

Helen Anne Parker



April 7, 1931 -
March 27, 2023

Helen died peacefully in Sidney B.C. early Monday morning. Born in Calgary to Ila (Tidsbury) and Harold Panabaker, Helen was raised under the open prairie skies with a view of the mountains she loved so much. She was imbued with a strong sense of lifetime learning and a deep caring for others. Helen was a graduate of the University of Alberta, attaining a BA in 1952. It was there she met John, the love of her life. Keen to further her education Helen moved to Montreal, where she attended McGill and completed her MSW. Helen and John were married in 1955 and began their life together in Yellowknife. Helen arrived in a blinding snowstorm, on a late milk run flight. So late that the Station Manager had gone home. John was there to push up the air stairs, welcoming Helen to her new home.

Helen threw herself into her new life, making lifelong friends, creating a home, raising a family and putting her training to work. She was integral to the establishment of the Yellowknife Children's Aid Society, worked tirelessly on many volunteer and Church committees and even managed to play a bit of bridge. Her love of music and the arts drove Helen to help in the creation of the Overture Concert Society, a group that brought classical music to Yellowknife. A consummate organizer, Helen took on everything with a sense of adventure. She was never intimidated and possessed an uncanny ability to "read the room". And she remembered everything; names, birthdays, details all gleaned from her incredible listening skills combined with the ability to ask the right questions.

An original trailblazer, Helen was one of the first women invited to join the Board of Directors of the Bank of Nova Scotia. At the time she was working as a school counselor, and entering the Bank's formal boardroom brought Helen into an entirely new world to explore. She stayed on the Board for many years, building yet more lifelong friends. Her board work continued with deep commitments to NorthwesTel and the Muttart Foundation.

Helen and John were avid travelers, always interested in new people and places. They were fortunate to travel so much of the world with family and dear friends. Helen's sense of adventure and desire to travel kept her in the air well into her eighties. Her last flight was to Calgary, then

onward to Lake Louise to visit "my mountains".

A friend to all, Helen loved to listen and counsel. She was a sounding board for many, including her grandchildren, with whom she forged deep relationships. Spending time with Grandma was special, almost as special as her chocolate chip cookies. Everyone that knew Helen will remember her beautiful smile, quick laugh and sense of fun. She seldom turned down a glass of wine, lunch out, or social invitation.

Helen was the ultimate communicator, connector and networker. She would stay in touch, share news and reach out, often at just the right moment when support was needed. Her network of friends spanned the world and the places special to Helen; Calgary, Edmonton, Yellowknife, Redrock Lake, Sidney and Yellowpoint to name a few. She knew how to write a great letter and used that skill to keep in touch with friends and family. We will all miss her annual Christmas letter.

Helen strongly valued all her relationships, the most important being with John, who she loved deeply. She is survived by, her children Sharon (Jim) Duke and Gordon (Jill Birch) Parker, her grandchildren Alyssa (Dan Wyman) Duke, Michael Duke, Graeme (Zena) Parker, Nigel (Karla Telidetzki) Parker, Victoria Parker, Alyson Parker, Clayton Birch and her great-grandchildren Nora, Isla, Rami and Karn. Helen was predeceased by John, and by her brother and sister in law Bill and Kathy Parker.

The family would like to thank the caring and compassionate staff of The Peninsula, Sidney All Care, and the palliative care team at the Saanich Peninsula Hospital. Donations in lieu of flowers are encouraged to the charity of your choice, or to the Helen and John Parker Community Fund managed by the Yellowknife Foundation; <https://www.ykcf.ca/home/grant-opportunities/helen-and-john-parker-community-fund/>

Helen requested that there be no service so please honour her memory however you think best. Perhaps you could get out the "good dishes" and raise a glass of Sauvignon Blanc, or just go for a relaxed hot dog picnic. Just remember to have some fun, and really connect to those around you. To express condolences please refer to First Memorial Funeral Services; <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/victoria-bc/helen-parker-11223056>