

JOHN GASBEEK ELMENDORF
9-9-1916 to 2-10-1980

On second month tenth, 1980, the Friends Meeting of Washington lost, by his sudden death, the opportunity to know better this ebullient man, with his wit, learning and spiritual commitment.

John Elmendorf's Friendly activities were woven through his distinguished professional life. They were as various as Deputy Commissioner for Europe for the American Friends Service Committee in 1946, establishment of the Sarasota, Florida Monthly Meeting, to his last service as usher at a material service at 2111 Florida Avenue a week before his death.

Educated in comparative linguistics and Romance philology at the University of North Carolina, John Elmendorf first used his fluency in a number of languages in Mexico City where he became Dean of the Faculty and Vice President of Mexico City College. He became Vice President of Brown University and then President of New College, Sarasota, Florida. In each place he and his wife Mary Lindsay were valued supporters of the local Friends Meetings. His interests broadened steadily from the narrowly academic to the world-oriented concerns which motivated his activities following his work at New College.

Instead of retiring after a massive heart attack, John Elmendorf chose to use his talents to further education as a means to improve communication and understanding among all the world's peoples. He worked in external degree programs in the Caribbean area, and as Senior Program Officer and Director of Middle East Programs for the Academy for Educational Development in Washington, D.C.

These latter activities took him to Nicaragua, Saudi Arabia, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Egypt, Algeria, Venezuela, Sri Lanka and elsewhere.

Throughout his life John Elmendorf kept his sense of proportion and his sense of humor. An incorrigible limerick perpetrator, he joked about publishing his Awork. @ One of them says:

It's just that a sma11 bit of levity
Can remove the preponderance of gravity
Which tends to prolong
The redress of wrong
And to lessen the chances of brevity.

John Elmendorf's survivors include his wife Mary Lindsay, a daughter Susan Elmendorf Roberts, a son Lindsay, and five grandchildren.