



## Helen I. (Sweeney) Smith

December 31, 1925 - December 27, 2018

Helen I. (Sweeney) Smith was born on 12/31/1925 (New Year's Eve) in Lynn, Massachusetts. Her parents were Mary (Gillis) Sweeney and John Sweeney. She had two brothers, James and Hugh, and a sister, Margaret. Helen was the youngest and outlived all of her siblings. She grew up in Lynn and went on to do secretarial studies. She worked for General Electric in Lynn for a number of years - enough to have a pension. Helen lived with her mother for several years. Over time it became clear that the Massachusetts climate was insurmountably unkind to her because she had asthma. Sometime in the 1970's she headed for Arizona. She did secretarial work for the Tucson Fire Department for many years.

Helen had a very good singing voice. She took voice lessons in Massachusetts and even made personal vinyl recordings. There was certainly one that had "Indian Love Call" on one side and "Ave Maria" on the other.

She had a lot of courage to head off to Arizona by herself as a single woman with no nearby family. That courage never failed her. In her wallet the Serenity Prayer and her Rosary were her constant companions.

She met her husband, Lindsey Eugene Smith, an automobile salesman at Selby Motors in Tucson. They were married for 3 years and then Lindsey had a heart attack in 1984 and he was gone by the end of the day. Helen always spoke of those years as the happiest of her life. The inscription on their headstone reads "Together forever." Helen married late in life and had no children of her own, though she did have 3 adult step-children whom I have tried without success to contact. Her closest relatives in her final years were nieces and nephews: Elaine Carpenter (FL), Irene Sullivan (FL -deceased), Mary Sweeney (MA), Terry Leonard (NC), and John Leonard (MA).

Helen retired from the Tucson Fire Department in February of 1990. She maintained strong friendships in Tucson. Her family is greatly indebted to her friends.

In 2015 she had major health events: two heart attacks and pneumonia. She had lost a lot of weight. Her survival was most definitely not assured. She was on a breathing tube and failing all her breathing tests. One cannot remain on a breathing tube forever, and so we made the decision to withdraw the breathing support at the end of a week. That was the signal for her recovery. She went to a rehab facility. It was clear that she could not return to her mobile home where she had continued to live contentedly with her cat, "Skeeter", after her husband Lin's death. While it was definitely a project to do repairs/renovations so that the mobile home could be sold, it was also a blessing to go through her home, to see the photos/ the letters/the cards she saved. Fortunately she was able to move from Rehab to Crossroads Adult Care Homes.

She lived there happily for almost 4 years. Besides the wonderful staff, she had two great comforts: Asher the dog, who went from house to house on the property cuddling, and a rocking chair which a visitor graciously got for her.

How I wish I had been able to persuade her to make more use of the beautiful outdoors. Now she has moved on to an even better place.

Helen had extraordinary friends, people who were in it for the long haul. This was a great support with family so far away. Many blessings upon them. She was also blessed with fantastic caregivers at Crossroads. Many blessings upon them. So much gratitude.

Helen almost completed her 93rd year. Her time here was well spent. She brought joy and spice to life no matter where she was with her wit and repartee.

Among the things which she saved was a pad of special note paper. On it as decoration there appears to be a Native American woman sitting on a chair, paired with the following prayer: "Thank you for my friends. Grant I treat them in such a manner they will be happier because of our friendship. Amen." Her signature appears below. I am guessing that she will continue to be mindful of her friends and family and benefactors.

Amen.

# Comments

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“ 9 files added to the album Memories Album



**Evergreen Mortuary & Cemetery** - January 10 at 09:20 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Mary Sweeney** - January 09 at 07:43 PM