



Helen Flower

APR 9, 1917 - SEP 21, 2018



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Helen Long Flower's prayer to go home to be with Jesus was answered on Friday, Sept. 21, 2018. She was 101 years old. In recent years she became confused about many things, but that wish was often on her lips and in her heart. She often asked her care-givers and visitors if they knew Jesus and would be going to heaven. Her family was thankful that she always knew us and knew she was loved and cared for. We had a family reunion to celebrate her hundredth birthday in 2017 and more than 50 family members came. As the party was coming to an end, Lorena asked Mom to pray for us all. She thanked the Lord for the family gathering and the good time we had together. Then she prayed that each one of us would follow Christ and live our lives in service for Him. The spiritual values that have guided her life were still evident, though she had lost memory of the things that did not matter so much. Helen Long was born April 9, 1917, in the house her father, Bert Long, built for his bride, Blanche Green Long, in 1903. Her grandfather, William Long, had settled on the land in 1868. William's parents, Valentine and Phrana Long, had moved their family to Iowa in 1849 because of the availability of land for their large family. He was able to buy nearly 1,000 acres from the government (some for 25 cents/acre) and gave each of his eight sons a farm. William chose to sell his land north of Centerville and buy the land near Seymour. Bert bought his brothers' (Will and Henry) shares of the farm when William died. A son born to Bert and Blanche in 1906 died shortly after birth, and they had little hope of more children when Helen surprised them at age 40. Helen attended the one-room school about a mile from the farm--starting in second grade at age 5 because her Mother, a former teacher, had already taught the basics. She graduated from Seymour High School in 1933 at age 16. Helen went to Iowa Success School in Ottumwa, studied shorthand and typing and other office skills, and babysat to earn her room and board. She was brought up in church, but accepted Christ as her Savior at a tent meeting in Ottumwa. As she began to study the



Bible in earnest, she decided she must break up with a boyfriend who was not a Christian. In 1935 she learned of Open Bible Institute in Des Moines and decided to get a job in Des Moines and attend night classes. When she graduated from the Institute in 1938, she was asked to become the Registrar of the school. She met Marlen Flower there and they were married January 1, 1939. Helen continued her job at the school and church during the war years while Marlen served in India and China, and her sister-in-law, Evilo, cared for the two boys. Marlen returned in January 1946 and resumed his job as bookkeeper for a meat packing plant. However, word soon came that Bert Long was ill and likely would not live long. They made the decision to move to Seymour and Marlen would learn to be a farmer. He credited the night classes he took and his good neighbors for helping in those early years. Life centered around church and family--and music. Helen found time to sit at the piano with each of the children while they practiced to make sure they were learning it correctly. They lived at the family farm for 51 years until 1997 when they moved to Greenville, South Carolina to be near their children. Marlen died in 2007. Helen lived with Lorena and Ken for 10 years until she required more care. Helen loved both her vegetable garden and flower garden. She excelled in her sewing and cooking skills. She served the Lord at First Baptist Church of Seymour as pianist, Sunday School teacher, Awana leader, and mentor, along with Marlen, to young Christians. She is survived by her sons, Dennis (Ruth Ann) of Elche, Spain, and Lance (Janet) of Greenville, SC, and her daughters, Lorena (Ken) West of Simpsonville, SC, and Nancy Smith (fiance' Guy Watkins) of Greenville, SC, as well as 11 grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren. A service was held at Mackey Mortuary on Century Drive in Greenville at 3:00 on Monday, Sept. 24 with visitation from 1:30 - 2:45. The Iowa service will be held at Thomas Funeral Home in Seymour on Friday, September 28, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. with visitation beginning at 10:00 a.m. Helen will be buried beside her beloved husband, Marlen at Southlawn Cemetery. To send flowers or a memorial gift to the family of Helen Flower please visit our Sympathy Store. Cemetery Details Southlawn Cemetery Visitation SEP 28. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CDT) Thomas Funeral Homes - Seymour 307 W. Wall StSeymour, IA 52590[(#)] Funeral



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SB

Susan Bunnell posted:

Thank you for giving to the Lord I am a life that was changed May the Lord bless Helen for her gracious service in the name of Jesus and also the Baptist Church for reaching out to the children of Seymour through the years with Awana and Vacation Bible School. Susan Merritt Bunnell Chiang Mai Thailand

October 19 at 7:00 PM

TB

Trenna Brown posted:

What a wonderful lady! So many memories come to mind when I think of her! She served her Lord well, and taught many of us so much! My prayers for the family, but such a blessing to know we will see her again! Trenna (Pick) Brown

October 2 at 7:00 PM

CR

Cindy Banks-Radke posted:

I grew up attending the First Baptist Church in Seymour and have fond memories of both Helen and Marlen. She is home with her Savior. Prayers to the family. Cindy Banks-Radke

September 27 at 7:00 PM

RK

Ruth Ann Pister-Kohn posted:

Lanny, please accept my deepest sympathy in the death of your mother. I enjoyed reading the story of her life. Although I didn't know her well, I knew she was a God-loving lady and raised her family in the same way. God bless you and the rest of your family! Ruth Ann Bristow Pister-Kohn

September 27 at 7:00 PM

EB

Emerald Garden Basket posted:

Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Helen Flower.

September 24 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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