

ELLIS TILTON WILLIAMS
1-14-1908 to 9-8-1983

The Friends Meeting of Washington, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting and the Society of Friends at large have lost a devoted and valued member with the death of Ellis Tilton Williams on September 8, 1983. We are very grateful for his many and varied services within the Monthly and Yearly Meetings and with many other Friends institutions, including Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, Sidwell Friends School, Haverford College and Earlham School of Religion.

Born near Philadelphia on January 14, 1908, Ellis Williams graduated from William Penn Charter School, Yale College and the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration. For some twenty years, he was associated with the Insurance Company of North America. In 1950, he joined the U.S. Forest Service as a specialist in forest insurance, taxation and credit. He was the author or coauthor of some 50 publications in this field.

During World War II, he was drafted as a conscientious objector and was enrolled in the Civilian Public Service, assigned to forestry projects. He was also a volunteer in a semi-starvation experiment testing life-raft rations for use at sea. After the war, he was for a time Acting Executive Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee's Southern California Regional Office.

Ellis Williams came to Washington in 1951, where he became active in the Friends Meeting of Washington, serving capably in many ways, including the Overseers, Trustees, and Nominating Committees and, 1961-65, as Clerk of the Meeting. When the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings merged, he became the first Presiding Clerk of the consolidated Yearly Meeting, 1968-72; and was active in many other capacities, including the ad hoc committee on queries for the consolidated Yearly Meeting, the Representative Meeting, and representative on committees and boards of Friends General Conference and Friends United Meeting.

Ellis Williams had a lively interest in Friends education. For 15 years, he was a valued member of the Trustees of Sidwell Friends School, serving as Board Chairman from 1967 to 1972. He was also a member of the Advisory Board, Earlham School of Religion, and of the Corporation of Haverford College.

Ellis Williams was active in making contacts and in bridge building within Baltimore Yearly Meeting and between the several branches of Friends, as well as between other religious groups. He served as a Director of the Council of Churches of Greater Washington and was a member of the Assembly of Interfaith Conference, which includes Muslims, Jews, Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants.

Ellis Williams' contributions to the meetings for worship were thoughtful and pithy, inviting meditation. He loved his family, showing quiet satisfaction in their activities and development. He had an active, and gentle sense of humor. Many have spoken lovingly of Ellis' contributions to their individual lives and personal spiritual growth. Most of all, with respect to Friends organizations, he had remarkable qualities of leadership, marked by careful preparation, a

friendly conciliation, sound judgment, and a good-natured, sage and persistent seeking of a true and vital consensus so that the group could go forward in unity.

Ellis' quiet, discerning, and nurturing presence will be missed in many circles.