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"NAN FREEMAN FARM WORKER MEMORIAL FUND"

"In an age in which we and our children sorely need the inspiration of the morally inspired act, as distinct from the soaring but safe rhetoric that for most of us substitutes for action, we must not forget Nan Freeman!" (Jewish Advocate 1/28/72)

BACKGROUND

At 4:19 A.M. on January 25, 1972 Nan Freeman was killed on a United Farm Workers picket line near Belle Glade, Florida. Nan had come with four other students from New College (Sarasota, Fla.) to assist those farm workers who are on strike against the Talisman Sugar Co. She volunteered to work in the middle of the night, passing out leaflets to truck drivers and personnel at the plant. One of the huge tractor trailer rigs struck her and she died of her injuries.

Nan Freeman was born August 29, 1953. She graduated second in her class from Wakefield Memorial High School in Wakefield, Mass. She participated in drama and American Field Service. She was a National Merit Scholar and in 1970 won the \$1,000.00 John F. Kennedy Award from the Massachusetts AFL-CIO for her knowledge of American Labor history. She was very active in her temple youth group and was a Shomeret Shabbat and Shomeret Kashrut (an observer of the Sabbath and Jewish dietary laws).

Nan was a bright, inquisitive and thorough student who thought nothing of turning in 100 page papers for high school courses. The bibliography and footnotes for one of her high school reports were so extensive she turned them in in a large brown paper bag.

Her interests were focused on the needs of her fellow human beings. She did term papers on American Indians, on Black Americans and on the struggles of working class people. As a teenager she worked with retarded children at the Fernald School in Mass. In Sarasota, Florida she volunteered her time at a day care center for Black children. She helped with a self-help housing project for farm workers. In November and December of 1971 she worked at a half-way house in North Carolina. Upon returning home for the holidays she proceeded to write a 200 page paper on the history of penal institutions.

Through Professor Marshall Berry of New College, Nan became interested in the struggles of farm workers in Florida. She did research on Florida citrus for the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee. When the farm workers at the Talisman Sugar Company went on strike and asked for help, she was one of the first students to volunteer her time and energy.

It is easy to say in a paper like this but it is true: Nan Freeman was a special young woman. Though she was frail because of a rheumatic heart condition, she was full of fun and high spirits.

Her friends called her "Morning Glory" because she made other people feel the beauty and joy of every morning. She was a happy person but she was not content to dwell on her own happiness. When she applied to college she said that a person could not truly enjoy life unless he or she were working to make life better for those who suffer. In her words she saw her life as one of service to others.

In her deeds she lived out the meaning of her words.

Nan Freeman died at the age of 18. Her understanding and compassion were beyond her years. She is sorely missed by her parents, Milton and Selma Freeman of Wakefield, Mass., by her brother Nelson, by her sister Elizabeth; and by her many friends.

PURPOSE OF A MEMORIAL FUND

Nan Freeman lost her life while helping farm workers. She could have turned inward but she chose instead to share her life with others. She is a contemporary model of service and sacrifice. It is the purpose of the Memorial Fund to keep alive Nan's spirit of love and service, and to channel that spirit into concrete help for America's farm workers.

PROGRAMS TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE FUND

Two kinds of programs will be supported by the "Nan Freeman Farm Workers Memorial Fund":

- 1) Financial support for young people, age 18 and older, who want to serve with the "non-violent" farm worker movement led by Cesar Chavez. There are many people in our society who want to help farm workers. Sometimes they don't know how. Too often there is not enough money to support them when they are ready and willing to work full-time in the farm workers' cause. Transportation to and from the field assignment must be provided by the volunteer. Resources from the Nan Freeman Fund will be used to provide room, board and \$5.00 per week to young people who are willing to work full-time with the farm workers cause.
- 2) Financial support for farm workers (or their children) who need education or training and who intend to put their skills to work on behalf of the wider community of farm workers. It is assumed that every farm worker supported by this fund will give service in the farm workers movement that will at least be equal to the time spent in education or training (e.g., one year of education would mean at least one year of service to the farm workers movement). Financial support will be limited to room, board, necessary expenses and \$5.00 a week spending money during the period of training.

The Nan Freeman Fund is established to affirm life as Nan affirmed life. It is a memorial whose presence will be felt not in any one place, but throughout the farm workers movement - wherever there is sacrifice and service to others. The Nan Freeman Fund will be a living memorial to a courageous young woman who loved people; who expressed that love in her work for justice and who gave her life for farm workers. The fund hopes to keep Nan's spirit of service and sacrifice alive in the farm workers movement and in the larger society.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 1) The fund will be administrated by the National Farm Workers Service Center, a non-profit, tax exempt corporation located at Keene, California. Contributions to the NFWSC are tax deductible. Checks can be made out to the "Nan Freeman Memorial Fund".
- 2) Contributions can be sent to the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis; 177 Tremont Street, Boston, Mass. 02111 or to the National Farm Workers Service Center, Post Office Box 62, Keene, California 93531.
- 3) All persons who are supported by the Nan Freeman Memorial Fund will know of the source of their support and the spirit behind that support. They will be recruited and approved on the basis of their desire to serve and their willingness to work hard. Their work will be non-violent in the spirit of the farm workers movement.
- 4) The National Farm Workers Service Center will maintain the Nan Freeman Memorial Fund even after the original resources have been exhausted.

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