



Helen Marie Berns

May 25, 1936 - February 23, 2026

Helen Marie (Pritchard) Berns died Monday, February 23, 2026, at Pine Valley Community Village in Richland Center. Helen resided at Pine Valley since November 2018.

Born May 25, 1936, in Wadena, Iowa, Helen was the first of three children born to Roscoe and Marie (Johnson) Pritchard. She grew up on a farm in Fayette County, Iowa. She cherished many memories of her childhood years on the farm.

Helen graduated from Wadena High School in 1953. Following high school, she attended Gates Business School. Upon graduation, Helen worked as a secretary for Gates Business College in Waterloo, Iowa. She spent her working life as Dan's right hand in their real estate and appraisal businesses. Helen met Daniel Berns at a 1954 Valentine's Dance at the Pine Lodge in Oelwein, Iowa the night before he had to report for his draft. When Dan returned in September of 1955, they began a 2-year courtship. Dan and Helen married on September 14, 1957, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Lamont, Iowa. Many times, Dan would tell whoever would listen that Divine Intervention brought him and Helen together. The family moved several times the first 10 years Dan and Helen were married before settling in Richland Center and completing their family of 10 children.

Helen converted to Catholicism in 1956 and was devoted to her faith in the Lord. She worked her entire life in preparation for her final journey. Helen was never one to draw attention to herself or to her efforts or merits. She did all

things well, quietly and with no fanfare, dressing simply, cooking for her ten children calmly, growing, canning, and freezing from her large garden, adding color to the yard and our world with her flowers, baking big batches of bread, and beginning it all with Sunday Mass. Her faith was deep, and her soul was trusting. She delighted friends and guests with her ready smile and hearty laughter. She never spoke ill of anyone, and she never had an enemy.

Helen is survived by sons Mark, Mike (Robin), Tom (Nikol), Fr. Eric, Matt (Fabiana), and Tony (Jenny). Helen is also survived by daughters Ann (Catherine), Therese (Paul) Deckert, and Jane (Rande) Swanson. Helen is further survived by 27 grandchildren, and 25 great-grandchildren. Helen is also survived by her sister, Erma Jane, and sisters-in-law JoAnn Pritchard and Phyllis Berns. In addition to her husband, Dan, Helen was also preceded in death by her son, Paul; grandson, Hunter; her parents, and her brother, Raymond Pritchard.

Helen's love for her family included luring them into card games lasting into the early morning hours, often employing her interpretation of the rules for her benefit.

Visitation will be held on Sunday, March 1, 2026, from 3 PM – 6 PM at Clary Memorial Funeral Home in Richland Center with a Vigil Service at 6:00 PM. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Monday, March 2, 2026, at 11:00 AM at Saint Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in Richland Center, with her son Father Eric Berns officiating along with priests of the Diocese of La Crosse. Following a luncheon in the church hall, burial will take place at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Keyesville.

Memorials can be made to St. Mary's of the Assumption Catholic Church or Pine Valley Foundation.

Her family is grateful for the loving care provided by the wonderful staff at Pine Valley Community Village. www.clarymemorialfuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 1. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Clary Memorial Funeral & Cremation Service, LLC
26777 Jelland Drive
Richland Center, WI 53581
(608) 647-6390
josh@clarymemorial.com
<https://clarymemorialfuneralhome.com/>

Mass of Christian Burial

MAR 2. 11:00 AM - 11:40 AM (CT)

St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church
160 West 4th St.
Richland Center, WI 53581
(608) 647-2621

Tribute Wall

SS

“ *What a beautiful tribute to your lovely mother. May your faith and memories bring you comfort in all the days ahead.*

Thoughts and prayers from the Luke and Sara Schwarz Family, St. John's Summit

Sara Schwarz - March 14 at 08:04 PM

VW

“ *My sympathy to the family of Helen Berns she was a friendly person She raised a great family Father Eric and Tereasa are the two i know the best*

Virginia Wiedenfeld - March 01 at 09:21 AM

MK

“ *Condolences to the entire Berns family. The Kaul family has been so blessed to have Father Eric as a neighbor and the officiant for both our parents.*

MariJo Kabat - February 27 at 03:42 PM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Helen Marie Berns.*



February 27 at 02:00 PM



“ *Divine Light was purchased for the family of Helen Marie Berns.*



February 27 at 01:16 PM



“ *Tracy, Ben, Jade, & Jovy Swanson purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Helen Marie Berns.*



Tracy, Ben, Jade, & Jovy Swanson - February 27 at 07:41 AM



“ *From your Crawford Electric Family purchased the Lily and Rose Tribute Spray for the family of Helen Marie Berns.*



From your Crawford Electric Family - February 26 at 12:50 PM



“ *Sorry for your loss.*

Linda Kleppe - February 26 at 12:14 AM



“ *I remember Helen when I resided at Pine Valley. Although I knew her before. She was a friendly easy-going person. My sympathy too Father Eric, and all of her relatives and friends.*

Joseph Simon - February 25 at 08:21 PM

TS

“ My sincere sympathy to the Berns Family on Helen’s passing. When I first started working for Dan, 48 years ago, I was able to watch Helen work on their new home, always with patient, deliberate, constant effort. I viewed Helen as one of the last real pioneer women! She always put her nose to the grindstone without murmuring or complaining. Helen reaped a long blessed life with a great family and husband. I can hear God saying, “Helen, well done my good and faithful servant.”

Tom & Debbie Shields - February 25 at 03:58 PM

SS

Our sincere condolences and sympathy to the Berns family on the loss of your beloved matriarch, Helen. Your St. Mary's Ridge friends, Melvin and Sandra Schmitz

Sandra Schmitz - February 27 at 01:58 PM

EB

HELEN WAS MY ONLY SISTER.HAVE MANY MEMORIES -MANLY WHEN SHE WAS YOUNGER.

Erma Jane Bernard - February 28 at 10:03 AM



Our sincere condolences to you all during this difficult time. Thinking of you always. Love always, Joe and Lori Berns

Lori Copeland-Berns - March 02 at 10:47 AM



“ Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Helen Marie Berns.



February 24 at 11:16 PM

DW

“*Doug & Bridget Wells purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Helen Marie Berns.*”



Doug & Bridget Wells - February 24 at 10:09 PM



“*Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Helen Marie Berns.*”



February 24 at 08:08 PM

JS

“*Dear Berns family, God bless you as you celebrate the life of your Mom! Sounds like it was a life very well-lived. Congratulations for raising such a wonderful mother, grandmother an great grandmother. May she enjoy her eternal reward.*”

John Schmitz - February 24 at 04:00 PM



“*Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Helen Marie Berns.*”



February 24 at 12:18 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Helen Marie Berns.*



February 24 at 10:12 AM



“ *So sorry to hear!! Helen was an awesome woman, mother and lady!! I hope she hasn't suffered for long!! Sympathy to the whole family! Thinking of you all! So many good times with many of you!! Father Berns, haven't seen you in ages, but we remember you well!!! God Bless all of you!*

Sandy Welte - February 24 at 09:46 AM



“ *Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Helen Marie Berns.*



February 24 at 09:43 AM



“ *Our sympathy to the whole Berns family. Although I didn't know your Mother, Fr Eric has had a positive influence on my Deacon formation. God Bless You All!
Deacon Norb & Marian Brunner*

Deacon Norb & Marian Brunner - February 23 at 08:25 PM

JS

Dear Father Eric, and all of Helen's relatives and friends: Please accept my sympathy.

Joseph Simon - February 25 at 08:13 PM