

Nancy Pocock

1910 - 1998

Nancy Pocock was born in Toronto, the daughter of a theology professor at the University of Toronto. She followed her early leanings to become an artist. After graduating in design from the Ontario College of Art in 1930 and a year of study in Paris, Nancy opened her own jewelry studio in Toronto's Gerrard Street Village. For 40 years she fashioned original jewelry, first alone, then in collaboration with her husband Jack Pocock, winning national and international recognition. But her early sensitivity to human distress led her to active involvement in the social issues of the times. When Canadian



Friends created the Grindstone Island Peace Centre, Nancy and Jack became Resident Friends for a series of its annual educational events. They included annual training institutes in non-violence, conferences for diplomats and seminars for journalists, young people, teachers and university faculty concerned with conflict and international understanding.

Nancy's social conscience led her in the 1960 and 1970s, first

to involvement with the Voice of Women, then in sending medical aid to all three sides fighting in the Vietnam War. She supported the International Committee to stop the detention, torture and death of political prisoners in Vietnam. She visited North Vietnam in 1973 and returned to that country four times after the war. A Vietnamese Medical Clinic bears her name and in 1987 she was given the Medal of Friendship, the highest honour received by a foreigner in Vietnam.

From 1983 on, her concerns centred on refugees. She pleaded ceaselessly with officials on behalf of those seeking asylum in Canada. Her home became an office and information centre for them, and a place to meet others.

She became “Mama Nancy” to countless refugees from many lands and to their families for whom her presence meant understanding and hope. She was awarded the Pearson Peace Medal in 1987.

Nancy's witness for peace and justice was not restricted to conflicts outside Canadian borders. Through their involvement in nonviolence training Nancy and husband Jack were drawn into gaining an understanding of the grievances of Ontario's First Nations. So when the Canadian Friends Service Committee formed a Native Concerns Committee, Nancy became its Clerk.