



Helen Leone Whiles

February 18, 1915 - January 24, 2014

Helen Leone (Merrell) Whiles was born February 18, 1915 in Wakenda, Missouri to John and Nellie (Martin) Merrell. Her mother died from pregnancy complications when Helen was just 3 years old, so her grandmother helped raise her until her father remarried when she was 12. Helen was very close to her father, and was influenced by his attitude, which she said was always happy and one where his temper remained intact. She attended school in Wakenda, but her family moved to Carrollton, Missouri after her sophomore year, so Helen graduated from Carrollton High School in 1932.

After graduation, Helen moved to Moberly, Missouri with her sister, Audrey. She worked as an usher, and later ticket taker at the movie theater. She then took a job at the drug store, doing everything from stocking shelves to working as a soda jerk. While living in Moberly, Helen became "smitten" with a young man named Howard Whiles, and the two were married on January 29, 1935. Four children were born to the happy couple: James Howard Jr. (Jim), Martha, Sheryl, and Danis (Dan). The family moved from Missouri to Albia, Iowa, then in March 1942, after Howard had lived in Omaha for one month, Helen packed their 1938 Ford with the first of the two kids, and the dog in the front seat, and pots and pans, clothing, and other household items in the back seat, and with the kid's beds tied on top of the car, to head for Omaha. The trip became memorable when Helen was unable to stop due to faulty brakes on the Ford, and rear ended an Armour Meat Truck that was stopped at a light. The beds

went flying, as did the pots and pans, and items in the back seat. The kids bumped their heads and were crying, and the dog was barking. As Helen opened her car door to survey the damage, a can of Old Dutch Cleanser fell from the car and rolled down Dodge Street!

In Omaha, Helen worked a variety of jobs. She was employed for two years by Gate City Iron Works as an electric welder and drill press operator. Because of her small size, she often was placed in very narrow spaces to “back rivets”. At this same time, she attended night school at the Commercial Extension School of Commerce where she took comptometer and bookkeeping classes. She then took a job with a dentist, Dr. Sorenson, as a dental assistant and performed office work. For a time, she even held a job at Singer Sewing Machine, teaching sewing and selling machines. Helen became a stay-at-home Mom for many years, but a year after Howard’s death in 1986, she became the church secretary at Florence Christian Church, where she spent 10 years. Helen will be remembered as a happy, outgoing, sassy lady and a published poet, who enjoyed sewing, reading, doing beadwork, and bowling.

Helen passed away on Friday, January 24, 2014 at Golden Living Center-Valhaven in Valley, Nebraska at the age of 98 years, 11 months and six days. She was preceded in death by her husband Howard Whiles, sisters Audrey and Virginia, brothers Martin and John Paul, and granddaughter Melissa. Helen is survived by her children James and wife Jane Whiles of Overland Park, Kansas, Martha Benner of Deming, New Mexico, Sheryl and husband Tom Hunt of Bennington, Nebraska, and Dan and wife Dianna Whiles of Wilmer, Alabama; 10 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren, and 4 great great grandchildren; brother J.C. Merrell of Pittsburgh, Kansas; sister-in-law Dorothy and husband Robert Bell of Port Orange, Florida; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Helen L. Whiles, age 98, of Omaha, died 1/24/14. Preceded in death by husband J. Howard Whiles and granddaughter Melissa. Survived by children: James, and wife Jane Whiles of Overland Park, KS, Martha Benner of Deming, NM, Sheryl and husband Tom Hunt of Bennington, NE, and Dan & wife, Dianna Whiles of Wilmer, AL, 10 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren, and 4 great great grandchildren, brother: J.C. Merrell of Pittsburgh, KS, sister-in-law Dorothy and husband, Robert Bell of Port Orange, FL, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Memorial service 11 AM Saturday, 2/15/14, Florence Christian Church, 7300 Northridge Dr, Omaha. No visitation. Inurnment 9:30 AM prior to the service at Forest Lawn Cemetery. Memorials to the church.

Tribute Wall



“ *Helen Leone Whiles*

December 10, 2022 at 09:12 AM



“ *My sincere condolences to the family of Helen Leone Whiles â€“ I am sorry to hear of your loss. We naturally have the desire to continue to enjoy life because God put eternity in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). It was never the Creatorâ€TMS purpose for us to suffer or die. Death was introduced through Adam's disobedience (Romans 5:12). The Bible promises a resurrection of dear family members and friends that we have lost (John 5:28, 29). I hope you are comforted by Bible promises of a hopeful future (John 17:3).*

J Johnson - March 07, 2014 at 04:59 PM



“ *Helen was a resident at Seven Oaks of Florence when I was the Service Coordinator there. She was one of my favorite residents. What a wonderful lady. She used to come into my office and we would spend lots of time talking about her family whom she adored. My deepest sympathy to Helen's family.*

Jayne Ball - February 12, 2014 at 05:13 PM



“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you! Helen was SO special to our family! What an amazing lady. God Bless and comfort all of you.*

*Love and Prayers,
Curt, Kathy, Dan, Shelley, Derek, and Dustin!*

Ecklebe Family - February 03, 2014 at 12:00 PM

BO

“ *Sheryl and family,
We were very sad to learn of you mom's passing. She was a wonderful lady and I have very fond memories of her.
Our heartfelt sympathy to you and your family.*

Brack & Myrtis Olds - January 31, 2014 at 09:52 AM

JM

“ *So sad to hear of Aunt Helen's passing. Thoughts and prayers to you all.
Love, Jan (John Paul's Daughter)*

Jan Merrell Machovina - January 26, 2014 at 04:34 PM