



Helyn M. McLain

October 19, 1939 - March 13, 2025

Mother

Helen M. McLain

Life Story

A Time to Be Born

Helen Mae Evans, affectionately known as Helyn, was a beloved mother, grandmother, and friend. Born on October 19, 1939, in Wilmington, DE, to parents William and Edith Evans, Helyn was the third of eight children, with four brothers and three sisters: Edgar, Melvin Robert, George, Dorothy, Delores, and Katherine. She was raised in Wilmington, where she grew up during the Silent Generation—an era marked by resilience, hard work, and community-oriented values. In her early adulthood, Helyn moved to Chester, PA, where she made her final home, surrounded by her family and community, which she loved dearly.

A Time to Speak

From an early age, Helyn demonstrated a deep passion for justice and advocacy. Educated in the Delaware public school system, she was inspired to use her voice to speak out against inequality and to empower others. Helyn was primarily dedicated to advocating for African American families who faced

challenges in the education, welfare, and legal systems. Throughout her life, she was never silent when it came to standing up for what was right, offering wise counsel to family, friends, and the wider community.

Her advocacy was not limited to words alone; Helyn lived out her values through her actions, dedicating herself to causes that would have a lasting impact on many lives. Helyn had a love for films that conveyed powerful messages and lasting inspiration, and among her favorites were *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *The Ten Commandments*, and *The Shawshank Redemption*. Each of these films spoke to her belief in hope, resilience, and redemption—values she carried throughout her life.

Helyn's favorite scripture, 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, was also a guiding force for her:

"Jabez was more honorable than his brothers; his mother had named him Jabez, saying, 'I gave birth to him in pain.' Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, 'Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.' And God granted his request."

This passage reminded Helyn of the importance of strength through faith and the power of prayer, two elements that guided her in all areas of her life.

A Time to Plant

Helyn's commitment to helping others continued as she pursued her education. She earned a bachelor's degree in social work from West Chester University while raising her family and working as a crisis intervention network specialist for Children and Youth Services of Delaware County. A decade later, she earned a master's degree in social work from Widener University, specializing in clinical social work.

Prior to her studies, Helyn was diagnosed with breast cancer, and while awaiting surgery, she found solace in a rabbit's foot, praying to God for comfort. When she returned to the hospital, doctors were astonished to find no trace of cancer. Helyn believed this was a testament to God's power, and it deepened her faith in ways that would shape her spiritual journey.

Helyn immediately joined Word of Life Ministries, where she shared her testimony, thanking God for her healing, and later became a devoted member of Shiloh Baptist Church, where she served as Co-Chair of the Missionary Board. Helyn was known for her unwavering faith and for offering comfort and guidance to others, especially through prayer and service.

A Time to Build

In 1981, Helyn met and married Clifford T. McLain, a Chester Police Officer who preceded her in death in 2023. Together, they blended their families and created a loving home. Their 42 years of marriage were built on mutual respect, shared values, and unwavering love. Helyn was a devoted sister, wife, mother, and grandmother, and her family was the cornerstone of her life.

A Time to Keep

As the matriarch of her family, Helyn led with wisdom, love, and faith. She was the foundation upon which her family stood, offering guidance, strength, and support. Helyn believed in the power of education and individuality, and she encouraged each of her children to follow their own path while making a positive difference in the world. Her approach as a mother was unconventional for her time, but it was always rooted in love, respect, and the belief that each child was capable of greatness.

Helyn's influence extended beyond her immediate family. She was a protector, a teacher, and a spiritual guide for everyone around her. Her prayers were constant, and her faith never wavered. Helyn was the steady presence that held her family together, and her impact will be felt for generations to come.

To commemorate Helyn's first home in Chester, 60 years ago, she planted an oak tree which still stands tall today. Helyn's personality, laughter, and warmth stood tall in life just like her beloved oak tree.

A Time to Depart

On Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 3:21 p.m., God, in His infinite wisdom, called Helyn home to rest in His glory. She had been ill in her final days, but her faith remained strong. Helyn leaves behind a profound legacy of love, service, and advocacy. Her family, friends, and community will forever remember the lasting impact she had on their lives.

A Time to Mourn

Helyn leaves behind to celebrate her memory and legacy five children: Jennine (Neenie), Paris, Carmen, Kenneth (Mark), and Stacia. Two brothers, George Evans and Robert Evans. Ten grandchildren, Zahir Shareef, Zaynah Kennedy, Jennine Johnson, Joseph Johnson, Kai Whitaker, Kasan Whitaker, Kanei Evans, Kashae Evans, Kamari Evans, Kaswa Dorsey. Great grandchildren: Shaheim Hamlin, Paige Evans, Kelani Rone, Nova Brooks and many many others.

A Time to Dance

salm 30:11-12, Thou hast turned Helyn's mourning into dancing: Thou hast

put off Helyn's sackcloth, and girded her with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto the forever.

Cemetery Details

Chester Rural Cemetery

412 W. 15th Street
Chester, PA 19013

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 4. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Mt. Airy Church of God and Christ
6401 Ogontz Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19126

Service

APR 4. 11:00 AM (ET)

Mt. Airy Church of God and Christ
6401 Ogontz Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19126

Tribute Wall

LY

“ *The world has lost a beautiful vibrant woman. I was blessed to know her as my aunt. Aunt Helyn was intelligent, savvy, ambitious, educated, loving and sensitive. I call her my "Auntie McLain" (like the movie "Auntie Mame" with actress Rosiland Russel). Aunt Heyln taught me to live.*



Lynn - April 04, 2025 at 03:50 AM

LY

“ *Lynn sent a virtual gift in memory of Helyn M. McLain*



Lynn - April 04, 2025 at 03:45 AM

LY

“ *The world has lost a beautiful vibrant woman. I was blessed to know her as my aunt. Aunt Helyn was intelligent, savvy, ambitious, fearless, loving and sensitive. I call her my "Auntie McLain" like the movie "Auntie Mame" with actress Rosiland Russel. Aunt Heyln taught me to live.*

Lynn - April 03, 2025 at 06:43 PM