



## REMEMBERING Helen Bartel

February 19, 1937 - September 2, 2023



Helen was born to Jake and Mary Willms on February 19, 1937 at 12:00 midnight on a cold, blizzard - like night, in Hepburn, Saskatchewan. She weighed in at 10 lbs. They named her Helen, in honor of her paternal grandmother, Helen Braun/Willms and her maternal grandmother, Helen Derksen/Tieszen. She passed into the presence of her Lord and Savior, whom she loved, on September 2, 2023, leaving behind 3 sisters; Mary Kornelsen, Rosella Martens, Elizabeth (John) Wiebe and 1 brother, Harry (Leona) as well as the Bartel family. She was predeceased by her husband Hans and brother Jake.

As the youngest sister, Helen played an important part in my life. We shared the largest of the four bedrooms upstairs in the old farmhouse. Just below our window facing west, was the roof over the Bay window of the dining room and reaching right up to our window were the branches of a lilac bush. A little farther away was a huge snowball tree and grape vines, and beyond that stood a fruit orchard of pears apples and cherries of different varieties. Dad planted raspberries behind the chicken barn. Dad used a horse drawn plough to cultivate between the rows and I remember Helen having to ride the horse. I thought she was very brave. Later the raspberries gave way to chicken shelters. Helen's major chores on the farm were to feed the chickens, gather the eggs and clean them. Somehow, she got out of milking cows. Why, I'm not sure. With raspberries and strawberries and a huge vegetable garden to keep clean and cows to herd along Selin's Rd, there were lots of chores for all of us. But we also had our fun times.

Helen: "Growing up was a lot more fun because of you.

I felt so much braver on our "adventures" when you were beside me.

The jokes seemed even sillier when you were laughing along.

Even chores or homework didn't seem so bad as

long as we were grumbling about them together.

Somehow, I always felt better and life looked brighter with you along."

We played with dolls. I was so jealous of that beautiful doll with hair, moving arms and legs and with the doll carriage you got for Christmas. The electric stove that really made hot chocolate and baked real biscuits was so much fun. We spent endless hours building roads, tunnels and castles in the patch of dirt next to the twin spruce trees, riding bikes, playing baseball with the neighbours, naming cars from the veranda, these were some of the things we enjoyed growing up. Later, we went to choir practice and mid-week prayer meetings and talked for hours with our friends. In some ways I was her shadow, following her. She did the talking and I depended on her a lot. She always showed she cared about me.

Helen's accomplishments are worth mentioning. Helen entered grade one in September, 1943 in Richmond School in Mennon, Saskatchewan, at the age of 6 ½ years and completed her elementary grades in Cheam School in Chilliwack, BC. Here, she was chosen "May Queen" and wore the crown proudly. Helen excelled in school scoring A's and B's. She was an excellent student and graduated from Chilliwack Senior High, June 9, 1955. In the yearbook she declared that her secret ambition was to go to college in the U.S. (that never happened) and answering the phone was a "HEADACHE".

Helen worked in the office of Country Freight Lines Ltd. for 2 years and 2 months. Later, at Cherry Motors for approximately 6 ½ yrs and then as dental receptionist for Dr. Thomas. This is where Hans Bartel admired this tall lady in the office when he came for his appointments. Eventually Hans and Helen went for a date and we all know what happened. They married November 28, 1981 and enjoyed 33 years of marriage. She instantly became a mother, grandmother and friend to Hans' family.

Helen was the only one of her sisters to own her own car. The first one was a 2-door red and white Chev. By the way, she let me drive it and get my licence with it, even though I almost landed it in the ditch. The next car was a blue Studebaker Lark and then a 1964 Ford Fairlane.

Helen travelled to various parts of Canada, the USA and the Holy Land. Later, with Hans, she spent a year in Refugee Missions in Germany.

Helen always took her spiritual life seriously. I remember the night she went downstairs to ask Mom and Dad to help her invite Jesus into her life. She was 11. Later she made a new commitment at a youth meeting. She was baptized and sang in the choir. She shared her faith freely and courageously. Helen attended East Chilliwack Bible School for 2 years, graduating on June 2, 1957. The Bible verse given to her was Isaiah 26:3 "You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you." She taught Sunday School in Laidlaw, a

Mission outreach of East Chilliwack MB Church 1958-1965.

Life has not always been easy for Helen. The muscular problem with her neck was difficult for her. Many times over the years I prayed that God would heal her but instead He chose to give her grace to bear it. She was not known to complain much about it.

Helen's love and interest and above all her prayers for family including siblings, nieces and nephews will ne missed. We were blessed to have her in our family. Rest in peace until we meet again. What a Day that will be!

