



Mary Evelyn Helms Woods

May 9, 1931 - May 6, 2026

Mary Evelyn Helms Woods passed away peacefully on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, just three days shy of her 95th birthday, following a rich and full life. She was predeceased by her beloved husband, MG (R) Stephen Richard (Dick) Woods, Jr., her cherished son, Shawn P. Woods, her parents and brother and sisters. She is survived by her loving children, Sharon E. Woods and Stephen R. Woods, III, daughter-in-law Patricia Woods, and by her granddaughter, Sabrina C. Woods and husband Noah Brown.

Mary and her twin sister, Marilyn Ann Ramsey, were born on May 9, 1931, in Grand Rapids, MI, to LTC (R) Jabob Helms, MD, and Gertrude L. (Johnson) Helms, RN. Mary and her sisters, Marilyn and Sarah "Sally", had an older brother, Jacob "Jack" Helms. Mary's father was a surgeon in the U.S. Army and fought in World War I, World War II and the Korean war. Her brother Jack, who had enlisted in the Navy, witnessed firsthand the bombing by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor when a ship he was aboard was attacked. Her sister, Sally, later joined the Air Force as a Nurse Anesthetist.

Mary loved music and sang every day until her passing. Growing up she and her sisters sang in church and school choirs, musicals, and for two summers sang with Billy Graham's choir during several tent revivals. In high school, Mary played the French horn, the trumpet and, as she said, could get by on the piano. She loved snow skiing and water skiing. She attended the

University of Michigan and the University of Washington before moving to Japan with her parents.

Dick and Mary met on a blind date when he was stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY, a few years after he graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point. Dick loved telling the story that when he arrived for the date, as the front door opened, he saw a vision of loveliness standing in the doorway. He then heard a beautiful voice say, "Hi, I'm Marilyn, Mary's twin. Mary has locked herself in the bathroom and refuses to come out." Dick then spent the next hour talking to Mary through the bathroom window trying to coax her out, while Marilyn tried to take the door off the hinges! Eventually, Dick won Mary over and she agreed to go out to dinner with him. Over the next year they fell in love. Mary and Dick were married at The West Point Chapel on September 7, 1962.

As a proud Army "Brat", Mary and her family lived all over the United States and Japan. When she and Dick married and she became a proud Army wife, she lovingly raised their three children at numerous Army posts across the United States and Germany on two different tours, often on her own when Dick was deployed to Vietnam on two different tours, or away on other training events or deployments. By the time she and Dick retired to their "forever" home in the Alexandria neighborhood of Wessynton, VA, Mary had called over 38 places home. Even after retiring Mary and Dick traveled the world with family and close friends. She was always up for the next adventure!

Mary was vivacious, upbeat, and optimistic and her friends and family were very important to her. She loved life to the fullest and loved people. She will be deeply missed!

Interment will take place at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

1 Memorial Drive
Arlington, VA 22211

Upcoming Events

Funeral Service

MAY 20. 1:00 PM (ET)

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