



Helen Carol Van Natta

January 20, 1926 - November 9, 2018

Helen Carol Van Natta, 92, of Camas, WA, died Fri., Nov. 9, 2018, at the Ray Hickey Hospice House in Vancouver, WA. She was born Jan. 20, 1926 in Jersey City, NJ, to Nettie Grimm and John I. Meyers.

As a very young girl, Helen decided that making others happy would be her life's goal. She had a smile and kind word for everyone she met. Aware of her many blessings, "Thank you," was never far from Helen's lips.

Helen spent her early life in Bayonne, NJ in a household that included her paternal grandmother and aunt. After graduating from high school in Bayonne, she took additional instruction at Spencer's Business College and then worked for a local bank. A lifelong Lutheran, she was confirmed and married at Grace Lutheran Church in Bayonne. Helen was a natural athlete and excelled at racquet sports. She delighted in beating her children and grandchildren at ping-pong well into her 70's.

When Helen was 14, a young man delivering groceries on a bicycle collided with her father's parked car. Dazed and confused, Bill Van Natta looked up to see Helen staring down at him. Her slender figure, lovely light brown hair and big dimples captivated him. Like many other couples of their generation, WWII separated them-but they were reunited after Bill was discharged from the Navy and married in 1947.

In 1952, their first child, Carol, was born, followed by three sons, Wil, Jim and Jon. Their children were raised first in New Jersey and later in Vancouver. Helen and Bill considered their move to Vancouver in 1962 the best thing that ever happened to them. In 1968, Helen built her dream house on six acres of land near Columbia River High School. The property was dotted with nut trees and had lovely mountain views. They lived there until moving to the Vista del Rio community in 1989 where Helen pursued her hobbies of volkswalking, genealogy and woodcarving. She and Bill adored their seven lively grandchildren who called them "Oma" and "Opa". A meal at Oma and Opa's always featured German favorites such as sauerbraten and red cabbage.

Helen and Bill's unwavering devotion to each other was broken only by his death in 2010. Following Bill's death, Helen moved to The Quarry Senior Living and later to the Camas Hills Care Home. The family extends its most sincere thanks to Adela Bucur, Cristina Ilasca and Ashley Hurst for their loving care of Helen in her final years.

Helen is survived by her daughter, Carol Van Natta (Robert Burdick) of Vancouver; sons, Wil of San Diego, CA, Jim (Teresa) of Hockinson, WA and Jon of Ridgefield, WA; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and her nephews, Jeff and Jon E. Meyers.

Helen's memorial service will be at 11 a.m., Wed., Dec. 26, 2018, at Zion Lutheran Church, Camas. Lunch will follow at the church.

Please make gifts in Helen's memory to the Ray Hickey Hospice House, c/o the PeaceHealth Southwest Foundation, PO Box 1600, Vancouver, WA 98668.