



## Helen E. Williams

November 22, 1933 - October 1, 2020

Helen E. (Austin) Williams of Fort Collins, Colorado was born in Denver, Colorado to Natte and Mary (Fuller) Austin on November 22, 1933 (11-22-33). She passed on October 1, 2020, at the age of 86, four days after falling and breaking her hip.

When she was 10 years old, Helen's family moved to Fort Collins, Colorado where Helen attended Washington Elementary and Lincoln Junior High, graduating from Fort Collins High School in 1951.

Helen loved Fort Collins and was proud to be part of a 7-generation chain of residents, including her great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

In 1951, Helen married Marv Garfield and they had four children: Steve, Gary, LeAnn, and Greg. Together they enjoyed the many joys and challenges of parenting. They later divorced but continued to be a united and solid support for their children.

Helen was involved with every part of her children's lives: homeroom mom, Cub Scout Leader, Camp Fire leader, Sunday School Teacher, and cheerleader... Each year, she and her children went caterpillar hunting, searching milkweed until they had each found a caterpillar. Milkweed and caterpillars were put into a large jar and sent to school with the kids. There, the entire class got to experience the thrill of seeing the caterpillars form a chrysalis and eventually turn into Monarch butterflies. When she was 41 years old, Helen and her daughter got matching butterfly tattoos, before it was a trend. Helen rarely missed a program, concert or sporting event that involved her children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren. Helen loved all animals, especially her dogs Cinny, Tibet and Patches.

Her motto was to be responsible, do your best and have fun.

When her children started school, Helen went to work for the Poudre School District at Bennett and Dunn Elementary schools, Leshar Middle School and Centennial and Rocky

Mountain High Schools. Students were drawn to her acceptance, positive attitude, and openness to new ideas.

Helen also worked for the US Forest Service, thoroughly enjoying the people she worked with and spending time in the mountains she loved. She especially enjoyed working with loggers and white-water rafting companies, writing and approving contracts and permits.

In 1978, Helen married Don Williams, a Fort Collins High School classmate that she reconnected with at their 25-year class reunion. During their almost 40 year marriage they enjoyed CSU Basketball and Denver Bronco games, antiques, trips to Mexico, landscaping and decorating their home on Smith Street, trips up the Poudre Canyon, workouts at Colorado State University and spending time with family. After retiring, Helen excelled at educating her young great-grandchildren, assuring they knew the Pledge of Allegiance, and numbers and letters before starting preschool.

Diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes when she was 30, Helen was very health conscious. Until the last 6 months of her life, she walked at least a mile a day. She was a cancer survivor, diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma at the age of 57. The day before starting chemotherapy, knowing that she would be losing her hair, Helen asked her son to cut her hair into a Mohawk. She shared pictures of her new "do" with others undergoing treatment to help brighten their day.

Helen was a strong woman, a believer in equal rights, who always voted for increased funding of public education. She never complained, always had a kind word to offer a friend, and a memory to share with a stranger.

A memorial service will be held at a later day, when friends and family can gather to celebrate Helen's amazing life.

Helen was preceded in death by her parents, sisters Loraine Messer and Betty Spitzer, brother Earl Austin, husband Donald Williams, son Gary Garfield and father of her children Marv Garfield

She is survived by children, Steven Garfield (Deb), LeAnn Massey (David) and Greg Garfield, grandchildren Ryann Hodge (Josh), Jenny and Derek Garfield and great-grandchildren Danae and Kace Hodge. She is also survived by special sister-in-law Carole Austin, adoring nieces and nephews, and her side kick, rescue-dog, Patches.

Memorial donations can be made to:

Animal Friends Alliance

232 E. Mulberry St. #1

Fort Collins, CO 80524

<https://www.savinganimalstoday.org>

# Comments

---



“ Earlier this week, I learned that my grandmother passed away. While we were not very close and did not speak often, we shared a love of learning and had many things in common. She gave me this book many years ago, and it sparked a path of self-discovery and personal growth that I will forever be grateful for. It may not have been the perfect relationship, in fact often strained, but everyone comes into your life for a reason. I hope she has found peace. Jennifer Smits



Jennifer L Smits - October 10, 2020 at 07:59 PM

---



“ Jacqueline Smits lit a candle in memory of Helen E. Williams



Jacqueline Smits - October 10, 2020 at 07:57 PM

---



“ LeAnn is following this tribute.

LeAnn - October 10, 2020 at 02:39 AM



“ Praying for you LeAnn, David and family during this time. I am so thankful I saw Helen and was able to speak with her at Marion Pike's memorial. Helen and I worked together at Leshner J. H. and we had a blast. Helen had a contagious laugh and smile. She will be missed by you all. "Memories are a gift from God that death cannot destroy." Sending hugs and prayers, Carol Moddelmog

Carol Moddelmog - October 12, 2020 at 10:42 PM