



Helen Bass Bourgoyne

OCT 17, 1922 - NOV 14, 2022



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MEMORIAL PARK
Funeral Home & Cemetery

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Helen Bass Bourgoyne

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Helen Ruth Bass Bourgoyne lived one hundred years before passing on November 14, 2022. Known for her contagious smile, Helen Ruth was as persevering as she was optimistic. She not only had an outer positivity, but also drew from a deep well of faith. Early on, her prayer for her children was that they, too, would live joy-filled lives of faith, regardless of their circumstances.

Helen Ruth excelled in school. At the end of her fifth-grade year, it was recommended that she skip the sixth grade and move straight to seventh. She was active in various school clubs and played the piano. Helen Ruth described herself as more serious growing up. However, on a more playful note, she wrote her diary in French to keep her thoughts private. Years later, she laughed when she could not read what she had written.

As a rural Tennessee teen, Helen Ruth traveled to Hollywood as Miss Seventeen, where she met some of the current day movie stars. Over the years, and with her genuine interest in other people, she turned the spotlight outward. Her life-long intention was to brighten the lives of others.

Most people who knew Helen Ruth received an annual birthday call and card. Often these cards came with a photo of a shared event. She loved special occasions and this was her way of celebrating people and reminding each one that their life mattered.

Helen Ruth enjoyed making history, too. After graduating from the University of Memphis, with a degree in English, and Peabody (Vanderbilt), with a second degree in math, she taught school. While scientists, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, worked on the atomic bomb, Helen Ruth taught their children. Ironically, though Helen Ruth skipped sixth grade, she taught sixth grade.

Still, life would not have been complete for her without a good love story. At twenty-four, Helen Ruth met Dr. J. Roy Bourgoyne in Memphis, TN, where they lived a full forty-eight years of life



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together, before his passing. In exciting times and especially on the ordinary days, Helen Ruth and Roy modeled how to both nurture individuality and live in community.

Each morning over breakfast, Helen Ruth would quote Psalm 118:24, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." One of her own most recent quotes: "I love people! Going to church and being with my church family starts each week off right."

Several groups of women brought Helen Ruth fulfillment. In college, she was president of her sorority (Phi Mu). Later she served in various roles in Dental Auxiliary, Coterie, Women of Faith and the Mary Galloway Home.

Helen Ruth's spirit lives on in her friends and more specifically, her children and grandchildren, Layne Bourgoyne of New York, Lisa Helen Baker (Jim) of New Mexico, René Stephen (wife, Lisa and son, Lucas) of Texas and Laura Jean Harmon (Craig, husband deceased, son, Jackson and daughter, Julia Rose) of South Carolina.

A Memorial Service will be held at First Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee, on Saturday, June 17, 2023 at 10:00 A.M. Visitation will be at 9:00 A.M. in the church parlor.

The family requests that memorials be sent to First Baptist Church of Memphis, Tennessee, Children's Museum of Memphis (Dental Exhibit), St. Jude or Memphis Dental Society (Charitable Fund for Mission of Mercy).



Events

Helen Bass Bourgoyne

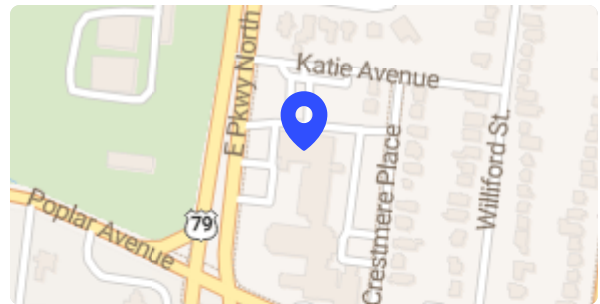
OCT 17, 1922 - NOV 14, 2022

Visitation

 **Saturday**, June 17, 2023

 9:00 AM CT


 **First Baptist Church**
200 E. Parkway N., Memphis TN 38112

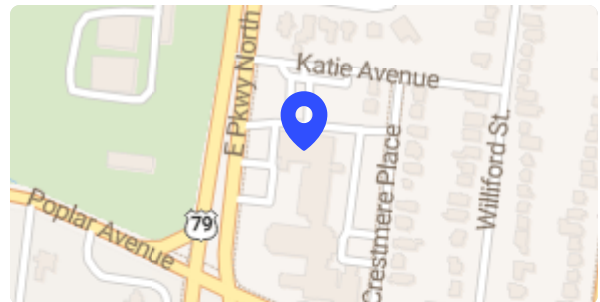


Memorial Service

 **Saturday**, June 17, 2023


 10:00 AM CT

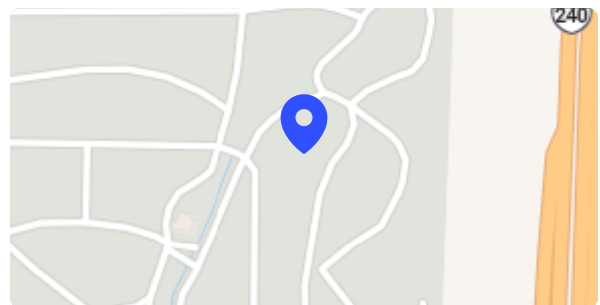
 **First Baptist Church**
200 E. Parkway N., Memphis TN 38112



Cemetery Details

 **Memorial Park Cemetery**
5668 Poplar Ave, Memphis TN 38119

 **(901) 445-8475**





Tribute Wall

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Anonymous sent an Enchanted Cottage to the Bourgoyne family.

June 15 at 6:22 PM



Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Helen.

June 15 at 6:22 PM



Skip Howard posted:

Two words come to mind when I recall Helen Ruth Bourgoyne: joy and grace. I had the joy of having her be a part of my life from the time I was a little boy at the First Baptist Church of Memphis. She was one of the the "youth moms" that raised so very many of us and was a constant influence and guiding hand on so many lives. When I was younger, she was "Mrs. Bourgoyne." When I got older, she became my good friend, "Helen Ruth." I was pleased she said, "yes," when I asked her to serve on the Church Archives Committee when I was named Church Archivist in 1989. Together with Janie Pople and Maggie Jordan, the three of them, most especially, served as my personal "trinity"—guides, partners and voices of wisdom over the decades—in preserving and recording and sharing the wealth of our church history. Our collection is filled with photos that she, herself, took over the years as a gift to others. I have treasured cards she sent to me over the years, and I was the recipient of many personal remembrances and gifts of food whenever I visited. She was patient and loving and giving, among her many qualities. I don't ever remember her being less than joyous—I can't even imagine that, honestly—and I never heard her say an unkind thing about anyone, nor anyone say an unkind thing about her. She was so deeply loved by all who knew her. I miss her and can't wait to see her again one day. Our pastor emeritus, Dr. R. Paul Caudill, was fond of using the word, "elect," to describe a certain type of person. According to the Cambridge dictionary, the term signifies "someone chosen by God." I cannot think of a more appropriate description of Helen Ruth Bourgoyne than that she was someone chosen by God.

December 9 at 9:01 AM



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AD

Amy Doville posted:

The first time I met Helen Ruth at 1st Baptist in the Women of Faith class, I knew there was no way she was as sweet as she "pretended" (I thought) to be. Yes, I was a bit cynical. After getting to know her, she was an even more wonderful person than she seemed. She was an amazing mentor and friend. Helen Ruth made an indelible mark on my life and soul, as she has on many people's lives. I am grateful to have known her, and look forward to seeing her again. Can't wait to hear those stories when we meet again. I'm so sorry for her loss but so grateful we have Eternity to share. My love to her family and those she impacted in her amazing life.

November 19 at 2:47 PM

GH

Gayle Heros posted:

SHE WAS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL LADY AND WILL BE MISSED BY EVERYONE WHO WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO KNOW HER. GAYLE HEROS

November 16 at 10:01 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Helen by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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