



Helen Madden Nicholas

February 27, 1923 - August 3, 2015

Helen Marie Madden Nicholas, daughter of Richard Francis and Helen (Gausepohl) Madden Sr., was born, February 27, 1923, in Indianapolis, Indiana. After graduating from Monticello Preparatory School in Godfrey, Illinois, she attended Connecticut College for Women (now Connecticut College) in New London. She majored in English and after her D-Day graduation, she was hired by the accounting firm Price-Waterhouse and was promptly sent off to a special course at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Following that training, she joined the Price-Waterhouse New York office and worked as a bookkeeper. Like many of Helen's friends, she was eager to live in New York City but found that one year was enough. Returning to Indianapolis, she worked for The Indianapolis News, chiefly writing for the women's pages. She always maintained that it was the most fun of any job she ever had.

In New York City, Helen met Lowell Nicholas while he was serving in the Navy. When he was hired as a lawyer for the Better Business Bureau in Indianapolis, they were married. In the late 1940's, they moved to Des Moines, Iowa because Lowell was transferred to that office with the BBB. Her daughters were born and educated in Des Moines. Helen's mother's health required her to return to Indianapolis in 1974. Eventually she was able to establish a new career as a bookkeeper for a real estate development company. She was forced to learn how to use a computer as a part of her job and later came to find them indispensable. After her "official" retirement Helen

developed a business as a private bookkeeper for ill and elderly persons, helping them monitor their investments.

Indianapolis was where she was born and had her early education, thus she had many good friends in the area. She soon became re-integrated with a group of eleven school chums and they enjoyed each other's company for many years. At the time of her death, only one of these friends survived her. Helen enjoyed golfing throughout most of her life and her lifetime scorecard boasted three holes-in-one.

In August 2010, Helen decided to return to Des Moines to be closer to her two daughters and their families. She was welcomed warmly into the Scottish Rite Park Residence and made many dear friends there. She was an avid reader and the Des Moines Public Library soon became one of her weekly destinations. She also enjoyed classical music and was a passionate fan of violinist Joshua Bell.

Helen passed away Monday evening, August 3, 2015, with her daughters at her side, at the Taylor House Hospice in Des Moines. She was 92 years, 5 months and 4 days of age.

Her family includes her daughters: Barbara Vanderwilt of Oskaloosa and Nancy (Mike) Itani of Adel; four grandsons: Ben (Shelby) Vanderwilt and Todd (Ashley) Vanderwilt, both of Oskaloosa and Nelson Atani and Joseph Itani both of Adel; three great-grandchildren: Brooklyn, Beckett and Claire Vanderwilt; a brother, Richard F. Madden Jr. of Indianapolis, IN; a niece, Cathy (Robert) Turner of Zionsville, IN; a nephew, Rick (Molly) Madden of Los Lunas, NM; and several great nieces.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Lowell and her son-in-law, Marc Vanderwilt.

Private Celebration of Life Services will be held. Burial will be in Union Mills Cemetery in Mahaska County, IA. Memorials contributions may be made to the Des Moines Public Library and Scottish Rite Park Miller Fund.

Tribute Wall



“ *Helen Madden Nicholas*

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