



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, 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 almost every day up 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, passing that love on

to her children. 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. They particularly enjoyed joining the West Point '56 cycling group with friends and former classmates such as Mike and Jane Lions, Linda and Conn Anderson, Jan and Bill Wehl, Bonnie and Frank Matthews and others. Mary was always up for the next adventure!

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

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

Please view and sign the family guestbook at jeffersonfuneralchapel.com

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

1 Memorial Drive
Arlington, VA 22211

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAY 20. 1:00 PM (ET)

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

Tribute Wall



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mary Evelyn Helms Woods.*



May 18 at 09:52 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mary Evelyn Helms Woods.

May 18 at 09:52 AM



“ *To my Sweet Mom,*

You have been Mom to me and my family for over 38 years. You and Dad Woods have always been there for us and we find joy and knowing that you are now reunited with him, Shaun, and your sister. You had such a beautiful life and the world was always so much better for those who had the chance to know and love you. Miss you Mom.

Love Troycla, Eunice, Christina, Stephen, Oliver and Sophia

Troy Clay - May 18 at 09:45 AM

JS

“ Sweet Mary! ❤️. From the moment I met her at NSVP, she was kind and warm to me....always. I will forever hold the memories of her and our friendship, her holding my son's as babies, for shared chats, cards and letters, and our wonderful long lunch together before I moved to Florida. Her laughter and smile were a favorite gift given. My heartfelt condolences to her family and close friends. Jen Shepp

Jennifer Shepp - May 15 at 09:50 AM

KD

“ Mary and her sisters were our "exotic cousins," as they traveled around the world while we grew up in Michigan, and we were always excited to see them. When they settled in Washington, we were able to visit and get to know Mary and Richard better, and experienced what wonderful people they were. Mary had a way of calling you "Darling" and making you feel like you were the most important person in the world to her! I think of her now especially at cherry blossom time, and any time I see ads for Shen Yun, which we saw with her at Kennedy Center. We will miss her light.

Kathy Dickenson - May 13 at 08:09 AM

MC

“ Mary's Liszewski Cousins purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Mary Evelyn Helms Woods.



Mary's Liszewski Cousins - May 13 at 07:57 AM