



Mrs. Helen Cox

August 15, 1928 - January 1, 2025

Helen Bilse Cox was born on August 15, 1928 in Oakland, California to Chester and Helen (Weber) Bilse. On January 1, 2025 she passed away peacefully at home in Clackamas, Oregon, surrounded by her loving family. She was 96 years old.

The two pillars of Helen's long life were her love of her family and her faith. She and her younger brother, Don, grew up as part of a large Irish-German family with relatives scattered throughout the entire San Francisco Bay area. Their home was the center of the clan, having been built by their grandfather in the 1880's to house his thirteen children as well as the family bakery, and while her grandparents were long gone by the time Helen was born, she was surrounded by a constantly changing cast of aunts and uncles throughout her youth.

After high school, Helen briefly attended U.C. Berkeley before transferring to Holy Names College in Oakland, graduating in 1951 with a degree in Liberal Arts. It was during her time at Berkeley that a close friend, Barbara Rothenbach, set her up on a double date with her fiance's brother, home on leave from the Army. It wasn't long before Ken asked Helen to marry him - but she took a while to make up her mind, and by then he was stationed overseas. Five years later, in 1955, they married and moved to Fort Lewis, Washington, where their daughter Cathy was born.

When Ken was discharged, they moved back to the Bay Area and settled in San Jose, where Christopher, Kevin, Keith, and Karen joined the family. Ken worked for the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department, while Helen was active in numerous groups including the American Association of University Women, the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, and the Deputy Sheriff's Wives Association. In 1970, following a heart attack, Ken retired from police work and began teaching Administration of Justice in the local community colleges. Meanwhile, Helen returned to school herself and earned a certificate in Library Technology, becoming the cataloger for the Eastside Union High School District.

With Ken's declining health, Helen eventually retired from the school district to care for him. Following his death in 1991, she returned to work at what was then Alexian Brothers Hospital as a receptionist, a job she held until 2003 when she retired for good to enjoy more time with her grandchildren. As Proverbs 17:6 says, "Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their parents."

In her later years, Helen maintained an active social life with friends and family, enjoying trips, book clubs, classes on a variety of personal interests, and theater. She was always up on the latest movies and shows! She was also active in civic life - working to promote the sanctity of life, volunteering with Friends of the Berryessa Library; and staying current on civic matters. Following the death of her son Christopher in 2018, and just prior to her diagnosis of Parkinson's, Helen went to live with Karen and her daughters. In 2022 the entire household joined Cathy in a move to Oregon, where Cathy and Karen cared for their mother at home until her death.

Helen is survived by four of her children - Catherine Cox, Karen Cox Aguirre, Kevin Cox, and Keith Cox (Jill); seven grandchildren - Loral Uber (Elena

Byrd), Katherine Uber, Jay and Elise Aguirre, Andrew Lane Cox, Christina Morris, and Jaqulynn Williams (Tom); numerous great- and great-great grandchildren; her sister-in-law Doris Bilse (Don); six nephews as well as their families - David Bilse (Janet), Doug Bilse (Mary); Kurt Bilse; Gregg Bilse (Jennifer); Gregory Cox Labitzke, and Geoff Labitzke (Robin). Her brother Don preceded her in death.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 22, at St. Victor's Catholic Church, 3108 Sierra Road, San Jose, California. A private interment will be held at St. Mary's Cemetery, Oakland.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that donations be made in Helen's memory to either the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research or to the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN).

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

FEB **22**. 1:00 PM (PT)

St. Victor's Catholic Church
3108 Sierra Road
San Jose, CA 95132

Tribute Wall

CC

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories of Helen*



Cathy Cox - January 09, 2025 at 03:27 AM

CA

A wonderful picture of Mom and Dad!

catic15 - January 15, 2025 at 08:29 PM

KA

“ *One of my favorite pics of mom! She really enjoyed ice cream* 😊



Karen Cox Aguirre - January 07, 2025 at 07:25 PM