

OTTO JÜRGEN HOFMANN
1918 - 2001

MINUTE 6.01.2
Otto Hofmann

The Friends Meeting of Austin wishes to minute the loss of our dear Friend, Otto Hofmann, who died on Saturday, May 12, 2001 with his family by his side. His former wife and good friend, Margaret Hofmann, and his children, Stephen Hofmann, Heidi Veselka, Barbara Yerby, and Anna Powell, are members of our Meeting. Otto and his family began attending our Meeting in 1953 and were among its first members. Otto blessed us with warmth, his breadth and depth of interests, and his wonderful stories. He built sandboxes for the Meeting's children, cabinets that would fit in the kitchen of the Meeting House on Washington Square, kept us supplied with pianos, and let us know when they were no longer worth tuning. He played piano for our singing meeting, and there are so many songs that we will never again hear without thinking of him. We were all enlivened by Otto's zest for life, and we were all amazed at what he had done and what he could do.

Otto was born on a farm in Kyle, Texas, on December 9, 1918, the youngest of ten children of a German pioneer family. He attended the University of Texas at Austin and received a liberal arts degree in the Plan II program and a master's degree in choral conducting. He was a conscientious objector during World War II, performing alternative service.

Otto followed his varied interests to the complex science of building pipe organs. He rebuilt the pipe organ for St. Mary's Cathedral, as well as building pipe organs for St. Stephen's Episcopal School, the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and others in Austin, throughout Texas, and beyond. He became one of the leading American authorities on pipe organs and was elected President of the International Society of Organ Builders. He was awarded the Industrial Arts Medal by the American Institute of Architects. He was a signatory of the charter of the Texas Conference of Churches and at one time a member of the Corporation Board of the American Friends Service Committee. He also served as Clerk of the Friends Meeting of Austin and of South Central Yearly Meeting.

Otto is survived by his sister Dorthea Hill; his former wife, Margaret Hoffman; his children, Helena, Pamela, Franz, Barbara, Anna, Heidi, and Stephen; his sixteen grandchildren; and his two great-grandchildren. Otto was buried in a plain pine box in Live Oak Cemetery in Umland, Texas.

Please, note in your calendar:

Sunday, October 21, at 3 p.m., a Memorial Organ Concert for Otto Hofmann will be presented at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 3501 Red River. Mr. David Heller, organist at Trinity University in San Antonio, will play. The St. David's Compline Choir and the congregation will sing German chorales and some of Otto's favorite hymns. There will be a reception following the concert.

The concert is free and open to the public. We hope that many members and attenders from the Meeting will come to hear this concert honoring Otto.

For Friendly Notes, Sept. 2001

304 A Song of Peace

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Words: Lloyd Stone, 1932, © Lorenz Publishing Co.

Music: Jean Sibelius, 1899, © Breitkopf und Härtel

1. This is my song, O God of all the na-tions, A song of
2. My coun-try's skies are blu-er than the o-cean, And sun-light

peace, for lands a - far and mine; This is my home, the
beams on clo-ver leaf and pine, But oth-er lands have

coun-try where my heart is, Here are my hopes, my
sun-light too, and clo-ver, And skies are ev - ery

dreams, my ho - ly shrine; But oth-er hearts in oth-er lands are
where as blue as mine. O hear my song, thou God of all the

beat-ing With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.
na-tions, A song of peace for their land and for mine.

verse 3 -- for Otto

We Austin Friends
hold a dear one among us

His words are gems
of stories shaped by time

Oh, weighty Friend,
you are a source of wisdom,

a steadfast presence,
spark of the divine

We celebrate
your glorious age of eighty

and wish you love,
and more love for all time.