Johnson, Helen Elizabeth

March 22, 2022



Helen Elizabeth Johnson

With an unmeasurable sense of loss, our family wish to announce the passing of **Helen Elizabeth Johnson**, née: Gaynor, aged 92 years, on Sunday, March 20th, 2022 at Pioneer Lodge in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

Helen was predeceased by 9 days by her husband Les Johnson, her beloved partner of 69 years, and is survived by her 6 children: Maureen (David) Ewasiuk, Kathy (Gary) DeWulf, Kevin (Sherry) Johnson, Ann (Lloyd) Rodgers, Heather (Paula) Johnson, and Linda (Vernon) Gray; 10 grandchildren and 9 great-children.

Helen was predeceased by her brother, John (Hazel) Gaynor; sister-in-law, Liz (James) Gaynor; and is survived by her beloved baby brother, James (Liz) Gaynor, with whom she shared a special bond. Helen is also survived by Dryburgh, Gaynor and

Johnson cousins, nieces and nephews whom she loved dearly.

Helen was born in the Gravelbourg hospital on February 17th, 1930 to Euphemia Anderson Gaynor and Thomas Gaynor, and was raised on the Gaynor family farm in the RM of Sutton, southwest of Palmer, SK. She attended Jesmond School until grade 10, and following the sudden passing of her father when she was 16, Helen completed grades 11 and 12 while boarding at the Moose Jaw Convent of Sion. In June of 1948, Helen was the youngest graduate of the Moose Jaw Normal School when she obtained her First Class Teaching Certificate. For the following two years, Helen taught in the one room Conifer School northwest of Limerick, SK on the Road to the Isles where she boarded with dear family friends the Carefoots. It was while spending time with her friend, who was teaching at Jesmond School, that Helen first met Les Johnson when fate threw them in each other's path. Although they were raised on farms only 3 miles apart growing up, Les and Helen attended different communities for school and church and had never met previously. Shortly after their first meeting, in July of 1950 Helen moved to Hamilton, Ontario to live with her mother and brothers, and she worked for the Bank of Montreal.

In November of 1950, Helen and her family received a visit from Les Johnson and friends in Hamilton, Ontario where Helen and Les' romance began and blossomed over two winters, culminating in a romantic marriage proposal at Niagara Falls on February 14th, 1952. Helen and Les were married in the Roman Catholic Church in Palmer, Saskatchewan on October 27th, 1952. Helen later described that cold windy day as the day Les "became my husband, my life".

Following a winter at North-View, the Johnson homestead, in 1953 Helen and Les took up residence on the Gaynor family farm where they raised their six children with love and discipline, instilling a work ethic that could be mirrored, but perhaps never equaled. Helen was tireless and an efficiency expert decades before Marie Kondo became a household name. She is the only woman any of us have ever known who could prepare a turkey or roast beef dinner with all the trimmings, serve it hot and still somehow manage to have the pots and pans washed before the meal was on the table.

Helen’s diminutive stature and quiet demeanour belied an unparalleled iron will and determination. She ran the household, planted and managed an immense garden, drove school bus, hauled grain and defended the family farm when Les was out in the fields. In the epic battle of Helen versus badger, she drove like a woman possessed and eventually cornered the badger and it was no match for Helen. Badger problem solved. Drive a 48 passenger bus around the Spillway at Thomson Lake or haul the 30 foot travel trailer across the U.S. when Les needed a break from long hours of driving – no problem.

Helen’s memory was like a steel trap and she was amazing with numbers. Birthdays, anniversaries, phone numbers. Her entire extended family, neighbors’ kids, everyone she ever drove on the school bus over 33 years, she knew their birthdays, their kids names and probably their birthdays too!! She was our collective memory holder.

Helen’s first love was her husband and family. She loved fiercely and for decades sacrificed her own needs for her children. For years she cared for her mother and was a dutiful, attentive daughter. A homebody at heart, Helen accompanied her adventure-loving husband far from the Prairies. Helen and Les were the true definition of a forever love. Anyone who knew Helen and Les realized how close their bond was. They pursued very few individual interests outside the confines of their home. Helen loved dancing, snowmobiling, playing cards, country music and fishing. As long as Helen was near Les, she was content.

Helen loved visiting her children and grandchildren, and adored receiving visits from the great-grandchildren as they arrived. She was always interested in the kids’ athletic and recreational pursuits, academic achievements, goals and aspirations and it was never a surface interest. Helen was happiest surrounded by family and friends, as evidenced by their large celebrations for their marriage milestone wedding anniversary parties. October, 2022 would have been their 70th.

In 1997, after spending the majority of her life on her family farm, Helen and Les retired to Moose Jaw where they enjoyed friends new and old and settled into a life of leisure – the busy kind because neither Helen nor Les were ever very good at

being idle. Watching grandkids and later great-grandkids play ball in Moose Jaw were some of Helen's favorite pass times as were reading mystery thrillers, watching curling, visiting with dear friends by phone, and following news and current events.

As the years passed and physical challenges surfaced requiring changes to her lifestyle, Helen persevered with the same grit and determination she had demonstrated her entire life. Helen's unwavering love for her family never diminished. Gentle with advice and steady in her actions, she truly led by example.

In honour of our beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, role model to us all, Helen has our greatest respect for a life of hard work well lived.

The Funeral Service will be held on Friday, March 25th, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. in Moose Jaw Funeral Home. Deacon Lamont Dyck will officiate and interment will take place in Rosedale Cemetery at a later date. Those not able to attend are invited to view the service virtually by going to www.moosejawfuneralhome.com/webcast/. In lieu of flowers, donations in Helen's memory may be made to the Moose Jaw Health Foundation, 55 Diefenbaker Drive, Moose Jaw, SK S6J 0C2. Arrangements are entrusted to Moose Jaw Funeral Home, 268 Mulberry Lane. Andrew Pratt Funeral Director 306-693-4550

1.



Duvin& Lola Weisbrod on March 22, 2022 at 5:28 pm

So sorry to hear that you lost Helen & so soon after losing Dad.We will truly miss them at our table when we get back to the dining room.We only knew them for a couple of years &looked forward to seeing them at mealtime. They had a beautiful life together & will be together again now.Will watch her funeral as we can't go to her funeral as I developed Covid on Monday.(Lola).They were very proud of their family & grandchildren& you all will dearly miss them.

2.



Ann and Walt on March 22, 2022 at 9:02 pm

What an emotional roller coaster your family has endured for the past several weeks. It was just like Helen to always be there for Les, and yes, the family. Les and Helen were the epitome of a happily married couple; which was evident by just the way the looked at each other, and now she has gone to be with him. They were both such lovely people and they will be missed. Our condolences to the entire family,

3.



Ann Brown on March 22, 2022 at 11:24 pm

I was saddened to hear of Helen’s passing so close to your Dad. That’s the way she would have wanted it. They were a devoted, loving couple. You will have the comfort of knowing that they are together. My husband and enjoyed their company at the Mulberry and after I moved, we shared many phone calls. My deepest sympathy and my prayers are with you



Lynn Csada on March 23, 2022 at 6:41 pm

Our deepest condolences to all the Johnson families..Norman and Lynn

4.



Pat Nixon on March 23, 2022 at 5:40 pm

We were saddened to learn of the passing of our cousin Helen. Then on reflection it seemed so in tune that she followed her husband Les so soon after his passing, as they were so very close and dedicated to each other, over their many years together.
Losing our loved ones, is always so very sad, having your wonderful memories of them ,which you will celebrate , memories that will support you in the coming days.
Thinking of you all, and sending our deepest sympathy
Sincerely , Pat and Marnie

5.



John Hamon on March 23, 2022 at 10:02 pm

Helen and Les Johnson were our closest neighbours for the many years we lived on the farm. There was hardly a day that past by that we didn’t see them. Hard to believe that they have now both past on, and only a few days apart.. I am however sure that they are together again, and forever.
My deepest condolences to all their family and friends.
May God keep them forever.

6.



Linda Klevgaard on March 23, 2022 at 10:31 pm

Our sympathy to all the Johnson family since the loss of

both Les and Helen, a lovely couple.
Brett and Linda Klevgaard and all the Robb family

7.



Helene (Joe) Taylor on March 24, 2022 at 8:21 am

Linda (and family), I'm so sorry that you've lost both your parents so close together. It sounds like your mom and dad would have wanted it that way. You've been through a lot this past month and we are keeping you in our thoughts and prayers. I hope when you are ready, you can share more stories and look back at happy memories you have of them. Sincerest Condolences, I'm so sorry for your loss (hugs)



Linda on March 28, 2022 at 10:18 pm

Helene, thank you for your condolences and support throughout this journey we've been on this path month as you've been with me every step of the way and it has felt great to have a supportive friend who has already gone through the same loss to give me some perspective.

8.



Pam Dawson on March 24, 2022 at 11:47 am

The Thompson family sends their deepest sympathies for the

loss of your mother, grandmother and great grandmother. As one of our closest neighbors, Helen and Les were very much a part of our daily lives. So there are many fond memories that were made over those years. Helen was Mom’s dearest friend and they shared many happy experiences from recipes to days out snowmobiling the countryside. May Helen and Les rest in peace together.
Adele, Pam, Brian and Garth

9.



Doug & Beth Krugal on March 24, 2022 at 8:01 pm

We were so sorry to hear of Helen and Les’s passing
Doug and I so enjoyed meeting them when we came to a Moose Jaw for car shows.
Our deepest condolences to all he family
Doug and Beth Krugal

10.



Norma Rabusic, Taber, AB on March 24, 2022 at 9:57 pm

Deepest sympathy to the Johnson family in the passing of both your parents so close together. I hope it’s some comfort to know you are in my thoughts and prayers. I have known Helen ever since we both were boarders at the Convent ot Sion taking our grade 11 and 12 together. We have kept in touch over the years at Christmas time. She was a great lady and wonderful friend. May they both rest in peace and may God give you the courage to carry on without them. God Bless!

11.



Joanne Girardin on March 25, 2022 at 12:01 am

From the Pinsonneault family to our great neighbors, the Johnsons. What are sad time for all of you. Thank you for great memories. Xxxxxx

12.



Trudy Friel on March 25, 2022 at 10:45 am

From another neighbor down the road. Sympathy to all the Johnson families.

13.



Chris and Don on March 25, 2022 at 2:53 pm

Our deepest condolences to all the Family

14.



Doug & Monique Mann on March 25, 2022 at 4:22 pm

Sincere sympathies to all the family. May all the memories of good times spent together help you through this time of sorrow. You are all in our thoughts and prayers.

15.



John and Wanda Dryburgh on March 27, 2022 at 1:32 pm

We were so sad to hear of Helen and Les’s passing. Hold on to the happy memories you’ve all shared, keeping your wonderful mom and dad alive in your hearts. Hugs to all.