

Mateo Hansen Memorial Minute

Mateo Hansen died March 15, 2026, in his home in Bellingham, WA. He was born March 15, 1948 in Everett. Mateo grew up part of a large family in Skagit County, Washington, and the family experienced extreme financial hardship. He devoted much of his professional life as therapist to helping children; his specialty was attachment-trauma focused therapy.

Mateo had a steady and open presence. He strove to be a Friend to all and often demonstrated how to walk in the Light through his interactions with others, through his writing, and with how he identified himself. His life was a testament to integrity, humor, and warmth.

Mateo's life partner was Judy Hill. Around 1990, before his transition to male, his and Judy's relationship was taken under the care of University Friends Meeting in Seattle. This was before University Friends recognized same-sex marriages. When a heterosexual couple who were preparing to marry said that they did not want to be married if Mateo and Judy could not, Judy answered that she would not want anyone to not be able to marry just because she and Mateo (then Mary) could not. Mateo, supporting his partner, often proudly told that story.

When Judy developed Parkinson's disease, Mateo tenderly cared for her at home for nine years, until he could no longer effectively do so. After she moved to a memory care facility in Bellingham, he visited her daily for the rest of her life.

Mateo was at the heart of Bellingham Friends Meeting (BFM) during the last decade of his life. He devotedly attended Meetings for Worship and served faithfully on Bellingham Friends' Worship & Ministry and Pastoral Care committees over many years. Mateo also served the wider Quaker community by sitting on the board of *Western Friend* and by being BFM's representative to North Pacific Yearly Meeting.

The transgender community was close to Mateo's heart. His passion for helping and counseling young people was evident when he was co-leader of a trans issues workshop at NPYM Annual Session. His knowledge and experience helping people and the wisdom he shared were cornerstones of the presentation. He supported the Southern Poverty Law Center, which fights hatred and intolerance in America, and his name sits on their Wall of Tolerance.

Mateo always loved animals, and his fur family over the years included several adored cats. After an accident in middle age, Mateo became legally blind, and Batik, his guide dog, was his constant companion. He loved to bring Batik to meeting for worship and remove her harness, so she could circulate around the room, visiting all her friends before or after worship. Batik cared for Mateo until she became too old to work; then she was adopted by another member of Bellingham Friends Meeting. Mateo visited with her regularly to the end of her life.

Mateo is remembered as a storyteller, poet, and novelist. He wrote two children's books under the name of Mary Hansen: *A Journey Out of Season* and *O' Little Town of Bellingham*. Mateo loved to laugh, and he loved *The Hobbit*. Regularly, he would add to the Pastoral Care Committee agenda that we needed more opportunities to laugh and have fun. One year he celebrated his birthday with a hobbit party, at which he gave gifts to all the attenders.

Mateo's children are Dawn, of Scotland; Scott (daughter-in-law Alexis), of Washington; and Laura (son-in-law Marcelo) of Oregon. His grandchildren are Sage, Ray, Ezekiel, and Theodore. Judy's children and Mateo's stepchildren are Dan and Kat. Their grandchildren on Judy's side of the family include Ana, Alexis, Nicole, Ray, Daniel, and Evan. As foster parents for many years, Mateo and Judy extended their love to many children.