



Helen Ruth

April 21, 1928 - January 2, 2026

Helen Ruth, beloved mother, grandmother, and dear friend passed away peacefully in the early morning of Friday January 2, 2026, in Austin, Texas at 97 years of age. Helen was a remarkable woman of strength and resilience - a ray of light with a fiercely independent spirit, a quick mind and strong will. She was a masterful gardener who loved black coffee and a little something sweet no matter the time of day along with a good book to read.

She was born Helen Ruth Mouser on April 21, 1928, in Nevada County, Southwest Arkansas near the town of Emmet to William Isaac Mouser (48) and Mary Frances Mouser, née Purtle (44). She was the youngest of seven children. Her siblings, Charles, Jack, and Willard Mouser, Margaret (Mouser) Peyton, Hazel Marie (Mouser) Meyer, and Mae Elizabeth (Mouser) Beaty, either married or went off to war when she was a young child.

Helen often shared memories growing up in rural Arkansas during the depression and second world war. She had a great deal of freedom, roaming the woods and countryside where she developed her love of plants and nature. This experience surely contributed to her strong will, tenacity to chart her own path, and her deep, spiritual connection to the soil.

After graduating from Pine Bluff High School, where she excelled in literature, reading, writing, and journalism, Helen worked for the Pine Bluff Newspaper.

In 1947, she moved to Houston, Texas, where she worked in the oil and gas industry for many years.

Helen married musician and multi-instrumentalist James "Jim" Hintikka in 1952. Helen and Jim traveled on the road, living in a trailer with Jim's band, Johnny Johnson and the Streamliners, before settling into a home in the City of Bellaire with their son Paul. They were active in the Unitarian Church, where Jim played concerts and Helen acted with the Channing Players.

Helen and Jim divorced in 1959. A single parent with full custody of two children, Helen returned to work in downtown Houston for the Superior Oil Company. She was a well-paid secretary, valued for her skills, and an amazing mother who worked hard to make sure her kids were well-fed, schooled, busy in scouts, baseball, and dance - all the traditional things that stay-at-home mothers did with the support of their husbands. She sewed clothes, baked crunchy oatmeal cookies, marble pound cakes, and created some memorable Jell-O concoctions.

Helen remained an active member of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston for many years where she taught Sunday School. In her spare time, Helen read history, classic literature, poetry, and modern fiction. She studied English for a few semesters at the University of Houston, where she developed her talent for writing short stories.

After retiring as Executive Secretary for the Land Department of Superior Oil Company, Helen worked as an independent Land Management Consultant, or Landman. Having learned the business through years of work and attention to detail, her intelligence and confidence served her well as a woman working in what was an almost exclusively male field. She zipped around Texas in her blue Mustang with caramel leather seats, surveying land in West Texas, sometimes climbing an oil rig in high heel shoes or flying in private planes to

meet landowners to write contracts.

Following the oil market crash in 1986, Helen moved to Austin, Texas where she worked in banking for several years. She traded in her Mustang for a Metro Pass and her high heels for a pair of gardening and walking shoes.

Helen spent many years working in Austin's Sunshine Community Gardens, where she tended to two beautiful plots and helped with the annual spring plant sale. She landscaped the front entrance to the apartments where she lived for over twenty years. People would often stop to admire her garden, especially in the spring when her Red Poppies were in bloom. Helen continued to garden well into her nineties. She'd occasionally announce, I'm giving up my garden, only to go out in the brutal late-Summer heat to divide and spread her overcrowded Iris, always wanting to share a basket full of rhizomes.

When she wasn't gardening, Helen kept her mind busy, reading, writing, working puzzles and playing Sudoku. She was a thoughtful conversationalist who lived life on her own terms - unapologetically herself, rooted in independence, shaped by intellect and humor, and sustained by a deep love of the natural world.

Helen is survived by her son Paul Norman Hintikka, daughter-in-law Cindy Hintikka of Austin, TX; daughter Mary Ann Hintikka, son-in-law Neal David Kieval of Houston, TX; three grandchildren, Eric Hintikka, Kathleen Hintikka, Phillip Kieval and granddaughter-in-law Paulina Ezquerra.

Affectionately known as Gaga and Nana by her grandchildren whom she adored, our dear Helleborus, as she called herself with a smile, will be forever remembered with love and greatly missed. She leaves us with the enduring

reminder that a life well lived is one guided by curiosity and the courage to remain true to oneself.

Helen was laid to rest at Our Lady of the Rosary Cemetery & Prayer Garden, serving all faiths, located in Georgetown, Texas.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in Helen's honor to the Celiac Disease Foundation, Austin's Sunshine Community Gardens, or Austin ASPCA (cat donations).

Cemetery Details

Our Lady of the Rosary Cemetery

330 Berry Ln
Georgetown, TX 78626

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR 11. 2:00 PM (CT)

Sunshine Community Gardens
4814 Sunshine Dr
Austin, TX 78756

Potluck snacks will be served.

Tribute Wall



“ *What a wondrous Spirit was Helen Ruth! Felt her presence yesterday so much, with the birds singing and breezes blowing and scattered rain showers. Just as she would love.*

Julie Wall - April 12 at 03:55 PM