

| Fri Jun 11, 2021 | 10:48am



Helen A. Potter

Date of Birth

July 19, 1922

Date of Death

May 31, 2021

City of Death

Santa Barbara, CA

Helen passed away peacefully on Monday May 31, 2021 at the age of 98 in Santa Barbara, California with her sons by her side.

Helen was born July 19, 1922 in Atwood (Orange), California, to Juana and Martin Apalategui who both came to the United States from the Basque Province of Navarre, Spain.

Growing up in rural Orange County, Helen lived in the two-story stone house her father built with rock from the Santa Ana River surrounded by the family's orange orchard. Helen attended Valencia High School in Placentia and Fullerton College.

When Helen was 19, she met her husband George Potter at a roller rink, they dated and were married in 1943. While living in Orange, Helen worked for the Orange County Assessor's Office. During this time, she welcomed her three boys, George, Leonard, and David.

The Potter family relocated to Santa Barbara in 1957, where she raised her children, proudly attending all three of her sons' band and orchestra concerts, plays, and musicals at Santa Barbara Junior and Senior High Schools as well as enduring dozens of piano recitals. Helen worked for both the Santa Barbara City and County Assessor's Offices, eventually becoming the Deputy Public Administrator until her retirement in 1987.

Helen loved music, theater, and the church. Actively singing in the church choir, and a member of the handbell choir, Helen was a long-time parishioner at the First United Methodist Church participating in the Methodist Women's groups as well as serving as the Primary Superintendent of the Sunday School Religious Program. She enjoyed her weekly Friday Lunch Bunch gatherings with her church friends.

The Santa Barbara Woman's Club was another important part of Helen's life for over 30 years especially after her retirement. She served many offices on the Board of Directors, including the Tea Chair, Parliamentarian, and from 2000 – 2002 as Club President.

Helen was proud of her Basque heritage and enjoyed several trips to Spain to visit relatives, her grandparents' homes as well as corresponding regularly with her cousins in Spain. In addition, Helen enjoyed traveling with her husband and friends to many European countries, cruising to Hawaii, especially the trips with Al and Margaret Sanderfer.

Helen is survived by her sons, George (Carol) of Placerville, CA, David of Santa Barbara, CA and grandson Martin of Glendale, CA.

Helen is preceded in death by her husband of 70 years George (2013) and son Leonard (2018)

A special thank you to Barbara Shaw, a family friend who unselfishly gave her time, help and friendship over the years making sure Mom had everything she needed. The family also wants to thank the nurses at the Assisted Hospice Care as well as the assisted living facilities (Absolute Residential Care and Casa Cambria) for the care and compassion she received in her final days.

In addition, we greatly appreciate Pastor Alan Strout of the First United Methodist Church for his friendship, visitations, as well as the great Pastoral Care she received for many years.

The family invites you to Helen's Celebration of Life on Saturday, June 26, at 2:00 pm at the First United Methodist Church at 305 E. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara. Donations can be made in her name to the First United Methodist Church.