



# Helen Riley Nichols

MAR 13, 1928 - MAY 28, 2006



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MORAN & GOEBEL  
FUNERAL HOME AND  
CREMATION SERVICES

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## **Helen Riley Nichols**

MAR 13, 1928 - MAY 28, 2006

**H**elen Riley Nichols, 78, of Decatur, died on Sunday, May 28, 2006 in Decatur. Memorial services celebrating her life will be 3 pm Saturday, June 3, 2006 in the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at the corner of Mound Road and North MacArthur Road. The family will receive friends from 2:30 pm until the service time at the fellowship.

She was born March 13, 1928 in Buffalo, New York the daughter of James Walker Riley and Helen Cameron Holden. She studied nursing at Sisters of Charity Hospital, Buffalo, N. Y., earning her Registered Nurse degree. After graduation she moved to New York City where she worked for eleven years at Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, as a staff nurse, clinical instructor and operating room supervisor. During this period she also attended Hunter College graduating with honors with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education.

Helen married George K. Nichols on September 4, 1960 in Tupper Lake, New York. In 1962 they moved to Decatur, Illinois. Here they were active in the Commodore Decatur Yacht Club, racing their Snipe sailboat. In 1973 she went to work at Decatur Memorial Hospital serving as a staff nurse, head nurse and eventually Director of Materials Management over a period of sixteen years, retiring in 1989. She helped plan the first Oncology Unit and was the head nurse there. After retirement she and her husband traveled throughout the United States and Canada in their travel trailer for ten years.

Her husband, sons, Mark H. Nichols and Christopher J. Nichols and his wife, Lisa Nichols as well as her grandchildren A.J., Kiel, Mellisa Turpin and Riley and Alyx Nichols survive her. Her sister, Mary Roizen, of Fort Worth, Texas and her brother Eugene Riley of Pipe Creek, Texas, also survive her. She also leaves many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Her parents, her brother, James W. Riley and her daughter, Amy Susan Nichols,



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preceded her in death.

Helen was an avid reader and always carried a book with her. She was also a serious music lover and enjoyed opera, symphony concerts and ballet. She enjoyed playing bridge and for years played regularly with a group of friends. Her most interesting hobby was genealogy. She spent many hours researching her family and was able to trace back to 1642. Her family history research involved travel in the United States, Canada, England, Scotland and Ireland.

Memorials are suggested to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis TN. 38105.

The family of Helen Riley Nichols is being served by the Moran & Goebel Funeral Home, 2801 N. Monroe St. Decatur.



## Tribute Wall

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SB

**Shirley Bates** posted:

Dear George and family, So sorry to learn of Helen's passing. I'm sorry I didn't know her longer but I'm thankful for the few years that I had. Please accept my deepest sympathy. She has been in my prayers as you and your family will be. IN Sympathy, Shirley Her third cousin once removed  
Southampton, PA US

June 17 at 7:00 PM

BM

**Bonnie Matthews** posted:

George, thank you so much for sending me the literature from Helen's services. I was so sorry not to be able to attend. I hope that the floral arrangement with the angel that Kris Nelson and I sent will fill a special place in your heart when you see your angel in your yard. My mother passed away a few months ago, and someone sent my Dad an angel that he placed in the backyard where they used to watch the birds and squirrels. He found great comfort in having his own angel above and in their yard. I know how much you two loved the view in your yard from your picture window. Please know that Helen holds a very special place in my heart. She was my first boss as a new RN and hired me straight to day shift before I had finished school. I will never forget her. Bonnie Matthews decatur, IL US

June 9 at 7:00 PM

RJ

**Randy Janes** posted:

Dear Mark & Family: Mrs. Nichols must have been a joy to live with. I did not know her...but from her obit she lead a full life and was truly a pioneering spirit. God Bless you all. Mt. Zion, IL US

June 2 at 7:00 PM

LA

**Lori Althoff** posted:

George, Please accept my deepest condolences on the passing of your wife. I will be thinking of you and your family in the days to come. Will look forward to seeing you this summer at Dr. Artime's office when I clean your teeth. Love, Lori Decatur, IL US

June 2 at 7:00 PM



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**Linda M. Riley-Pacelli** posted:

George and Family:My deepest sympathies with your loss and my prayers I offer as comfort to solace your soul and maintain your memories.She will always be very special too me and is walking with the angels as I write this.God BlessLinda & Joe Mulberry, FL US

June 2 at 7:00 PM



**Deborah Twardy & Robert Hopkins** posted:

George and Family, Helen was a joy to know and we mourn her passing with you. She was not just our cousin, but also our dear friend. You are in our thoughts. Love, Bob & Deb Pittsburgh, PA US

June 2 at 7:00 PM



**Roger Leiser** posted:

To the Nichols FamilySeveral week before she died, Helen called and asked if I would say a few words at her memorial. It was a request I had never had before from someone who knew their death was imminent. On the phone she was calm and seemed accepting of her future. I couldn't know how she was in private moments and with her family.When I was president of the Fellowship, Helen was vice-president. It was many years ago, in the 70s I think. In the last few years my memory has become very bad. I tried to remember some events from that time to tell you. No luck, the details are just gone!But, the impressions are very clear! Here are my feelings of that period.She was such a joy to work with,Never complained, just said "I'll do that",A rare combination of competenceAnd good nature,Plus a gentle and insightfulSense of humorMy frequent comment to others is "If you have to be president of anything,Make sure Helen will be vice-president,She makes it fun and easy"One last comment, in 1997 ,I asked her what authors she liked. She decided send me a list.She did, three pages full. Her closing , on page three was "Thought it might work better if I sent you a list.THERE WILL BE A QUIZ!..HELEN" Decatur, IL US

June 2 at 7:00 PM



**Joan Cameron** posted:

Helen was a wonderful cousin. We are going to miss her very much. We will miss all her cheerful letters and news of the family as well as all her help on family history. Sincere sympathy and will be thinking of you.Joan and Janet Sudbury, ON Canada

June 1 at 7:00 PM



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JF

**Jennifer Smith And Family** posted:

I am sorry for your loss, she was a wonderful person and will be greatly missed east amherst, NY US

June 1 at 7:00 PM

AA

**Ann Andersen** posted:

Dear George, I am so very sorry to hear of the death of your wife. I know you shared so many interests and you will miss her dearly. I will be thinking of you in the time to come. Ann Andersen  
Aurora, CO US

June 1 at 7:00 PM

CW

**Cameron Wingers** posted:

Mark, On behalf of the IBM Team, we offer our condolences to you and your family members. Cameron Wingers OVERLAND PARK, KS US

May 31 at 7:00 PM

KR

**Karen Riley** posted:

George and family... I feel privileged and honored to have had an Aunt that was so fun to be around. The last few years her emails were something I looked forward to. Our last talk a few weeks ago was wonderful and will be treasured by me. Helen always made me feel important and I loved the stories she shared about times spent with my dad. She gave me a love for geneology and family. I will think of her often and remember her with a great love. I hope there is a peace now that her journey here is completed. My love and prayers to all of you. KR Grand Island, NY US

May 31 at 7:00 PM

DR

**Donna Riley** posted:

George & Family, Although my visits with Aunt Helen were short and far between I was glad for the time we did have. She could always tell a good story and make you laugh. My deepest sympathy to all Buffalo, NY, IL US

May 31 at 7:00 PM



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JP

**Jerry Person** posted:

I did not know Helen, but working with her son, Mark, I know that she was a great mother and wife. May God bless you all. Lees Summit, MO US

May 31 at 7:00 PM

ES

**Emma And Paul Smith** posted:

For my dear cousin and his family. How sad, she is missed, but we know she is out of pain and at peace. Lakeland, FL US

May 30 at 7:00 PM

TR

**Thomas Riley** posted:

Olney, MD US

May 30 at 7:00 PM

DR

**David & Joannie Ruedi** posted:

Please accept our condolences. I remember Mrs. Nichols well from my youth – always moving with a purpose and direct. Having spent a good deal of time in her home, I can truly say that she made me feel welcome, while challenging me to be a better person. I trust she maintained the same drive throughout her life. Although, we haven't seen her in a number of years, we will miss her. Virginia Beach, VA US

May 30 at 7:00 PM

RB

**Reverend John S Biedler** posted:

With sadness and loving care, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur sends it's support and condolences to George Nichols and the extended Nichols family. Decatur, IL US

May 30 at 7:00 PM

BL

**Betty Lewis** posted:

Mark & family, Our hearts and prayers are with you all. Betty & your N.C. family Point Harbor,, NC US

May 30 at 7:00 PM



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KS

**Karen Spaulding** posted:

Dear George and Family,I am so sorry for your loss. Helen is at peace now.I am going to make one of the dessert recipes she sent me. She sent them after you came to have dinner at my house two summers ago. I thought that was such an awesome idea, to share a favorite recipe! She explained who the recipe was from and told little stories with each one.I will keep all of you in my prayers. Take one day at a time and talk about her as often as you can!!Love – Karen Spaulding Colden, NY US

May 30 at 7:00 PM

JF

**June Allison & Chelso Frescura** posted:

The spirit of life in Helen will be remembered by those who loved her. We send our sincere condolences. Decatur, IL US

May 30 at 7:00 PM

JR

**Judy Riley** posted:

Helen is one of the dearest people I've ever had the pleasure to meet. We had so much fun with Mom, Dad, Helen, George and Mary at Gene and Casey's home—at the "Turkey Cook-Off"—all of those many years ago; T & I still talk about it! My condolences to everyone who is near and dear to her. xox -Judy Olney, MD US

May 30 at 7:00 PM

JT

**Judy & Tommy** posted:

In loving remembrance of Helen from the both of us. xox OLNEY, MD US

May 30 at 7:00 PM

MW

**Maria Montour Wolf** posted:

Dear Nichols Family:Our family sends its deepest sympathy for the loss of Helen. My mom and Helen were nursing buddies and is very sadden by the loss of such a good friend. Our prayers our with you and your family at this time.SincerelyWilma Montour and Family Tonawanda, NY US

May 29 at 7:00 PM



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MC

**Mary S. Cleave** posted:

Please accept our condolences. Forsyth, IL US

May 29 at 7:00 PM

GS

**George And Kim Stanhope** posted:

We're very sorry for your loss and hope your happy memories of your life and love together will bring you much comfort. Champaign, IL US

May 29 at 7:00 PM

SC

**Sally Spaulding Cambio** posted:

George and Family,I look at my Mom's print you gave her of the tree often and think of you and Helen. Please know that you are all in our thoughts and prayers. I believe it is one happy reunion with Mom, Dad, Helen, Audrey and Jimmy. Take care and please keep in touch. Springville, NY US

May 29 at 7:00 PM

AS

**Ann & Ray Stanhope** posted:

Helen was our friend and we will miss her. Her intellect, her sense of humor and her practical approach to life were refreshing. How much more she will be missed by her siblings, her children and her grandchildren. Most of all she will be missed by her friend, partner and husband of over forty-five years. A life long companion can not be replaced and will always be missed. Helen will remain always in our memories and we will remember her with fondess.Ann and Ray Stanhope Champaign, IL US

May 29 at 7:00 PM

AH

**Anna T. Hollin** posted:

Chris,Jack and I are so sorry. We wish we could be there with you.Your Mother had a wonderful life and I know you are glad she is not suffering anymore.Lots of love,Grandmother Prospect, KY US

May 29 at 7:00 PM



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SU

**Suzannespaulingvattimo** posted:

George and family, I think about how happy you made my mom with the print of the tree and think of you and Helen every time I look at it. My prayers are with you. Rochester, NY US

May 29 at 7:00 PM

RA

**Randy And Ron** posted:

Helen was a joy to have as a friend. I will dearly miss her wit and humor. She brightened my days when we worked together at DMH, and our LSB lunches including our last one this past Christmas were always a highlight for me. The earth was a much better place because she was in it. Fort Lauderdale, FL US

May 28 at 7:00 PM

MA

**Margaret Allen** posted:

GEORGE AND FAMILY, I AM SO SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS. THE SPAULDING FAMILY HAVE ALL OF YOU IN OUR PRAYERS AND THOUGHTS. I WILL MISS HELEN'S E-MAILS. I ENJOYED HER STORY TELLING. SHE ALWAYS MADE YOU LAUGHT. LOVE MARGARET AND FAMILY buffalo, NY US

May 28 at 7:00 PM

BD

**Barbara Dove** posted:

Dear George and family -I'm so terribly sorry for your loss. Decatur, IL US

May 28 at 7:00 PM

AJ

**Aj** posted:

Normal, IL US

May 28 at 7:00 PM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Helen by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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