

**ERIC FREDRICK MENKE**  
**2-11-1901 to 8--23-1979**

Eric Fredrick Menke was born on February 11, 1901 in Mannheim, Germany, the son of Cacilia Foldner and Constantin Menke. His early schooling was in Berlin and Frankfurt. As a child, his ambition was to be an architect, and at the age of 8 he constructed a complete village from graph paper, with a church, town hall, houses, etc. around the village square. His other early interests were gardening and collecting rock specimens, which were combined in the construction of a rock garden at the family home.

Faced with the problem of unemployment and the uncertain future of Germany after World War I, he accepted an uncle's offer of a job in the United States.

He still had dreams of becoming an architect and so entered the School of Architecture at Yale University, graduating in the late 1920s. He later took courses in City Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

His professional career included service with the Philadelphia firm of Price and Walton the District of Columbia, Federal Government, and the Army Corps of Engineers. He was on the architectural staff when Municipal Center's building was originally planned in the 1930s and was responsible for the development of the staircase park and plaza at the Center. The project begun last year to complete the sculpture at the base of the plaza steps leading to the Superior Court was the fulfillment of a long-felt wish and an indication that a portion of the original grand design could be salvaged.

His association with the Friends Meeting of Washington began in 1930 when he was the supervising architect overseeing the construction of the new building at 2111 Florida Avenue, N.W. Soon after its completion, he became a member of the Meeting, a status maintained continuously until his death on August 23, 1979. He served on the International Student House Committee and also as an usher. He was an active member of the Seniors' Center at Quaker House.

From an early age Eric was an admirer of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and was a founding member of the American Goethe Society of the District of Columbia. He collected books and objects connected with the poet which became part of the 5000 books and 2000 engravings, prints, drawings, paintings, photographs, lithographs, manuscripts, etc. which he presented to the Georgetown University Library, where they will go on exhibition.

He was also a member of the Committee of One Hundred, the Joint Committee on Landmarks, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Institute of Architects and was an alternate member of the National Planning Commission for the U.S. Army's Chief of Engineers.

He helped bring about a revival of Liturgical typography at the St. Alban's School Press. He also was one of the first members of the National Peace Academy and an ardent supporter during his last years. He sponsored an essay contest on "My Thoughts on the National Peace Academy" at Duval Senior High School in Lanham, Maryland, in which over 100 students participated. The

winner was given a membership in the Academy.

Through lusty song Yale men proclaim their allegiance to "God, Country and Yale." As late as one year ago, he recalled an incident which occurred in his freshman year and involved help extended to one younger and less fortunate. The gratifying reward of a kind act is a beautiful Christmas story, written and published in a booklet form titled "At Yale Long Ago."

Eric never married. He was greatly helped in his final days by the presence of his devoted sister, Herta Menke, who came from Germany and sustained her brother to the end.

Our memories of him are of a man of peace and integrity of character. His sometimes irascible manner masked a warm and loving heart.

In a hospital room, alone and facing the end, his faith and courage were demonstrated as he wrote the following lines:

"Night Thoughts"  
When you are all alone at last  
And God gives you his hand  
Don't be afraid and hesitate  
To look the distant land.  
The love that now embraces you  
Helps you to look ahead.  
You know what He has promised us.  
He is the wine and bread.  
The love of friends will go along  
Without regard to age.  
Your life goes on and it records  
A new and better page.