



## Helen B. Johnson

September 8, 1932 - October 25, 2016

Helen Bos Johnson. Born Helen May Bos on September 8, 1932 she was the second of four children. She grew up in East Detroit and was a child of the depression. As a young girl she would spend her summers on Platte Lake in northern Michigan enjoying the water and woods. She received her bachelor's degree in education from Olivet Nazarene College in Kankakee, Illinois. She dated a young man named Jim Johnson as a freshman, but decided she was too young to get serious. Later in college she found love and married a brash young man named Floyd Kanipe. Floyd was a minister in the Nazarene church. They would raise three children together and move from town to town following pastoral assignments. Eventually they landed in Lansing, Michigan.

Helen came from an era of housewives and clearly defined gender roles, yet she was not one to be easily categorized. Instead, through sheer will and unflinching courage, she went back to school and earned a Master's degree from Central Michigan University. Helen would have a long career as a high school guidance counselor in Perry, Michigan. Eventually she retired from teaching, and after forty seven years of marriage she divorced her husband and purchased a condominium in Charlotte, Michigan. Imagine the courage to take such a bold step so late in life.

Helen threw herself into her new community by volunteering at the local hospital and hospice care. She found a new church and made new friends in

Charlotte. As chance would have it her former boyfriend from Olivet reached out to her (50+ years later). Jim Johnson had lost his wife some years before and wrote Helen a letter from across time. Within months they had reconnected and were married. Jim relocated from Nashville, Tennessee to Charlotte. For thirteen years they kept each other company, and laughed at each other's jokes. They tended a garden together for a couple of years (giving most of the food away to friends and charities). They doted on their grandchildren and were active in their church and community.

On Tuesday, October 25, 2016 Helen passed away quietly at their home in Charlotte. Those who knew her will find a void has opened in their lives, and yet they are so much richer for having known her. The combination of her depression era sensibilities and her bright mind gave her a unique approach to the world. Her unflagging belief in the Creator made her a wonderful evangelist for all that is good in this world. It is with sadness and a selfish sense of loss that we say goodbye to her.

She is survived by her husband Jim Johnson; brother Bill (Kay) Bos; three children Cindy Kanipe (George Illig), Greg Kanipe, Kent Kanipe (Wendy Glatfelter); and six grandchildren Jacob Kanipe-Illig, Max Kanipe-Illig, Mark Kanipe, Miles Kanipe, Nathan Kanipe, and Jessica Kanipe.

Friends and family are encouraged to visit Helen's tribute page at [www.prayfuneral.com](http://www.prayfuneral.com) to share memories and condolences. The family is in the care of Pray Funeral Home.

# Tribute Wall

LI

“ When Helen married my brother, Jim Johnson, I too became to love her as my sister. Wish we had more time in these short years of their marriage to get better acquainted. My husband and I made two trips with them to the Grand Hotel for a few days of enjoyment and shopping. They came to Springfield, MO to visit us many times. Helen was a delightful person with so much talent and love for everyone. We will miss her deeply and and so glad we have such happy memories of her and her love for Christ. She had a great personality and we shared like sisters things close to our hearts.  
*Lois Ingalls and Jim Ingalls*

---

**Lois Ingalls** - November 16, 2016 at 07:17 AM

DA

“ Dear Cindy, I can not tell you how heart broken I am to hear of your moms passing. There is not enough space here to tell you what she meant to me. Or how many hours we spent talking & laughing. Thank you for sharing her with me... and all of us at PHS.... but ESP with me, she was just like a mom to me. Sarah & I will NEVER forget her endless kindness to both of us..... esp at a time when I was a struggling single parent! She was wonderful beyond measure and I loved her very much!!!!  
*Sincerely, Debbie Adams*

---

**Debra Adams** - October 30, 2016 at 07:08 PM

KC

“ *Kim & Dan Curran lit a candle in memory of Helen B. Johnson*



---

**Kim & Dan Curran** - October 29, 2016 at 11:22 AM

DA

“ *Helen was a good friend and neighbor. I will miss her. She and Jim were such good people. May God Bless the family. Donna*

Donna Allen - October 28, 2016 at 06:47 PM

DA

“ *Donna Allen lit a candle in memory of Helen B. Johnson*



Donna Allen - October 27, 2016 at 09:21 AM

DA

*Helen was a dear friend. Jim was a wonderful husband. I will miss seeing Helen out walking and at church. May she rest in peace. Donna*

Donna Allen - October 27, 2016 at 09:25 AM

GC

*What a great loss in our community, Helen you will be missed. Jim and the family God Bless  
Gayle Clement*

Gayle Clement - October 27, 2016 at 11:19 AM

SH

*Helen was a devoted wife, mother and friend, so caring to all she met. We will miss her encouragement to all of us and that wonderful smile on her face. You will always be in my heart, Helen, you're in God's care forever. Sharon*

Sharon Hice - October 28, 2016 at 12:35 PM

FJ

*The Volunteers of HGB Hospital appreciated Helen's dedication and service during the time she served at the hospital. Always with a smile and willing to help. It was great to work with her. She will be missed. Our prayers and thoughts are with the family.*

*HGB. Volunteers*

---

**Frankie Johnson** - October 28, 2016 at 06:52 PM

MK

*Helen was a very special hospice volunteer in our kitchen. With Jim they fed many families and patients every week. They were a very special couple. Jim, we at Eaton Community Palliative Care are deeply sorry for your loss. May you feel God's loving arms around you and may the love of your friends and family give you strength during this difficult time. Margaret Kyser and the volunteers and staff at Eaton Community Palliative Care.*

---

**Margaret Kyser** - October 28, 2016 at 10:36 PM