



Helen Jean Cornman-Drake

April 27, 1922 - June 30, 2024

Helen Jean Cornman entered this world on a sunny afternoon, April 27, 1922, in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, to loving parents Elmer and Goldie Cornman. Her birth was tenderly assisted by her aunt, Irma Thompson, a dedicated registered nurse. For the first 25 years of her life, Kittanning was her home.

Helen's love for animals was evident from a young age. At just five years old, her bravery nearly cost her life when she dashed into the street to rescue a kitten from a pursuing dog, only to be struck by a large truck. She spent six days in a coma, but on the seventh day, she miraculously regained consciousness. After several years of recovery, she later became an accomplished equestrian riding and showing her beloved five-gated Kentucky thoroughbred, Billy Cloud.

Helen graduated from Kittanning High School and furthered her education at the Grace Martin Finishing School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1946, at the age of 22, Helen married Nevin C. Ritzman. Together, they welcomed a daughter, Rhonda Louise. Helen's second marriage was to James Drake from Worthington, Pennsylvania, and they were blessed with a son, Jeffrey Lynn.

Following James' passing in 1958, Helen embarked on a new chapter in Miami, where palm trees, Miami Beach, and the Florida Keys became her canvas for exploration. She embraced yet another challenge: tennis. Her passion for the sport spanned a lifetime, leading her to attend numerous worldwide tennis tournaments.

Later, Helen made an unexpected move to South Daytona Beach. There, she continued her love affair with tennis and became a longtime member of the Pelican Bay community. But her creativity knew no bounds—she discovered a passion for painting, taking lessons from the renowned Bob Ross. Her acrylic masterpieces remain treasured heirlooms within her family.

Helen's adventurous spirit carried her across continents. She explored Australia, marveled at the pyramids in Egypt, immersed herself in Japanese culture, witnessed Africa's wild beauty, and stood atop Machu Picchu. In 2018, just before the COVID-19 pandemic, she made the difficult but necessary move to Tallahassee, Florida, to live with her eldest child, Rhonda, and her family. Even during the pandemic, she stayed active, walking and playing tennis with her beloved Boston Terrier, Tucker.

Helen leaves behind a legacy of love, courage, and creativity. She will be profoundly missed by her daughter Rhonda Ritzman (Marx), her son-in-law

Ronald Dean Marx (Tallahassee), her son Jeff Drake (Tallahassee), two granddaughters—Whitney Elizabeth Marx (Tallahassee) and Meaghan Marx (Ferree, Tallahassee)—and her grandson-in-law, Henry Ferree (Tallahassee).

May the memory of Helen Jean Cornman continue to inspire us all.

Cemetery Details

Tallahassee Memory Gardens

4037 North Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 562-1518
<https://www.abbeyfh.com/>

Tribute Wall

LG

“ Loren Gomes lit a candle in memory of Helen Drake



Loren Gomes - July 06, 2024 at 10:08 PM

LG

“ Loren Gomes sent a virtual gift in memory of Helen Drake



Loren Gomes - July 06, 2024 at 10:07 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Helen Jean Cornman-Drake.



July 05, 2024 at 09:38 AM