



Helen Ross Staley

December 23, 1921 - January 1, 2026

Helen Ross Staley, aged 104, passed away peacefully on January 1, 2026, surrounded by her loving family. Born on December 23, 1921, to Ralph and Dorothy Ross in Caldwell, NJ, Helen lived a remarkable life filled with love, adventure, and dedication.

Helen was predeceased by her husband of 67 years, William Warner Staley. She is survived by her four children: Joanne (Kit) Buritsch, Ross (Terri) Staley, Liz Staley, and Fred (Catharine) Staley. She is also survived by eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

Helen attended Stephens College and then transferred to the University of Pennsylvania, receiving her architectural degree in 1944. She married the love of her life, Warner, on March 25, 1945, and they settled down in Maryland after the end of the war and the completion of Warner's engineering degree at the University of Virginia. Together, they shared a beautiful marriage filled with shared passions and mutual respect. Helen practiced architecture for 50 years, leaving a lasting impact on the field and those with whom she worked. In 2016, she was included in the American Institute of Architecture Baltimore Chapter's "Early Women of Architecture in Maryland" exhibit.

A woman of varied interests, Helen loved researching her family's genealogy and was an active member of several prestigious organizations, including the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Colonial Dames 17th Century, the Daughters of Founders and Patriots, the Mayflower Society, and the Order of Charlemagne. Her passion for history and family heritage was evident in everything she did.

Helen and Warner shared a love for sailing, both racing and cruising in the Chesapeake Bay and British Virgin Islands. They were active members of the Potapskut Sailing Association, the Magothy River Sailing Association, and the Sailing Club of the Chesapeake. Their air travels took them to many parts of the world, creating cherished memories along the way. They enjoyed their homes in Maryland, Florida, and Vermont, where they welcomed family and friends with open arms.

For the past 12 years, Helen has been an active and beloved resident at Searstone Continuing Care Retirement Community. She formed warm friendships and thrived in the supportive and caring environment of the community. A special thanks goes to the staff at Brittany Place, where Helen received their wonderful care during the last two years.

Helen Ross Staley leaves behind a legacy of love, dedication, and resilience. Her memory will be cherished by all who knew her, and she will be deeply missed.

A memorial service for Helen will be held at the performing arts center of Searstone Retirement Community in Cary, North Carolina. The service will take place at 2:00pm on Saturday, March 7, 2026. A time for light refreshments and visiting with family and friends will follow immediately after the service.

The family will also schedule an interment service in Helen's beloved Vermont for later this year. More information to come. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Dorcas Ministries. (<https://givebutter.com/NeighborUp>)

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR 7. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Searstone Retirement Community, Highview Auditorium
17001 Searstone Dr.
Cary, NC 27513
<http://www.searstone.com>

A time for light refreshments and visiting with family and friends will follow immediately after the service.