



Helen Crespi Mekenie

January 31, 1932 - March 20, 2019

Helen Louise Crespi Mekenie, 87, died peacefully after a lengthy illness in Alexandria, Virginia on March 20, 2019. She was born January 31, 1932, the fourth of six children, to Louis Paul Crespi and Margaret Mary Serafini Crespi, in Exeter, NH. She attended St. Michael's Catholic School, and graduated from Robinson Female Seminary in 1949. She briefly attended the University of New Hampshire, but returned home to work in the family business upon the unexpected death of her father. She is preceded in death by her parents, and her daughter, Penelope Anne, brother Joseph Paul Crespi, and sister Margaret Caroline Crespi. She is survived by her husband of 59 years, Michael Phillip Mekenie, three sisters, Dorothy Caspersen, Mary Frenette, and Louise (Dana) Hickey, as well as her daughters, Margaret Mekenie, Elizabeth (Derrick) Heard, Helen (Scott) Hine, and Caroline (Craigie) Smith, and eight grandchildren, Kayla, Audrey, Taylor, Cierra, Emma, Jillian, , Craigie and Lindsey.

A Mass of Christian Burial will take place at St. Lawrence Catholic Church at 11am Monday March 25th.

Helen met her husband in 1956 at Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth, NH, where she was head bookkeeper and office manager and he was an Airman, and part-time bartender. They married in Exeter, then moved to Fairmont, WV, where Michael finished his degree at Fairmont State College. He worked

briefly in life insurance, then retail, and they lived in Hornell, NY, Myerstown, PA, and Charlotte, NC before settling in Northern VA. The first winter in Hornell was lonely. Helen had an infant and knew no one, but over time she made some dear friends. Living on a farm in rural Myerstown, she adjusted to many new challenges and even took out an annoying ground hog with a shotgun once. In Charlotte, she challenged herself to overcome her nonexistent sense of direction by taping a large map to a wall and carefully plotting out her trips. Once settled in Northern VA she became a working mother, employed in the banking industry, Fischer Hardware, and ultimately she retired from the Washington Business Journal.

A lifelong Catholic, she never missed Mass and always gave up something for Lent, usually booze or chocolate. Her faith sustained her through the loss of her young daughter, Penny. Helen considered raising her children to be her primary mission in life and counted her grandchildren as God's rewards for her hard work. She made sure everyone had chores to do and nobody ever claimed to be bored, lest they be instructed to get a toothbrush and scrub something. She had no tolerance for bad grades, grammar errors, or missed assignments, and this earned her the nickname, "Italian Bulldog." She was especially proud that all five daughters earned college degrees.

She enjoyed cooking and was especially knowledgeable of the proper way to prepare fruits and vegetables, a skill she picked up working in her family's produce store, and later by utilizing the magnificent produce from her husband's extensive garden. Her family will remember many delicious meals: lasagna, Thanksgiving stuffing, soups, and crusty, yeast breads that she deftly turned out. She loved to play cards and board games, especially when she won.

Her illness, dementia, diminished her ability to converse and connect for several years and her family has felt the loss inch slowly forward. Now that

her time on earth has come to an end, she will be deeply missed by those who knew and loved her.

The family is infinitely grateful to the nurses at Emilia's House who cared for Helen for the last several months.

Previous Events

Family Gathering

MAR **24**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Jefferson Funeral Chapel
5755 Castlewellan Drive
Alexandria, VA 22315
(703) 971-7400
info@jeffersonfuneralchapel.com
<https://www.jeffersonfuneralchapel.com>

Service

MAR **25**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Lawrence Catholic Church
6222 Franconia Road
Alexandria, VA 22310-2511
<https://stlawrencealex.org/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Helen Crespi Mekenie*

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



“ *Information Technology Service Office purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Helen Crespi Mekenie.*



Information Technology Service Office - March 25, 2019 at 02:02 PM



“ *Mike: We were so sorry to hear this news, but will always cherish our memories of Helen from our Good Friday brunches. Our prayers are with you and your family.*

*Very sincerely,
Sean and Linda Reilly*

Sean Reilly - March 24, 2019 at 10:00 PM



“ *Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet was purchased for the family of Helen Crespi Mekenie.*



March 23, 2019 at 05:42 AM