

MARIA CLAUSS

1956 - 2011

Memorial Minute for Maria Bianca Clauss

2012.3.4 Maria Clauss was a teacher, mother and dreamer with an incredible gift for early childhood education. She brought her own inner child to bear on the nurturing of her family, her

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students and her life in the meeting community and taught us all “not to be afraid to love fearlessly and dream big”.

Born in Dover England on July 11, 1956 to John and Margaret Careccio, Maria grew up in places as diverse as Uganda, California, and boarding school in North Carolina, but she always considered Oneonta, NY her childhood home. A graduate of Prescott College in Arizona she moved to Austin in 1983. A faithful attender of the Friends Meeting of Austin for many years, she died peacefully at home surrounded by friends and family on August 19, 2011, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Maria’s life revolved around children, her own and the world’s. Her passion for the Montessori Method of education led her to involvement as a teacher and director of several schools in Austin, and to the founding of Primavera Montessori School and Shady Grove Community School. She worked tirelessly with the monthly, quarterly and yearly meeting’s children in First Day School and on outings, service opportunities and educational projects. If you were teaching with Maria, you weren’t always sure what would take place but it always worked out to be fun and to the benefit of all.

Maria was a walking library of songs and stories, which she shared with young and old alike. She loved adventure and taught there was nothing you couldn’t do if you honestly wanted to. That got her into trouble at times, such as driving through high water to get her children home from music lessons. No one was hurt but there were some tense moments.

Maria never lost her ability to be in the moment. For her, Spirit was not about theology but about experience. She had a deep calmness that enabled her to look into your face and settle you in the Spirit, whether you were a small, restless child or an agitated elder. She was both the child who never grew up and the fierce mama who had the power to keep you safe.

We miss her welcoming spirit but the legacy of her love has made our meeting richer. Through her long illness she’d be upset that weakness and pain prevented her from doing more and being happier but she would want you to know her emotions, what was going on in her life. She would minister often about the little things that mean so much in life—a moment in nature, a warm hug from her daughter. She brought peace and joy to so many even as she went gently “into that good night”.

Maria is survived by her husband David, daughter Rachel Elizabeth and son Jonathan Jefferson Clauss, all of whom are dear to our community. Her mother, Margaret Careccio died the evening of her memorial meeting for worship, September 18, 2011. She also is survived by her brother, Keir Careccio and countless dear friends.

**In Memoriam
Maria Clauss**



Celebration of Life, September 18, 2011

Welcome

We are pleased that you have been able to join us today for Meeting for Worship. Quakers refer to their times of worship simply as Meetings. Today we are here for a special Meeting for Worship in Memorial Celebration of our friend Maria Clauss. In such a Memorial Celebration we gather, in the presence of God and one another, to remember and honor Maria.

Quakers worship in and through silence. We gather together in silence, in which we listen within ourselves for the voice of God, to nudge us. And perhaps give us a few words to share with others. That is what we will be doing today. We will sink down into silent worship and share with one another and joyfully celebrate the life of Maria Bianca Clauss.

So what messages will we probably offer one another today? Let us remember that all of us live as part of a great tapestry of life. So, it seems right that today we celebrate Maria's life, to gain a fuller understanding of the fabric of her life by inviting all of you, in our own personal ways, to share stories, memories, songs, and prayers. Remembering is an act of bringing about a wholeness, a fullness. When we re-live and relate memories of those we love, we gain a greater understanding of who they truly were.

We will begin with a few moments of quiet so that we can all reach down toward that of God within us and see what message, memory, story, song or prayer we might want to share. If you feel so led, you are invited to stand and introduce yourself and share. And as we proceed, let us enjoy a few moments of silence between messages so that we can ponder and take into ourselves what has been said.

After an hour or so, when it seems that everyone who wishes has had a chance to share, a designated Friend will end our Memorial Meeting by turning to a neighbor to shake hands, and all of you are then invited to do likewise – greet your neighbors.

Maria Bianca Clauss

July 11, 1956 – August 19, 2011

Born in Dover England to John and Margaret Careccio, Maria Bianca Clauss grew up in places as diverse as Uganda, California and boarding school in North Carolina, but she always considered Oneonta, NY her childhood home. After graduating from college in Prescott, Arizona, she came to Austin in 1983. With a passion and incredible gift for early childhood education and the Montessori Method, Maria taught and directed at a number of local schools and founded Primavera Montessori School and Shady Grove Community School.

She is survived by her husband David, children Elizabeth and Jonathan, her brother Keir Careccio, her mother Margaret Careccio and many, many dear friends.

And the Seasons, they go round and round;

And the painted ponies go up and down;

We're captives on the carousel of time.

We can't return we can only look behind from where we came

And go round and round and round in the circle game.

- Joni Mitchell