

**Miles George Wedeman**  
**January 23, 1923 - October 23, 2013**

Born in Baltimore, MD on January 23, 1923 Miles George Wedeman was the son of Wayne Edgar Wedeman and Sara Jane Cowlam. He grew up in suburban Philadelphia. A superb student, he completed high school at 16 and graduated from Swarthmore College in 1943, at the age of nineteen. He first encountered the Religious Society of Friends at Swarthmore, where he became increasingly engaged in and committed to Quakerism. Miles spent the summer of 1941 in Salinas, KS working with those opposing the United States' entry into World War II. When the bombing of Pearl Harbor led the US to declare war on Japan, he attended Harvard Law School for three weeks. He then enlisted in the Navy and was sent to midshipman's school, after which he was appointed to the post of Second Lieutenant in the US Navy. Miles spent most of his War service as a bomb demolition specialist in the South Pacific, either taking bombs apart or escorting them back to Pearl Harbor to be dismantled. When the war ended, he completed his education, graduating in 1948. His fondest goal had always been to travel the world, and the role of civilian lawyer with the US Department of the Navy allowed him to do this.

He met Martha Jean Hall in the early 1950s through mutual friends. She had come to Washington as an intern and later became one of the Washington Post's first female news reporters. They married in at All Souls Unitarian Church in January 1955 and had four children: Sara, (b.1956) a psychologist, business consultant and active member of Abington Friends Meeting in Pennsylvania; Andrew, (b. 1958), a political science professor; Benjamin, (b. 1960) a Middle East correspondent for CNN; and Nicholas (b 1961) a USAID contractor. All four children were welcomed by the Friends Meeting of Washington during their infancy. The family was active in the meeting until they moved to Seoul, South Korea, in 1968. From there they moved to Cambodia, the Ivory Coast, Syria, and India.

International work was Miles' life-long passion. He loved history, politics and culture, especially that of the Middle East, Asia, and India. In an interview with the Foreign Affairs Oral History Project of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, he credited the Upper Darby High School's world affairs club, which he joined as a youngster in Depression-era Philadelphia, with opening his eyes to the wonders of the big, broad world. The world beckoned and he accepted – with fascination, wit, and a commitment to effectiveness through compassionate reflection and thoughtful action.

Miles was appointed economic attaché to the US Embassy in Phnom Penh in 1971 - the summer after Nixon's invasion of Cambodia. Between 1971 and 1973, he was responsible for ensuring that this civilian city was properly provisioned, despite being surrounded and besieged by the Khmer Rouge. In 1972, he wrote to the Meeting to say that the position of Friends on the war in Indochina made it impossible for him to support the Meeting financially. On behalf of the Committee of Overseers, Louis D. Harrington wrote back with a thoughtful letter regarding following one's inner light, with an understanding that thinking people could come to divergent conclusions when assessing the same situation. Friends, said Harrington, place far more on value on our shared humanity and on compassion for one another than they do on any political system.

In 1973, Miles returned to the United States to serve as director of the Viet Nam desk for USAID. From 1974 to 1978, he was Director of the Regional Economic Development in Abidjan, the Ivory Coast. He was then transferred to Damascus, Syria, where he spent four years as USAID mission director.

He retired from USAID in 1980, and then served for 5 years as director of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in Hyderabad, India. Returning to the US, he worked between 1985 and 1992 as a consultant to USAID projects and international agricultural research projects. Miles was seriously injured by a car in 1992, after which time he had to give up going

abroad as a consultant. From the mid-1990s to 2001, he worked as a volunteer in the Clinton White House, answering the President's mail. Apparently, it was an intriguing job.

In 2007, Miles and Martha moved into Goodwin House, in Falls Church, VA. She lives there now, among friends and a surprising number of fellow travellers from overseas posts. Miles participated in a local Meeting for Worship and led a biweekly foreign affairs discussion. He read the New York Times, religiously, every day. He had an extraordinary memory, and even as his days came to a close, his eyes would sparkle at the mere mention of anything related to international affairs.

Miles passed away on 24 October 2013 of natural causes. He is survived by his wife Martha, his four children and seven grandchildren.