



Helen Lavin

MAR 18, 1931 - JAN 22, 2024



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Weslaco - Helen Clare was born on a farm near the village of Mount Union in Henry County, Iowa on March 18, 1931 to Frank and Laura Shopbell. She was preceded in death by her parents, her sister Mary Louise Phifer, her brother Philip W. Shopbell, her first husband John David Kaufman, and her second husband Francis J. Lavin, Jr. From her marriage to John, she had three daughters, Elizabeth L. Kaufman of Friendswood TX, Jane K. Winn of Seattle WA, and M. Katherine Riordan of Bellingham WA. Also surviving are her three granddaughters, Julia Winn Buckley, Lydia Winn Samuels and Rachel Goeken and her two great-grandsons Evan William Winn Buckley and Tristan Peter Winn Buckley. Helen leaves her sister-in-law Phyllis Shopbell of Granite Bay CA, their daughter Paisley and son Preston, his wife and two children. The four Phifer nephews, Wood, Brook, Sky and Zack and their families also survive. After graduating from Osceola High School in 1949 and Iowa State College in 1953, Helen traveled to California to marry her classmate from Iowa State John Kaufman at Treasure Island, San Francisco on June 19, 1953. She worked briefly in administration at Capwell's department store in Oakland CA while her husband finished his tour of duty with the U.S. Navy. While John attended graduate school at CalTech, Helen and John lived in Pasadena CA and welcomed their first two daughters in 1955 and 1957. In 1957, she moved with her family to Midland MI where John began his career with the Dow Chemical Company and they welcomed their third daughter in 1959. In 1970, she received a M.Ed. from Central Michigan University and began a 25-year career with Midland High School. She participated in school activities before her retirement, and was also active in Midland and Weslaco in the United Methodist Church, playing bridge and bowling. Helen enjoyed music, sewing and reading. Starting in 1949, she was a member of the P.E.O. Sisterhood, a women's organization. In 1983, Helen married Francis (Frank) J. Lavin, Jr. of Rhode Island and they lived together in Midland. In 1994, Helen and Frank



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both retired, and in 1998, they moved to John Knox Village in Weslaco TX. From 1998 until Laura's death at age 100 in 2007, Helen enjoyed the company of her mother who also lived at John Knox Village. Frank passed away on March 14, 2021.

Helen leaves six step-children from her marriage to Frank: Frank III, Pamela Fontaine, Michelle Teixeira, Keith and Marc all of Rhode Island and Christopher of Florida and their families. A memorial service will be held at John Knox Village in Weslaco and will be followed this summer by a graveside memorial service and burial in the Trinity Cemetery in Mount Union, Henry County. Helen will be laid to rest together with John Kaufman, Frank Lavin, her father, mother and grandparents George and Clara Shopbell. If you'd like to pay tribute to Helen's memory through a gift, kindly consider contributing to PEO, the women's organization she was actively involved in: <https://donations.peointernational.org/>



Tribute Wall

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HA

Hector Amaya Md posted:

My most sincere condolences

December 13 at 1:30 AM

PO

Penelope Ehman Olson posted:

Betsy, Jane, and Mary (as I know you), you have my deepest sympathy. I always enjoyed Helen and your whole family. I will remember our family get-togethers.

December 13 at 1:30 AM

DR

Debby Rektorik posted:

Helen was a beloved volunteer in our office at Knapp Medical Center. Prayers to her family.

January 23 at 6:38 PM

DR

Debby Rektorik posted:

Helen was a beloved volunteer in our office at Knapp Medical Center. Prayers to her family.

January 22 at 7:37 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Helen by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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