throughout Irene's entire life, she loved to visit Benton on weekends and to summer in that region of central Pennsylvania where her parents were born and her extended family members had lived over the past three centuries. From her earliest and frequent visits back to Benton, with its well-kept farms, stunning hemlock stands, springtime creeks freighted with fish, and winter valleys covered in mounds of crystal perfection, Irene evolved a deeply personal and spiritual sense of "the beauty in the world." That sense would later manifest itself as a distinct throughline in Irene's world view, especially in her lifelong achievement and innovation in education. Irene believed to her core that looking for the beauty in all things can make possible the impossible, thereby revealing the beauty and embracing diversity in the world.

After college, Irene moved to Columbia County and later to Philadelphia, where she built a life rooted in family and community while raising her son, Michael Koehler. After her marriage to Randy Granger, her family expanded to include his three children, Fletcher, Gordon, and Willa. She delighted in having Michael and his family living only 1.2 miles away and her best friend of forty years, Beulah Trey and her family, within just a few blocks. She welcomed all into the Mt. Airy community that she loved for over four decades.

Irene earned a B.A. from Susquehanna University, an M.A. from Bucknell University, and a Ph.D. from Fielding Graduate University. Under Irene's pioneering leadership as Executive Director of the Friends Council on Education from 2001-2014, the Friends network of schools increased in vitality and interconnectedness as a national and international educational community. Irene's core belief from her youth to seek "the beauty in the world" helped to inform her vision in creating legacy programs such as the Leadership Institute in Friends Schools, the SPARC (Spirited Practice and Renewed Courage) program, and numerous peer networks. For ten years after her retirement, Irene remained connected with the Friends Council through mentorship, leadership, and consulting activities. She loved above all leading the Quaker Pilgrimage to the Lake District in England and carried on making that joyous journey seven times, for the last time in 2024.

Prior to her service at Friends Council, Irene was the founding head of Delaware Valley Friends School, co-founder of Greenwood Friends School, and a founding faculty member of Fielding Graduate

University's doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Change. Irene co-authored multiple books, including *Readings on Quaker Pedagogy* (2004); *A Governance Handbook for Friends Schools* (2010); *Tuning In: Mindfulness in Teaching and Learning* (2010); *The Autism Playbook for Teens: Imagination-Based Mindfulness Activities to Calm Yourself, Build Independence, and Connect with Others* (2014); and *Leading in the Light: Celebrating 325 Years of Quaker Education in America* (2014). In addition, she regularly contributed to educational and psychological publications. Irene served on the boards of Haverford College, the Systems-Centered Training & Research Institute, the Council for American Private Education, the Mindfulness in Education Network, and Vector Group Consulting.

Irene lived a deeply spiritual life and integrated many different faith traditions into her religious practices. Meditation practice guided Irene's daily life, as did Quakerism and her love of nature (first learned from her father). In recent years, Irene converted to Judaism. At the time of her death, she remained an active participant in Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting and a member of her beloved Germantown Jewish Center.

Irene lived a full life, placing professional accomplishment and relational integrity equally together on the very top shelf of her values. What made Irene's life so special to so many was the high value she placed on learning from anyone and everyone. She especially cherished her time with children (and adults who possessed a childlike playfulness). She found immense joy in the close relationships she shared with her grandchildren, Stella and Charles Koehler, treasuring the time they spent together in her Mt. Airy home. She was deeply grateful that they lived nearby, allowing for frequent visits, spontaneous everyday moments, and the beloved tradition of "Grandma Reenie Camp," which brought her great happiness and lasting memories for all.

Irene loved returning to Benton to visit her extended family whenever she could and welcoming her children back home at any opportunity for a visit. Irene never went to Benton without challenging her 98-year-old Aunt Jesse in a game (or three) of Scrabble. Irene discovered the importance of community within her family during her youth, and sharing this lesson became one of her most cherished Gifts to everyone who knew her.

Irene is survived by her loving husband, Randy Granger; her brother, John McHenry; her son, Michael Koehler and his wife, Lauren McGuire, their children, Stella and Charles Koehler; and her stepchildren, Willa Granger and her fiancé, Zak Gordon; Gordon Granger and his wife, Kristi Wood; Fletcher Granger and his wife, Lauren Granger, their son, Brayden Granger; and her beloved "Royal" corgi, Bryn.

Mourner's Kaddish - Adapted by poet Marge Piercy

Look around us, search above us, below, behind.

We stand in a great web of being joined together.

Let us praise, let us love the life we are lent
passing through us in the body of Israel
and our own bodies,

Let us say *amen*.

Time flows through us like water.

The past and the dead speak through us.

We breathe our children's children, blessing.

Blessed is the earth from which we grow,

blessed the life we are lent,

blessed the ones who teach us,

blessed the ones we teach,

blessed is the word that cannot say the glory
that shines through us and remains to shine
flowing past distant suns on the way to forever.

Let us say *amen*.

Blessed is the light, blessed is the darkness

but blessed above all else is peace

which bears the fruits of knowledge

on strong branches, let's say amen.

Peace that bears joy into the world,

peace that enables love, peace over Israel and

everywhere, blessed and holy is peace,

Let us say *amen*.

Psalm 23 - Irene's Adaptation

The Divine Mystery shepherds me through life.

I notice that I always have more than enough.

I am offered a resting place in everlasting love.

The Mystery provides an oasis of peace near still waters,

Restoring my soul and reviving my spirit.

The Mystery opens before me the right path

and leads me along,

so that I can sing to the Source of Creation.

Even when the path takes me through

the valley of the shadow of death,

the valley of deepest darkness and despair,

I will not give into fear

I will seek the path of light.

The Divine Mystery is my strength and my peace.

The comfort of unconditional love takes away my fear.

I'll never be lonely, for love is always near.

Even when darkness surrounds me

I am anointed with the sacred breath of life

my cup overflows with love.

Only goodness and love pursue me all the days of my life.

Then, when my life is through,

My soul will return to the Infinite Mystery to shine in the forever.

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“**FORSYTHIA** by Ada Limón. Limón is the 24th - and current - poet laureate of the United States. She is also the first Latinx woman to hold this position.

At the cabin in Snug Hollow near McSwain Branch creek, just spring, all the animals are out, and my beloved and I are lying in bed in a soft silence. We are talking about how we carry so many people with us wherever we go, how even simple living, these unearned moments, are a tribute to the dead. We are both expecting to hear an owl as the night deepens. All afternoon, from the porch, we watched an Eastern towhee furiously build her nest in the untamed forsythia with its yellow spilling out into the horizon. I told him that the way I remember the name forsythia is that when my stepmother, Cynthia, was dying, that last week, she said lucidly, but mysteriously, More yellow. And I thought yes, more yellow and nodded because I agreed. Of course, more yellow. And so now in my head, when I see that yellow tangle, I say, For Cynthia, for Cynthia, forsythia, forsythia, more yellow. It is night now. And the owl never comes, only more of night and what repeats in the night.”

Friends may make
donations in Irene's memory
to the funds in her name at:



**Delaware Valley
Friends School**



**Greenwood
Friends School**



**Friends Council
on Education**