



Helen Jean Clark

July 21, 1927 - August 25, 2018

Helen Jean Clark, age 91, of Albia, passed away on Saturday, August 25, 2018 at the Monroe Care Center in Albia surrounded by her loved ones.

Helen Jean (Ford) Clark was born on July 21, 1927, to William Barber and Dorothy Ann (Lawson) Ford in Albia, Iowa. She was one of four girls born to her parents. Helen was a lifelong Albia resident and 1945 graduate of Albia High School, where she met her future husband, Glenn Davis Clark. Helen and Glenn were born two days apart, a detail of their story that made them seem destined for each other. After marrying on February 27, 1948, they had three children: Susan Jean, David William, and Cynthia Marie.

Upon graduation from high school, Helen started to work in the Monroe County Department of Social Welfare as a junior stenographer, where she served until 1953. At that point, she commuted to the Iowa General Assembly, where she served as a secretary to a Committee Chairman in the House of Representatives. She served in multiple additional administrative positions throughout her career, including for the Veterans Administration Hospital, Hollingshead Abstract Office, First Christian Church, Chamberlain Manufacturing Corporation, and Albia Manor. A strong proponent of pursuing higher education, Helen decided to obtain college degrees later in life. She graduated in May 1979 from Indian Hills Community College in Centerville, Iowa, with a business degree, and in May 1980 from Des Moines Area

Community College with a degree in health care administration – both times with a 4.0 GPA. For the majority of her adult life, Helen and Glenn owned and operated Clark's Garbaze in Albia.

A strong Christian, Helen put her love of music and administrative skills to work through multiple roles within the church throughout the years, including organist, Sunday school teacher, Junior Choir Director, bookkeeper, and deaconess. Helen instilled this strong sense of faith in her children and grandchildren, and they spent countless hours with her at the church.

Helen also loved to travel and passed this love along through the generations. She achieved her goal of visiting all 50 states and traveled extensively throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America – frequently taking her kids and grandkids with her. Helen never rested, keeping her young late into life.

For Helen, family always came first. She rarely missed a band concert or birthday party, and her grandkids recall fondly the many summers spent at the house she and Glenn built together. Later in life, she most treasured the time she got to spend with her great-grandkids.

Helen was preceded in death by her husband Glenn, their son David, her parents, sisters Marcella and Velma, and son-in-law Jeff Gustafson. Left to remember her life are her daughters, Susan (Stan) Gilland and Cindy Gustafson; seven grandchildren, Stacie (William) Day, Seth (Cindi) Gilland, Nicole Gustafson, Sarah (Curt) Hopkins, Melanie (Mike) Hatch, Scott (Ricki) Gilland, and Becky Gustafson; eighteen great-grandchildren, Mason and Katie Day, Lia and Ethan Gilland, Olivia, Sophia, Cameron, and Avery Hopkins, Hannah and Hayden Hatch, Brenden and Brylee Woolsey, Collin, Mikayla, Case, and Cooper Gilland, and Carter and Madison Gustafson and a sister, Patricia Hanson.

Visitation will be held from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 28, 2018, at Tharp Funeral Home in Albia, with Helen's family present from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. to greet family and friends.

Funeral services will be held at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, August 29, 2018, at the Tharp Funeral Home in Albia with Pastor Terry Chapman officiating. Burial will follow services at Oak View Cemetery in Albia.

Cemetery Details

Oak View Cemetery

Albia, IA 52531

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 28. 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Tharp Funeral Home
116 Benton Ave.
Albia, IA 52531
(641) 932-3129
<https://www.tharpfh.com/>

Funeral Service

AUG 29. 10:30 AM (CT)

Tharp Funeral Home
116 Benton Ave.
Albia, IA 52531
(641) 932-3129
<https://www.tharpfh.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Helen Jean Clark*

January 30, 2023 at 05:06 AM



“ *Helen Jean Clark*

January 30, 2023 at 02:53 AM

BC

“No one could ask for a more wonderful aunt than our Aunt Helen. She had the wisdom, perspective, and wit for a joyful spirit at all times. She forgave and understood as Jane and I yelled “Hi, Handsome!” out her station wagon window to any unfortunate male on the sidewalk, permitting our little prank to thrill us. She was generous with her time, writing letters back to me, a clumsy grade school correspondent, anytime I wrote to her. I will cherish reading those letters again!

We loved to pull out sheet music from the piano bench for her to play for us. Credit her for inspiring me to attempt to perform half so well! It was fun music: “Hit Parade” tunes and other merry songs linger in my memory.

We adored gathering the pie cherries (and savoring the divine pies) from her Albia backyard. The land abutted the cemetery where she did landscaping, so we joined her and played in that peaceful setting. She helped us find where a few of her brothers and a sister were buried there; and we learned that life was precious.

We learned what pregnancy looked like from her! We loved playing with those three frisky cousins! and then we learned again that life is dear.

She was a bright light in our lives.

Beth Cullison - August 28, 2018 at 06:26 PM



“Simply Happy Kalanchoe Plant was purchased for the family of Helen Jean Clark.



August 27, 2018 at 01:29 PM