



Helen Rickard

April 25, 1928 - November 6, 2024

Helen Jane was born on April 25, 1928 to Claude and Nellie Lakin. She was a much-loved child and a joy to both parents. Her dad nicknamed her "John" after the boy in the Ding Dong Bell nursery rhyme (Pussy's in the well. Who put her in? Little Johnny Flynn. ...).

Helen adored her father: "If you want a good time, go with him. You may not know what you're going to do, but it will be fun!" Helen's mother was a very good cook. As a child, Helen was a picky eater, so Nellie would cook anything to get her daughter to eat. However, if Claude didn't like the food, he would wrinkle his nose, which Helen soon learned to imitate.

Claude trained his dogs to do various tricks. In 1928, a photographer from the Minneapolis Tribune newspaper saw an Airedale dog smoking a pipe as he pushed Helen in a baby buggy down the sidewalk near Minnehaha Falls. He took this photo that was printed in the newspaper.

While attending grade school, Helen and a few others were called to the principal's office. The children were students in the fourth grade. There was no need to worry; however, as each of them were promoted to the fifth grade! Helen continued her education a year younger than her classmates. She recalled that she went to school with the famous congressman, Melvin Laird (Helen's mother, Nellie, was good friends with Mrs. Laird). But her favorite memory was riding in a new Cadillac car every morning with their neighbors, the Lewis'. Mr. Lewis did not allow the children to talk during the ride. This was

agony for Helen, as she liked to chat. When they got out of the car, she would always say, "Thank you, Mr. Lewis."

The Lakin family later moved to Wisconsin where she attended a church youth group during her high school years. It was in one of the youth group meetings that a tall, good-looking older brother of Helen's friend and classmate, Jim Rickard, met Helen. His name was Warren, and he was able to date her. After some time, Warren went to Helen's parents to ask for her hand in marriage. Claude and Nellie said "Yes". So Warren took Helen on a date and he planned to run out of gas. While stopped, Warren asked Helen to open the glove box and pull out the box that was in there. He asked Helen to open it, and inside were two large nails with the note that they would use those nails to build their home. A second box contained Helen's engagement ring that Warren designed and had the jeweler make for her.

Who could resist? Of course, Helen said "Yes" to this marriage proposal. On their wedding day in June 1950, Claude walked his only child down the aisle. As Claude passed Helen to Warren, he told Warren that "Helen is only out on loan."

Warren and Helen moved to Hibbing, Minnesota, and their first child, David, was born in November 1951. Helen said that the nurses took wonderful care of her and her new baby.

It was in Hibbing that Helen learned to make pasties. This was a favorite meal for the Rickard family, and the recipe has been passed down from generation to generation (and a few others who are not Rickards). Helen also knew that poppyseed cake with lemon custard filling was Warren's favorite cake, so she made that for him on each of his birthdays.

In March 1953, Helen gave birth to their second child-another son-Stephen (Steve). Sometime in early 1954, while Helen was pregnant with their third baby, Warren used those two nails to build a house on Blaisdell Avenue in Bloomington. Instead of hiring most of the work out, Warren laid the foundation, mortared the brick, installed the pipe and wiring, and roofed the house. Jean was born in April 1954, and the family moved into the house a

short time later.

But the family would not be complete until Kathryn (born in August 1958) and Carol (born in August 1960) were added to the Rickard family. When Helen brought home these babies, Dave, Steve, and especially Jean were so excited to have these little girls added to the mix.

The house on Blaisdell was too small for this large family, but Warren had a plan. He would knock down the wall separating the kitchen from the attached garage, and turn the garage into two bedrooms, a laundry room, and extended kitchen/dining area. Helen now had room to work in the kitchen and serve her large family delicious meals; now she had a separate laundry room in which to work.

Helen had two gardens at this home: one for flowers and another for vegetables. She canned the vegetables, and used the flowers for arrangements as a member of the Bloomington Garden Club. It was common for Helen to ask her children to look for interesting pieces of driftwood or gather pine cones for her flower arrangements.

Now Warren was a clever guy, and he was a mechanical engineer. He would often buy something—a wooden boat, boat motors, cigarette machines, an electric pony ride—and fix those up and sell them at a profit. The family was able to buy a boat (blue and white day cruiser) and use that for hauling camping gear, including fishing equipment, water skis, and water surfboard. The Rickards joined the Boat Club, and took many trips up and down the Mississippi River as well as the Saint Croix River. It was especially memorable when the family was going through the locks and dam, and the boat's motor wouldn't start.

Boat Club members would travel the river to a location where an event was planned, including a potluck meal. Helen would bring a macaroni-hamburger hotdish that was always a hit. The Rickards would sometimes stay overnight and usually everyone slept on the boat.

Camping at Lake Miltona became a favorite place each summer, and Helen

would pack the family clothes and food for the week-long outing. Helen cooked over a Coleman stove, washed camp dishes, pots and pans, and watched her anxious children wait for an hour to pass before they could go swimming in the lake after eating a meal.

As her children grew and joined youth activities, it was quite a sight to see when Helen joined the Boy Scouts at a game of baseball. Helen was the only mom on the field catching fly balls bare-handed! She wasn't bad at hitting the ball and running bases, either! She was a co-leader in Camp Fire Girls, and other organizations.

The house on Blaisdell was getting too small as the children were getting big, so Warren drafted plans for a new house on Mission Road in Bloomington. It was there that a two-story, four-bedroom home with dining room and family room was built. Helen and Warren wanted to stay in Bloomington so Dave could finish his high school years at John F. Kennedy High School. Steve, Jean, Kathy, and Carol followed and graduated from that high school, too. Several years went by and Helen and Warren grew to love Lake Edward. They cleared the lake lots with the help of their grown children, put two trailers on there, and had a lot of fun fishing, singing around the campfire, and having a good time with family and friends.

But as time went on, their children were grown, married and no longer lived with Helen and Warren. It was time to move from that big house on Mission Road, so they purchased a condo in Edina that was previously owned by Warren's sister and her husband.

Now in all this time, Helen and Warren took many trips-some by motorhome and others by flights to their destinations. They traveled the United States, including Alaska. They took a memorable cruise to the islands of Hawaii. They went to foreign lands like Canada, Mexico, Europe, Taiwan, and Australia. One day, Warren jokingly told his children that he had spent their inheritance: He and Helen purchased a trailer in Mission, Texas, and decorated it with nice furnishings. Helen and Warren would spend many winters in the Lemon Tree Park. Helen was the editor of the park's newsletter: Lemon Tree Times. She

wrote various sections in the newsletter that introduced others to park residents, provided recipes by Eileen Sideways, and gave readers a lot of nostalgia. They entertained many friends from the park, and led Bible Study meetings in their winter home.

Sadly, Helen's loving husband, Warren, passed away in October 2014. They had 64 years together. "If couples had a marriage half as good as your dad's and mine, they would be very lucky," Helen mentioned often to her children. Today she leaves behind her five children, their spouses, fifteen grandchildren, and thirty-one great-grandchildren. Not a bad life for an only child who grew up during the depression and who never imagined all that! The family thanks the Kingsley Shores' staff who cared for our mom with love and kindness, and Abbie, from Midwest Hospice, who gave her comfort, tender care, and much compassion.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **16**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Bloomington Chapel
2300 W. Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431
(952) 884-8145
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Memorial Service

NOV **16**. 12:00 PM - 12:45 PM (CT)

Bloomington Chapel
2300 W. Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431
(952) 884-8145
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Memorial Service for Helen Rickard in memory of Helen Rickard



Washburn-McReavy - November 12, 2024 at 02:50 PM

CD

“ A fond memory I have of Aunt Helen is that for years, when I was an adult, she would call on the morning of my birthday and wish me a Happy Birthday! She always included that it was easy for her to remember because her dad had a heart attack on that day. Over the years I've forgotten whether it was a fatal heart attack or not. But it didn't matter in our conversation, because after mentioning that fact, we would have a pleasant conversation about current things happening in our lives. The conversation would always end with Aunt Helen saying "I love you", to which I would reply "I love you too". Rest in peace, Aunt Helen and remember that I love you.

Chuck Davich, nephew

Charles T Davich - November 15, 2024 at 08:21 AM

SR

“ Mom had a wonderful sense of humor. If I was in trouble, which did happen on the occasion, gulp, I would try to make Mom laugh. It didn't always work but I can still see her trying not to smile. As a young boy, I was quite shy and Mom was a great encourager. In 1992 while I was staying with Mom and Dad I used to love playing cribbage with them at the kitchen table. Even though Sherry and I are a long distance away, Mom will be sorely missed.
Steve & Sherry Rickard

Steve Rickard - November 13, 2024 at 05:23 AM

SC

“ 1 file added to the album helen



scheduledesk - November 09, 2024 at 10:42 AM