Noel Edwin Harris was a sweet man. A kind man. An honorable man. He was a devoted husband, a supportive father, a steadfast friend, an engaged citizen, and a lifelong activist for human rights, justice, and peace.

Noel was born on December 6, 1918, in Inglenook, California, a tiny community north of Fort Bragg. He was the fifth and youngest child of Thomas Jefferson and Edith Mayzel (Wood) Harris. His siblings were Kathryn Laura (Hadley), John Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson, and James Henry, all of whom predeceased him. Noel was a third generation Californian through his maternal grandmother. His mother's parents, James Ervin and Laura Webb Wood, were early settlers near Garberville in southern Humboldt County. They had eighteen children, and Noel had more 60 first cousins. He and his favorite cousin, Myrtle (Barnes Baxter), were the last two remaining before her death in December 2014.

Noel's family moved to Fields Landing in 1922, and he spent his boyhood there and in Eureka. He attended Field School, Jefferson Grammar School, Eureka Junior High, and Eureka Senior High, where he graduated with honors in 1936. Though he came from a "hunting and fishing" family, Noel was cut from a different cloth. Shy and thoughtful, he loved reading—books, magazines, newspapers, anything he could get his hands on. He used to speed read the front page of people's newspapers when he delivered milk to their porches as a boy.

In 1935, when Noel was 16, there was a general strike of lumber workers in the Pacific Northwest—demanding better pay, a shorter work week (less than 60 hours!), and the right to collective bargaining. At the Holmes-Eureka Mill (site of the current Bayshore Mall) three strikers were shot and killed by police, and many others were wounded. This incident made Noel resolve to protect and defend the rights of all workers, and he devoted the majority of his working life to the trade union movement—first as a rank and file worker, later as a shop steward, and finally as Business Agent for Plywood Workers Local 2931, a job he held from March 1965 through January 1981 when he retired. Noel was reelected seven times, though he never campaigned for votes; he believed the quality of his representation had to speak for itself.

Noel's non-lumber employment included a summer job at the San Francisco World's Fair in 1939, a season of commercial salmon fishing with his father in 1946, and a spring and summer working at the Fields Landing Whaling Station in 1940. Decades later, he described that experience in a book he co-wrote with his good friend librarian Lesa Coleman. *The Town that Had Enough, A History of Fields Landing and Its Whaling Station* was published by Noyo Hill House in 2014, making Noel a first-time author at age 95.

Though a pacifist by nature, Noel was also a resolute anti-fascist. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Navy in 1942. From then until the end of the war in 1945, he served as a radio technician first class aboard the USS Cowpens, the first US aircraft carrier in the South China Sea. Noel was never one to tell war stories, but in 1999 a friend

helped him locate some of his old shipmates via email. The detailed memories they exchanged now fill a large binder with valuable historical material.

In 1940 Noel married Myrtle Loft, a fellow progressive from Ferndale. Their son, John Stephen, was born in November 1941, and soon after that Noel left for the war. Like many wartime couples, their marriage didn't survive. In December 1946 Noel married Charis Wilson, former wife of photographer Edward Weston. They had two daughters, Anita Kathryn in January 1948 and Rachel Fern in October 1950. Noel and Charis were founding members of the local chapter of the NAACP and early members of the Humboldt Unitarian Fellowship. They held many views in common, but their personalities were mismatched, and though they stayed together for twenty years and always remained friends, by the late 1950s their marriage was essentially over.

In 1960 Noel met the love of his life, Ina Lipman Bradford. The path ahead wasn't clear, and they spent many years trying to find a way to be together that wouldn't cause people pain. On December 27, 1967, Noel and Ina were married, and over the course of the next 50 years, they proved that "true love prevails." And inspires. And ultimately generates more love in ever-widening circles.

In 1967 Noel suffered the unbearable tragedy of losing his first two children. Stephen died in April when his Navy plane went down off the coast of Japan, and five months later Anita was murdered while traveling in Scotland. That Noel was able to survive these losses without becoming bitter or losing his faith in humanity is a testament to his character and to the boundless support he received from Ina. In spite of the pain, Noel's marriage to Ina marked the beginning of the best and happiest years of his life. Their five decades of love and teamwork allowed him to become all he was capable of—as a husband, a father, a labor organizer, a peace activist, a scholar, a mentor, a friend, and a human being.

Ina went to work with Noel at the union office as soon as they were married, and when the Local could no longer afford to pay her, she continued working for free until Noel retired. At that point they enrolled in the "Over Sixties Program" at Humboldt State University. Noel had graduated from Humboldt as a history major in 1949 on the GI Bill. Now, at 62, for $3.00 per semester, he was able to fully indulge in the pleasures of the mind. For more than a decade he and Ina attended classes several days a week, and Noel didn't just audit, he committed to writing all the papers and taking every exam. His contributions to class discussions, based on first person recollections of history, were especially valued by his professors. Noel and Ina also attended a number of Elder Hostels, including one in Hawaii and one in Washington D.C., where they spent election night of 1992 in a youth hostel dorm. Noel's other post-retirement activities included volunteering as a docent in the Humboldt Room of the County Library and serving on the board of the ACLU.

Noel and Ina traveled overseas a number of times, always visiting Finland where Ina's daughter Gail lived with her sons Lauri and Esko. They made countless trips to southern

California to see Noel's brothers, John and Tom, and their wives, as well as Ina's three siblings, Bob, Norma, and Marilyn, and their families; to Las Vegas and San Clemente to spend time with Ina's son Niels, his wife Gloria, and their children Nicole and Leif; to New York City and later to Iowa to visit Ina's younger daughter Leigh, her husband Nick, and their son Cole; and to Santa Cruz, California to get together with Noel's daughter Rachel, her partner Bruce, his daughter Saraí, their close friend Joe Stroud, and Noel's former wife Charis.

In August 2007 Noel had a stroke, but he recovered well, partly due to his determination and optimistic spirit. He received excellent medical care from Dr. Bill Hunter and staff, outstanding therapy from Mad River Home Health Services, special attention from "local daughter" and nurse Victoria Onstine as well as Noel's "personal physician" Dr. Corinne Frugoni, and, most important, around-the-clock dedicated love and support from Ina.

As Noel began to slow down, Ina took on more caregiving responsibilities. So it was a great benefit to both of them when Noel began to attend Mad River Adult Day Health Care two days a week in early 2013. It provided him with much-needed exercise and social stimulation, and it gave her a chance to run errands, visit with friends, and occasionally even rest!

For the last ten years of his life, Noel's beautiful spirit, his concern for the planet and its people, his delightful sense of humor, his unfailing politeness and sweetness always stayed with him. He retained his essential self even during the final fifteen months when he was housebound and largely bedbound. Robbed of a huge measure of his autonomy and a certain amount of his dignity, Noel seldom complained and was usually in good spirits. Though he often forgot "new" people's names (that is, people he met after his stroke), he was always happy to see a familiar face, as well as faces of people he'd never seen before. Even if he was feeling tired, he would rise to the occasion when people came to visit, joining them in conversation and often surprising them with his sly wit.

After becoming bedbound, Noel discovered new pastimes: listening to his favorite music on an iPod and YouTube (sometimes singing along) and watching videos and documentaries on a laptop computer on his tray table. He also followed the crazy roller coaster of politics during the last election cycle, voting first for Bernie Sanders and then for Hillary Clinton. The one thing he couldn't wrap his head around was the election's outcome. An eternal optimist, he couldn't credit the fact that such a man had been elected. Let's hope his and Ina's faith in the future proves to be well-founded.

The synergy of Noel and Ina's remarkable fifty-year partnership has reaped benefits for the world beyond their immediate circle of family and friends, beyond the geographical boundaries of city, county, state, and country. Together they have planted seeds of justice, courage, compassion, integrity, humor, hope, and love which will keep on growing, flowering, and reseeding themselves for many years to come.

Noel died peacefully on the morning of July 20. In the end, he didn't make it to 100, but $98^{1/2}$ well-lived years on this planet was a mighty good run!

Noel is survived by a huge host of family and friends, and there's not enough room to thank all of them for the richness, pleasure, interest, and just plain fun they added to Noel's life. For many years Victoria Onstine has been a mainstay of loving support for both Noel and Ina. She has been aided by contributions of every sort from an amazing group of relatives and friends including Niels & Gloria Pearson, Gail Pearson, Leigh Bradford, Rachel Harris & Bruce Hobson, Norma Cooney, Betty Lipman, Nathan, Noel, & Hannah Hadley, Chuck Baxter & Bob Hawkins, Corinne Frugoni, Lesa Coleman, Kris & John Onstine, Barbara Kaplan & Dave Woodson, Frank Onstine, Maggie & Mark Shaffer, Jerryl Lynn Rubin & Amanda Devons, Edie & Don Butler, Sharon & Michael Fennell and Troy Williams, Monda Hall, Don Murphy, Dan Cornford, Sylvia & Russ Bartley, Darylla Hager & Rick Lemo, Reevee Rimson, Bruce Roessler, Joe Stroud, and the not-so-old "old gang" of peace activists—Willa Moore, Elizabeth (Bunny) Westbrook, Judy Coyle, Charlie Vader, Terry Wright, and Sue, Gus & Nicholas Deshais.

Of enormous importance this past year and a half have been the whole team from Hospice; the nurses and therapists from Mad River Home Health; the VA Home Based Primary Care Program; and finally, Noel's beautiful, longtime, dedicated caregivers—Michael Bien, Lorraine Whelihan, and Char Melugin. We could never have done it without you!

A memorial celebration of Noel's life will be held on Friday, October 20, at 2 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 24 Fellowship Way in Bayside, California.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the *Friends of the Noel E. Harris Archive Fund* through the Humboldt Area Foundation at 363 Indianola Rd., Bayside, CA 95524 or to *Veterans for Peace Chapter 56* at PO Box 532, Bayside, CA 95524.

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