



Helen Burke

January 1, 1

Typically, when we refer to those comprising the "greatest generation," we think of the men who survived the great depression, then served in WW II, and came home to help build America as it became a true super power. So often, we forget the women of that era. Helen M. (McLoughlin) Burke was one of those women. Helen passed away peacefully on August 22nd, 2011.

Helen was born in 1924, the daughter of Bridget, (Walsh), and Thomas McLoughlin then living on Sunset Avenue in Lawrence, and shortly after her birth moved to Methuen. Her mother, always known to the grandchildren as Marney, was first generation American and one of twelve siblings. She had to leave school in the eighth grade when her mother became ill. Her father was born in England, his parents being en-route to America from Ireland, and worked for the Curran & Joyce Company. Most of Helen's aunts and uncles worked in the textile mills in Lawrence as did most of their contemporaries. Helen had two brothers who she loved deeply, Thomas and John. Both brothers are pre-deceased, both served in the armed services.

In 1942, Helen started working as an operator for AT&T in Lawrence, located on Common Street. Helen worked for AT&T for twenty-six years, (non-consecutive), most of the time as a temporary employee. In those days working a split shift, (i.e., 9:00 am till 1:00 p.m., then 6:00 p.m. till 11:00 p.m.), was not unusual. Busses, taxis and walking were the modes of commuting to and from work. One could not leave their shift until their replacement arrived so punctuality became a way of life. "Casual dress," a term yet to be coined, was saved for those rare but highly enjoyed trips to the beach.

Helen always remembered the evening of May 7th, 1945 when all operators were called and told to report to work at 6:00 a.m. the following morning, not knowing that May 8th would come to be known as V-E Day (Victory in Europe). Again, one must remember a world when all long distance calls went through operators, a world of telephone booths when operators would have to calculate the cost of the call, and then have to listen to ensure the correct change was deposited "a world when people made "person-to-person" calls. The world was changing rapidly, and Helen changed with it.

On June 19, 1949, Helen married Walter S. Burke of Lowell. As newlyweds, and due to work requirements, Helen and Walter moved to Miami where they lived for about a year,

until the birth of their first son was imminent. They returned to the Merrimack Valley and lived for a short time in Methuen before buying a house in North Andover in the early fifties. It was in this home, and as members of St. Michaels Parish, that Helen and Walter raised their three sons. For about thirty years, multi-generational gatherings of the extended family and dear friends took place every week for Sunday dinner at Helen's home.

In 1985, Helen and Walter moved to Salem, NH to enjoy their retirement years, which they did, and became members of Mary Queen of Peace Parish. All of her grandchildren have fond memories of their many visits to Pop and Grammy's home.

In June of 2008, Walter passed away, just days after their 59th wedding anniversary. About two years after Walter's death, Helen moved into Greystone Farm, an assisted living facility in Salem.

Helen is survived by her three sons and their families, Thomas and Brenda of Salem NH, John and Debbie of Chester, NH, Michael and Marianne Baker of Salem/Harrisburg PA, and daughter in law, Ellen Burke of Hampstead NH. Helen had six grandchildren, Patrick, Christopher, Sean, Katherine, Bridget, and Kerri, as well as one great-grandchild, Olivia. Two other great grandchildren are expected in the coming weeks. Helen is also survived by her life-long friend, Mary Blackwell of North Andover/Seabrook. Mary has and will always be known affectionately as "Aunt Mary" by the Burke family. The family would like to thank Dr. Kuchipudi and her staff, the staff of Greystone Farm, and to all those family members, friends and acquaintances, too numerous to mention, who had shown kindness and thoughtfulness to Helen throughout the years.

In lieu of flowers the family requests that all friends, acquaintances and readers of this notice perform continued, unselfish random acts of kindness and think a kind thought of Helen while doing so.

A Funeral Service will take place on Thursday morning at 10:30 at the Kenneth H. Pollard Funeral Home, Inc. 233 Lawrence Street Methuen.

Friends will be warmly received on Thursday at the funeral home from 9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.