



Mrs. Helen Keller

December 15, 1923 - December 11, 2017

Celebrating Her Spirit

Amazing grace, in good times and bad. Courage under extreme pressure. Unwavering faith against all odds. Well-placed wit, sense of humor and timing in the face of adversity was therapy for us. We watched, listened and learned as Mom navigated herself and us through life's inevitable ups and downs, taking them in stride, staying the course.

With such a remarkable, unique woman as our mother, teacher, coach and best friend, we always felt loved, safe and we knew we would be okay. That security was suddenly tested on December 11, 2017 in Columbus, Ohio, when our beloved mother died after a brief illness. It felt so surreal; an unimaginable depth of agony, pain and despair. Now what? She would want us to start by remembering and sharing with each other, family and friends, the good times. And then, she would expect us to do as she always did ...to keep going.

Born Helen Louise McGee on December 15, 1923 in St. Paul, MN to the late Granville and Josie McGee, she was the second oldest of seven, five brothers and one sister. Along with her family, she was a member of St. James United Methodist Church and attended John Marshall High School where she was a member of the girl's athletic association, an outstanding student and Salutatorian of her graduating class.

Helen continued her education in St. Louis, MO where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Stowe Teachers College, now Harris-Stowe State University. While there, she played shortstop for their softball team and in 1944, became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Gamma Omega Chapter. Helen started what would become a 35-year career in Education, teaching reading and language arts to 5th and 6th graders in the St. Louis Public Schools. During this period, she met Julius Judkins, Jr., of Marion, IN, who was attending Lincoln University Law School, after having served in WWII. When he graduated, they got married & moved to Bloomington, IN to attend graduate school at Indiana University, where they each earned Master's degrees. They then moved to Richmond, IN, where Attorney Judkins joined the law practice of the late Attorney C.R. Richardson, who had been a friend of his father, the late Attorney Julius C. Judkins, Sr. Helen was a homemaker, taking care of two small children, Julius, III (Jule) and Adrienne. They enjoyed traveling, entertaining and spending time with family and friends.

After her husband died an untimely death at age 35 after a brief illness, Helen and the children moved to Cincinnati so that she could take a sixth grade Language Arts teaching job at South Avondale Elementary School. Several years later, she married Raymond Keller, a civil engineer from Springfield, OH. They had a daughter, Teri. The Keller family was active at Mt. Methodist Church where Helen served for many years on the scholarship committee. They also enjoyed traveling, entertaining, playing board games, bridge and were long time members of a couples club and bridge clubs.

After Raymond died in 1994, Helen continued as a dedicated member when Mt. Zion participated in a merger to become New Vision United Methodist Church.

Helen was a born teacher, passionate about the power of education, which she instilled in her students. In 1971, she was asked to become one of the seven founders of the now nationally renowned, Cincinnati School for the Creative and Performing Arts. She loved teaching at SCPA and helping the school develop and thrive. She remained there until she retired.

Eventually, Helen moved to Columbus, OH in 2006 to spend more time traveling, shopping, going to movies and out to dinner, celebrating birthdays and holidays with her children and grandchildren. An avid bridge player since her father taught her how to play as a teenager, she immediately joined a bridge group at the neighborhood Senior Center, where she played regularly until recently. She also attended Flintridge Church. Most of all, Mom was deeply passionate about and dedicated to her family, extended family and friends. Best of all, she just liked hanging out with all of us, doing something or nothing at all. And always, afterwards, she would say, quoting our late cousin, Robert "Bubba" Johnson, "We had a time." Well, Mamacita, We're going to be okay. Your phenomenal, indomitable spirit lives on in all of us. Thank you for a most Beautiful Life. We will love you for time immemorial. On behalf of the entire family, "we had a time." Vaya con Dios... Jewel, Adrienne and Teri.

She was preceded in death by brothers Perry Glennon McGee, Earl McGee, Milton Lafayette McGee and Freddie McGee.

Helen is survived by her three children, Julius Caesar Judkins, III Keller, (Katharine) Phoenix, AZ; Adrienne Louise Judkins Keller, Columbus, OH; Teri Marlene Keller, Columbus, OH; her sister, Marlene McGee Carter, Cincinnati, OH; her brother, Granville O. McGee, St. Paul, MN; six grandchildren, Amber Jordan Brooks (Michael), Winston-Salem, NC; Julius Caesar Judkins IV Keller, W. Lafayette, IN; Chad Garrett Brown, Columbus, OH; Jhareth Ferguson, Chicago, IL; Adrienne Danielle Gossett, Evanston, IL; Christopher Owen Raymond Gossett, Columbus, OH; four great grandchildren, Isaiah Keller, Julius Caesar Judkins V Keller, Nea Lin Brooks, Lillian Michelle Brooks and many

loving nieces, nephews, cousins, relatives and friends.

Cemetery Details

Spring Grove Cemetery

4521 Spring Grove Cemetery
Cincinnati, OH 45232

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 22. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Cedars of Lebanon (Spring Grove Cemetery)
4521 Spring Grove Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45232

Service

DEC 22. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

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