



Elizabeth “Betty” Brown

January 3, 1927 - January 12, 2024

Resident of Kensington

Elizabeth “Betty” Brown, died peacefully in her home on Friday, January 12, 2024. She was 97 years old. Betty was born on Jan. 3, 1927, to her parents Kate and Henry Blake on the family homestead in Firesteel, South Dakota, land that Betty would later in life recognize as stolen from the Cheyenne River Sioux.

The family left South Dakota during the dust bowl era and relocated to Oregon, then moved to Richmond, California to find work in the shipyards during World War II. Betty attended Richmond High School where she began her lifelong activism for peace, and social and environmental justice. Throughout her life, she carried on the humanist traditions of her parents, who were founding members of the Richmond NAACP.

Betty met her husband Wallace Donald Brown while attending Richmond High. They would marry upon his return from WWII. Betty graduated from the University of California, San Francisco with a degree in nursing, which was followed by a year-long course of study in public health at the University of California, Berkeley.

Betty worked as a school nurse for the Richmond Unified School District (West Contra Costa County Unified School District) for 30 years, identifying children with special needs and referring them to specialists who could help them achieve success as school students.

Wally and Betty had two children and enjoyed the out-of-doors in a variety of forms including building cabins, hiking, backpacking, camping, and traveling throughout the western U.S.

Following the Wally's death in 1972, Betty redoubled her devotion to a variety of progressive causes including peace through diplomacy and the intertwined causes of environmental and social justice. She continued as the co-Chairperson of East Bay Peace Action through 2023, living out her desire to remain an activist all her life. She was also a passionate advocate for health care for all people.

Betty is survived by daughters Janice Brown-Silveira and her husband Mitchell of Reno, NV; Paula Brown-Williams, and her husband Theodore Williams of Bishop, CA; grandchildren Erin and Nathan Brown-Silveira of Reno, NV; nephew Robert Whitney of San Jose; and numerous cousins and their children and grand- children.

A celebration of Betty's life will be held later in the year. In lieu of flowers, those who would like to remember her may make contributions to Peace Action, Healthcare for All, or the Sierra Club or simply speak out for a more just and peaceful world.