



Helen J. Wentz

September 5, 1921 - January 30, 2022

“God’s love is greater than we can ever imagine”

Helen J. (Prideaux) Wentz whose goal was to celebrate her 100th birthday, which she did on September 5, 2021, was called to her heavenly Mansion Just Over the Hill Top on January 30, 2022. Helen had been diagnosed with breast cancer a week after her birthday and on January 12 she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She was not in any pain and was resting peacefully while surrounded by family when God called her home.

Helen was born September 5, 1921, in Dodgeville, Wisconsin to William H. “Harry” Prideaux and Jennie Hazel (Dowling) Prideaux. She grew up on the family farm 1 mile west of Dodgeville on highway 18 with two brothers and a sister. They moved to Arizona due to her mother’s health when she was 11 years old. The Lord called her mother home leaving a housekeeper, Florence, and Helen to tend to her siblings and household duties. The family moved back to Dodgeville where she helped with the farm chores. The family was very close, and her father was very attentive to his children. Helen’s father remarried and the children adored their stepmother, Lula M. Martin.

A rural school was built near the farm and the children were to attend, but Helen wanted to stay in the town schools. Her father told her if she could pay the tuition she could. Helen emptied her piggy bank and attended the Dodgeville public schools, graduating from Dodgeville High School in 1939. She continued her education at the Teachers College (now UW) in Platteville

where she earned a two-year teaching degree in 1942. Helen began teaching in the rural schools at Edmund, Wisconsin, and Jamestown school in Dodgeville where she taught her younger sister.

While attending college she met the love of her life, Leonard "Len" Wentz. They eloped to Kahoka, Missouri on January 31, 1942. They lived on the family farm in Platteville where she helped with all the farm chores such as bailing hay, milking, and feeding cattle. Helen also helped with the housework while tending to children as they came along, five in all. When the youngest child started school, she returned to teaching. Helen started at Stumptown rural school and then the Corniela rural school in the Platteville district before moving to the Northwoods.

During WWII Helen was a member of the Women's Relief Corp. where she helped families of the men who went off to serve our country. Helen and Len are in the Smithsonian Institute Museum in DC for their part in serving their country with produce from the farm and assisting families of the service men. Helen was a member of the Grant County Homemakers Club and the First Methodist Church of Platteville as well as founder and leader of the Jolly Platter's 4-H Club.

Helen's family always came first. With all the ups and downs of life her faith never wavered. Times were tough, but she would say "one day at a time" and "keep your faith" for "The Blessings of the Lord be upon you" Psalms 129:8. Helen was one tough cookie! When Len was injured and could not work for sometime, the welfare agent came around to assist and Helen told them to go away and that she would take care of her family, and she did. Helen raised chickens and a garden which she would sell the produce, eggs and dressed chickens to stores in town or families. Helen spent a lot of the time giving to those in need.

They moved to the Woodruff/Minocqua area in 1963 where she accepted a teaching position at Minocqua Grade School, which later joined with Hazelhurst and Lake Tomahawk to form the MHLT school. Helen started with grade five before moving down to grade two and then grade one. Helen would

say that she “Loved those little ones as you can just see them learning”. Helen joined the Methodist Church of the Pines and joined the Rebekkah Lodges, Crossroads #8 in Woodruff and later Cloverleaf #107 in Park Falls. She was a member of WEA and a union representative for the teachers. Helen retired from teaching in 1985.

Helen and Len began traveling to Europe as their oldest son was in the military. They would make several trips to England and Germany where they located family members still living on the homesteads, relatives they didn't know existed. Some who still keep in contact.

In December 2005, God called Len home. He has been waiting Just Beyond the Moon and for the Lord to call them both to the Mansion Over the Hill Top. In 2006, Helen and her daughter began traveling the United States in a motorhome. They traveled extensively all by compass and the sun; no maps, no interstates. Helen's favorite places were the Grand Canyon and Mt. Airy, North Carolina which is Andy Griffith's hometown, and Seabrook Beach, New Hampshire where she earned the nickname of Pink Panther for the pink parka she wore while walking the beach in the winter months.

Wherever they went, they met folks who became friends and still kept in touch. Helen made an impression on many. In 2014 the travels ceased as Helen's health was declining. They took short trips and discovered so much on the backroads of the Northwoods, such as the trips to Hayward to see elk and get a piece of pie. They also enjoyed traveling through Moose Lake Road, up by Mercer, which ends up in Butternut. Helen enjoyed all backroads, even the ones that were nothing but “cow paths”. Helen was special in all the lives she touched, especially her students who to this day give her praise and thank her for who they have become.

Helen was loved and respected by all who knew her. She was always ready to lend a hand to whomever. Helen taught many young people to cook, sew, garden and any other survival tactics. She believed the boys should know how to do all these things for “you never know, you may not find a wife”. She was a

true Christian woman who missed going to church in the last few years, but never stopped reading her Bible and keeping up with the daily devotions. Helen's faith kept her going for 100 years. Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...

Helen is survived by her daughter and caretaker, Carol Richardson of Woodruff, Wisconsin and Barrington, New Hampshire; sons, William (Trudie) of Foley, Alabama; James (Mary) of Richmond, Texas; Gary (Tim Galbraith) of New Glarus, Wisconsin; daughter-in-law, Thao of Marion, Texas; nephews, Curtis (Linda) Prideaux of Dodgeville, Wisconsin; Robert (Peggy) Prideaux of Estero, Florida; Alan (Andrea) Wilimovsky of Edgerton, Wisconsin; nieces, Jennie (Douglas) Post of Oregon, Wisconsin; Hazel (Thomas) Martin of Grandview, Wisconsin; 12 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren, and 17 great-great grandchildren, of which one is a namesake, lil' Helen. Helen is also survived by several cousins including Kay Schuetz of Watertown, Wisconsin, and Donna (Donald) Casey of Waukesha, Wisconsin as well as many, many, friends and family of Platteville/Dodgeville, Woodruff/Minocqua, New Hampshire and Texas areas. She was adored by all wherever she went. Helen was preceded in death by her husband, Len; son, Robert; parents, "Harry" and Jennie Prideaux; brothers, Steven and Robert, along with Robert's wife Margaret; sisters, Edith Wilimovsky and infant, Ann; special cousins, Howard and Doris Martin; Ralph and Sally Martin; granddaughter, Micayla Ellis and nephew, Larry VanNatta, who was like a son to Helen.

The family would like to thank Dr. Thomas C. Gabert and his staff, especially his nurse Melissa, for the excellent care they took of Helen over the past couple years. Helen adored Dr. Gabert. "Best doctor anyone could ever have. He really cares about his patients". Helen told him he could not retire until she was no more. So, Doc, you have her permission now. "She was a hoot!" for sure.

Cremation has taken place and there will be visitation with coffee and cookies at Bolger Funeral Home in Woodruff on February 19, 2022, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

Graveside services will take place at the Eastside Cemetery in Dodgeville, Wisconsin in the spring. Please, no flowers. Instead, please make a donation in memory of Helen to a charity of your choice.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

FEB **19**. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Bolger Cremation & Funeral Services - Woodruff Chapel

1212 First Avenue

(mailing address P.O. Box 40, Woodruff WI 54568)

Woodruff, WI 54568

(715) 356-6006

bolgerfuneral@gmail.com

<https://www.bolgerfuneral.com>

Tribute Wall

DB

“ *The most amazing, compassionate woman I have ever met. My fondest Fish Fry's are with the double trouble gals!!! You both meant a lot to our entire family! Our thoughts and prayers are with you now and always! Donna and Cubby Butler*

Donna Butler - February 20, 2022 at 09:53 AM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Helen J. Wentz.*



February 18, 2022 at 08:11 PM

JH

“ *What a wonderful person and teacher. So happy I had the chance to visit with her at Mrs. Trinko's memorial shortly after she turned 100. Our family's thoughts are with her family.*

Joe Handrick - February 11, 2022 at 11:43 PM

JH

“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Joe Handrick - February 11, 2022 at 11:38 PM

LP

What an awesome picture of Gram and "the teachers" ❤️

Lauri Jean Pevear - February 19, 2022 at 02:48 PM

GM

“ *Helen was my (& my sister's & brother's) teacher at Stumptown School. Several years ago, I found her address & mailed a letter, introducing myself & sharing an update on my life. She responded with the sweetest note - and included actual school pictures she had kept of me, my sister & my brother from 1958.*

I rediscovered that note this morning and checked on the internet, learning she had passed away in January. I have nothing but fond memories of her as a teacher. I so wish that I had made the trip north to visit her upon receipt of her note.

If the family has any pictures of her (especially during her career at Stumptown), I'd love to see & scan them for memories and sharing with my sibs.

*Gary McFall
Madison, WI
garyandmic@gmail.com*

Gary McFall - February 11, 2022 at 01:26 PM

LA

“ *Best Gram ev'a!! ❤️
I have a lifetime of memories so its tough to choose just one. She had a love for family & others that poured out so naturally it made you want to be the same. She owns my heart & will always be my favorite lady. May my life reflect her love & honor her memory so the light of her legacy lives on & makes her proud. All my love, #1*

Lauri Jean - February 03, 2022 at 01:11 PM