



Helen M. Patterson

July 6, 1933 - August 8, 2019

HELEN MICHAEL PATTERSON passed away on Thursday, August 8, at her home at Blakehurst Life Care Community in Towson, Maryland due to complications from leukemia. She was 86 years old.

Helen was born on July 6, 1933, in Asheville, NC to Dr. Otis Michael and Mrs. Nannie Michael. It was at birth she was given the nickname of “Chick”, which she is still remembered by to this day. Her older brother and only sibling, Dr. Otis Michael, Jr., preceded her in death.

Helen spent her early years in Asheville, North Carolina as a Black American raised by her widowed mother during segregation and overt racism. She endured a rough childhood, and since the death of her mother in 1980’s, opted to not participate on a recent trip to the Biltmore in Asheville, as she said, “Why would I go visit a place that did not allow Blacks to visit when I was growing up?”

Helen’s adult journey began at the tender age of 16 when she left Asheville and entered Hampton Institute in Virginia. She quickly became a popular member of the Hampton community, and was more readily known by her nickname, “Chick”. At Hampton, she studied physical education and in 1954, graduated with a B.S. degree. Helen often spoke glowingly about her college days at Hampton, her friends, the excellent education that she received and

how she enjoyed being a majorette, Miss ROTC, and a member of AKA Sorority. Helen would later enjoy reliving those fond memories while seeing old friends at her Hampton class reunions, in which she would be a founding member of the “Hampton Ladies”.

After graduating from Hampton, armed with her degree, Helen ventured north to Baltimore, MD where she began a career in the Baltimore City Public Schools. The success of her first job, at the Chic Webb Recreation Center, was succinctly captured in a letter written in late 1956 by the then District Supervisor congratulating her for her new position. In that letter he praised her “pleasant personality, cooperative attitude and high personal standards... that had a positive impact on the entire center and program”.

MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2019 Wake: 10:00 a.m. Memorial Mass: 11:00 a.m.
NEW ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH 4408 Liberty Heights Avenue,
Baltimore, Maryland

During those years, Helen not only enjoyed a successful professional career but her life would be forever changed on a warm summer day in July 1954, when, a friend invited her aboard the late Dr. Joe Thomas’ yacht, the “Fla-Joe”, and introduced to “her future husband”: the man who would become her husband and love her of her life and her best friend: the late Doward B. Patterson, Jr. They were married December 22, 1956.

Helen and Doward would have countless happy memories. They especially enjoyed recounting the fun they had on Dr. Thomas’ yacht, often laughing about the onlookers gawking at the site of so many young Black Americans enjoying themselves as they casually cruised the Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore Harbor on a { } foot yacht- in the 1950s! They spent many weekends water skiing on their boat “Trouble”, with fancy one legged slaloms and jumps! Throughout their marriage, she and Doward, himself a clinical pathology chemist at Baltimore’s Sinai Hospital, would enjoy traveling and

cruising with friends and family, and road trips in their trailer as members of a camping group called the “Blackhawks”, relaying messages and jokes throughout their road trips via popular CB radios.

In the 1970’s Helen and Doward built a pool in their backyard, extending to more parties and great times with friends and loved ones. Helen was an avid swimmer, and a year until her death she was known to jump in a pool with her nose gear, ear plugs and swim cap, to swim a lap or two. She taught both of her girls how to swim.

Helen’s life was defined by success, achievement, persistence and determination. She seized every opportunity to further herself and her skills. In addition to her B.S. from Hampton, Helen earned a Masters in Education in 1971 from Loyola College in Baltimore, completed additional post-graduate studies at Loyola, as well as at Johns Hopkins, the University of Maryland and the City College of Baltimore.

Helen’s successful career continued for 37 years in the Baltimore City Public Schools holding teaching, counselor and assistant principal positions at Dunbar Senior High School, Frederick Douglass Senior High School, Northern Parkway Junior High. She served on numerous task forces, implemented strategic planning, implemented policies and procedures all within the school system, finally retiring in February 1993 as the Coordinator of the Office of Special Pupil Services.

Helen and the late Doward B. Patterson, Jr. enjoyed 60 wonderful years of marriage. In addition to the many fond memories, Helen and Doward’s marriage produced two beautiful daughters, Dr. Angela M. Patterson, MD, Neonatologist/Pediatrician and the Honorable Devy Patterson Russell, Baltimore City Judge.

Helen was a loving, creative, nurturing, fun, caring mother, and a strong role model for her daughters. Together, she and Doward created lasting memories that both Angie and Devy will always cherish, whether at their home at 2811 Mohawk Avenue splashing and partying in the pool, or during summers attending Chemist conventions around the country.

Helen and Doward loved to travel, and even ventured to Tunisia, North Africa, when her daughter Angela's family was living overseas.

Helen had so many friends who she loved dearly, and they loved her back. She was an active and proud member of the Baltimore Girlfriends, Inc., Spockettes, Bon Bons, Hampton Ladies, Gamma Boule Archousa and her amazing Bridge Club.

During the last four years of her life, Helen resided at the Blakehurst Senior Living Community where she was active on the Blakehurst Governor's Board, Event Planning Board, and she even learned to play croquet. She was proud to be known as one of the first Black American residents, and known by her curly hair and love for her fried green tomatoes. She made many wonderful friends at Blakehurst who enriched her life along with her life long friends until the end.

Helen Patterson was a compassionate and caring person who brought light, laughter, and joy to all who had the privilege of knowing her. Her life was defined by achievement and service to others.

Helen Michael Patterson will be forever loved by her family and friends. In addition to her daughters, Helen leaves four grandchildren, Madison Russell (Sophomore University of Maryland College Park), Alexandra Jones (Sophomore Yale University), George Russell IV (Junior Gilman School), and

Brendon Jones (Senior Bullis School), who she loved deeply and was so proud of all of their achievements. Equally proud and loved are her two sons-in-law (both Presidential Appointees under President Obama), the Honorable Walter Jones, Esq. and the Honorable George Russell III, U.S. Judge for District of Maryland; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. Helen has blessed us with a treasure trove of wonderful memories, and will be deeply missed

Previous Events

Wake

AUG **26**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

New All Saints Church
4408 Liberty Heights Ave.

Memorial Service

AUG **26**. 11:00 AM (ET)

New All Saints Church
4408 Liberty Heights Ave.

Tribute Wall



“ *Helen M. Patterson*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.*

March Funeral Homes - August 17, 2019 at 01:03 PM

VS

The Saxton family from NC, VA, CA TX & NY extend our deepest condolences. Cousin Helen has now joined Doward in Heaven.

Veronica Saxton - August 20, 2019 at 06:11 AM