



Helen K. Johnstone

November 1, 1939 - March 29, 2025

Helen K. Johnstone, 85, of Cornwall, PA, passed away peacefully after bravely battling the long-term effects of Parkinson's Disease, on Saturday, March 29, 2025, at Cornwall Manor Health Center. She was the wife of the late Parker N. Johnstone, who passed away in January 2024.

Born in Chicago, IL, she was the daughter of the late Howard and Leonora (Doll) Gloyd. As a child Helen loved to dance, studying tap dance and ballet for years. A star student from day one, with exquisite handwriting, she was valedictorian of her class at Champaign High School. Helen attended DePauw University and transferred to the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Music Education and matured into an accomplished organist and violinist. While attending DePauw University, she became a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and remained an active member for life, planning and attending many joyful milestone reunions with her Kappa sisters. Helen was a pastor's wife for many years in the UMC in Northern New Jersey Conference where she enjoyed choir directing, singing, and playing the hand bells. An impeccable seamstress, Helen often made her own clothes and those of her children, as well as knitted beautiful afghans and baby blankets for family and friends. Helen was active in supporting her children at sports games and playing violin in the pit orchestras for several summer musical performances at Madison Summer Theater. She attended Chubb Institute for Computer Technology and worked as a computer Programmer/Analyst with Chubb Insurance Company for eight years. She was

a former choral director of community and church choirs and played the violin with the Hershey Symphony, in which she absolutely held her own but jokingly described herself as the “little white-haired lady in the back corner of the stage.” While living in Connestee Falls, NC, Helen was commissioned as a Stephen Minister—one who offers compassionate, listening care to individuals in a church congregation experiencing challenges such as grief, illness, job loss, or other difficulties. A favorite hobby during Helen’s retirement was studying and tracing her genealogy. She and husband Parker enjoyed traveling to visit loved ones near and far, as well as getaways to favorite spots such as Europe, Alaska, and Bermuda. Helen loved her large, extended family and treasured her friendships from every corner and period of her life. Her kind spirit, warm smile, and bottomless love were a gift to all.

She is survived by her four children William F. Presnell of Fountain Hills, AZ; Jonathan Presnell and wife Max of Ephrata, PA; Thomas Presnell and wife Katharine of Mine Hill, NJ; and Katherine (Presnell) Barrabee and husband Brian of San Diego, CA; her brother Roger Gloyd; niece Deanna Gloyd Miller; and dear friend Laura Babcock.

Her stepchildren include Dr. Frederic Johnstone and wife, Suzanne of Puyallup, WA; Steven Johnstone of Reading, PA; David Johnstone (deceased) with partner, Ken Kroll, of Newark, NJ; Douglas Johnstone of Springfield, VT; and Thomas Johnstone of West Yorkshire, UK.

Also among her beloved family are 16 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, June 14, 2025, at Madison United Methodist Church in Madison, NJ at 2:00 pm. Inurnment at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery will be held privately.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Parkinson’s Foundation, <https://www.parkinson.org/> or Hershey Symphony <https://hersheysymphony.org>.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 14. 2:00 PM (ET)

Madison United Methodist Church
24 Madison Ave.
Madison, NJ 07940

Tribute Wall

AO

“ *Helen was a valued member of the Hershey Symphony Orchestra. It was a pleasure playing with her in the violin section. She was a lovely, calm, elegant and unassuming lady. We missed her when she retired from playing in the orchestra.*

Ann Ouyang - October 27, 2025 at 04:17 AM

AW

“ *Aunt Helen will live in my mind as the most elegant of ladies.*

April West - April 03, 2025 at 04:37 PM