



Helen M Oakley

July 18, 1931 - May 20, 2018

Helen Marie Oakley, 86, a resident of Prescott, AZ, died peacefully on May 20, 2018, at Samaritan Village on Scott Drive. She was born on July 18, 1931, in St. Louis, MO, to Elsie (Schneider) and Edward J. Guetebier. Helen graduated from Beaumont High School in January 1949, valedictorian of a class of 200. She received a 4-year academic scholarship to Washington University in St. Louis where she majored in elementary education, qualifying for Phi Beta Kappa. Between high school and college Helen completed a full 9 month business school course, which was a great asset and used appropriately. She was an excellent secretary and regularly found temporary employment easily.

Helen married her high school sweetheart John Oakley in 1952 and over 13 years, six children were born. She helped support John through four years of medical school and five years of surgical residency. The family moved in 1962 to Prescott, AZ, to join two Missouri classmates, Drs. Ed Ritter and Dennis Semkin, to establish the Prescott Medical Clinic. Helen actively participated in many organizations including the Yavapai County Medical Auxiliary, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, PTA, Art Docents, P.E.O. Chapter Y, cloggers, Whiffle Tree square dancers, water aerobics, YRMC Parkinson's "Big" exercise program and tango activity. Helen also loved music and played piano. For many years Helen and John enjoyed attending both symphony and POP concerts, to which they had season tickets. She enjoyed her bridge group and became quite adept with the computer. Helen was a student of genealogy, loved animals and birds and was a voracious reader and Sudoku player. Most of all, she was a sweet and loving wife and intensely involved mother who also did years of in-home caregiving for her elderly mother and her husband John's parents.

Helen was always happiest when surrounded by family. She doted on her grandchildren and in later years, the high point for Helen was the week long Christmas celebration at her home, routinely attended by all six children, spouses, and the majority of her grandchildren.

Helen was a fervent supporter of the study of Parkinson's, donating not just her brain but her entire body to further knowledge about the disease that ultimately took her life. She participated for five years in the Muhammad Ali—Michael J. Fox ongoing Parkinson's Research Program in Phoenix, which entailed extensive intense mental and physical testing plus lab and x-rays every three months. Since the mental testing was repetitive, Helen easily memorized most of it and each three months her score improved, which blew examiner Dr. Holly Shill away! In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Banner Sun Health Institute for Parkinson's Disease, 2901 N. Central Ave., Suite 160, Phoenix, AZ 85012 (602-747-4483); please indicate the contribution is being made in the memory of Helen M. Oakley of Prescott.

Survivors include her husband of 66 years, John Sr., and children Annie (Cal), Barbara (Dave), Sherrie (Jim), John, Jr. (Angela), Steve (Anna) and Bill (Kelley). In addition, Helen is survived by fifteen grandchildren, two great-granddaughters and numerous nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her brother Edward J. Guetebier, Jr., her sister Marion E. Hicks, and their spouses.

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, August 8, from 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. at Hampton Funeral Home, 240 S. Cortez St. Dr. John (first husband, 66 years) will share several life experiences and anecdotes, with audience and family participation welcomed. Light refreshments will be available.

Comments



“ Dear John and family,
I was so sorry to hear of your loss. Helen was an amazing woman and the two of you raised a fine family. I know she lives on in them and am glad she was on the earth such a long time to share her knowledge with all of you and give you great memories. Please extend my condolences to everyone. I know how hard it is to lose your mother.

Sherry Baca

Sherry Baca - August 05, 2018 at 10:45 AM