



Mary Helen Brawner

May 13, 1927 - September 13, 2017

Mary Helen Wood Brawner entered into her eternal home on Wednesday, September 13, 2017, peacefully with her family by her side.

Helen was born on May 13, 1927, on the Wood family farm in the Hamlin community, ten miles west and one mile south of Wynne, Arkansas. Helen loved growing up in Hamlin and made many life-long friendships there (in later years, she affectionately referred to her friends from Hamlin as the “Hamlin-ites”). In the lower grades, Helen attended the one-room school house in Hamlin, but she completed her education at Wynne High School and graduated in 1944.

After graduating high school, Helen attended Arkansas State College in Jonesboro, Arkansas. She loved college and learning and was very active in the college social scene. An “It Girl” on campus, Helen was a member of Alpha Tau Zeta sorority, an honored invitee to various fraternity and ROTC functions, and had various beaux and admirers. Following two years in college, Helen moved back to the farm to help care for her ailing parents.

While living at home, Helen began working at the Cross County Courthouse in the office of Mr. Gene Cook, the Cross County Clerk. Helen loved working at the courthouse as a young woman and formed many lasting friendships with the older women in the various other offices.

After her dinner companion for a Christmas night dinner party fell through, Helen invited Claude Brawner, Jr., to be her date for the evening. She had seen Claude earlier in downtown Wynne and thought he looked quite dashing in his military uniform. The events of that Christmas evening sparked a beautiful romance, and Helen and Claude were married on October 18, 1953, at Central Methodist Church in Hamlin following a brief courtship.

Helen continued working at the courthouse until the birth of her second child in 1958 and became a housewife. When Claude ran for Cross County Circuit Clerk in 1964, Helen campaigned for her husband full-time and went back to work at the courthouse following his win. Helen continued to work in the Circuit Clerk's office as Deputy Circuit Clerk until her retirement from politics in 1987. Helen loved returning to work at the courthouse and especially loved working for the people of Cross County. She had a keen business mind and was known as an institution of knowledge in the courthouse. It was widely known that Claude was the out-front politician, but if you had a question about the workings at the courthouse, you asked Helen.

Following her retirement from the courthouse, Helen worked briefly at K & K Collections in Wynne, where she loved staying on top of the latest women's fashions. When Helen retired from K & K Collections, she completely devoted herself to her husband, children, and taking care of her young grandchildren.

As a young woman, Helen's older female mentors at the courthouse got her involved with the Order of the Eastern Star, Wynne Chapter 399. A member for over 60 years, Helen so enjoyed the fellowship within the organization and their charitable efforts. A lover of flowers and all things bright and beautiful, Helen was active in the Town and Country Garden Club and her arrangements of cut flowers have been used in many bridal showers, recitals, and church and school functions throughout the years.

An avid follower of Democratic politics, an interest shared with her father Hampton, brother Vernon and husband Claude, Helen enjoyed campaigning for candidates and causes and stayed interested in current events. During her long life in public service, she will be remembered for having served the people of Cross County with honesty and humility, having brought trust and integrity to her position, and instilling confidence in local government.

A woman of incredible faith, Helen was heavily involved in all facets of the United Methodist church. Sunday school teacher, choir member, active member of the Go-Getters Sunday School class and active member of the Warren Golden Circle of United Methodist Women, participant in senior adult ministries, faithful shut-in visitor, and great supporter of the annual Harvest Bazaar at Central Methodist in Hamlin are only a few of the ways Helen furthered God's Kingdom on Earth. It is often said that her offering of sweet, heartfelt prayers full of praise and thanksgiving was one of her chief spiritual gifts.

Helen was very proud of her life on the farm and her varied interests, but she was most proud of her ultimate life achievement: her large family. Growing up in a large, extended family, Helen looked up to her half-brothers and sisters and showered love down on her nieces and nephews. When she had a family of her own, she faithfully and selflessly committed herself to her husband, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Over the years, visiting with her relatives on the phone became one of her chief delights, but she was rarely more thrilled than when someone would stop by for a visit in person. She always had something sweet on hand to offer relatives and passersby. Afternoon coffee with grandchildren home from

college, or from one of their travels, was a treasure. One could be sure when you entered her kitchen or den, she would greet you with her warm smile. After all, as she often said to her grandchildren, "A smile is universal."

Helen is preceded in death by her parents, Lillie Michie Wood and Hampton Wood, beloved husband Claude and her half-siblings: Elmer Elam, Clyde Elam, Gail Elam Wise, Gertrude Elam Dallas, F.M. Freshour, Clarence Wood, Lester Wood, Vernon Wood, and Lillian Wood Henderson.

She is survived by her children, Sharon Brawner Tucker, Claude Brawner, III and wife Jeannine; her four grandchildren: Lauren Brawner Dodson (Bryce), Corrie Tucker, Claude Brawner, VI, and Timothy Tucker, Jr.; great-grandchildren Macoy Dodson and Hattie Grace Dodson as well as numerous nieces and nephews, great nieces and great nephews, and many special friends.

In Helen's life, one can see the absolute triumph of Christian grace in the lovely ideal of a Christian lady. She leaves behind a legacy of love and devotion and a wealth of fond memories to all who knew her.

The family would like to thank the staff at Crossridge Community Hospital and the faithful caretakers and friends who were so devoted to Helen in later years.

Memorial contributions can be made to First United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 1007, Wynne, AR 72396 (please designate as for "missions" or "choir fund"); Central United Methodist Church, c/o Mary Anne Cruthirds 1050 CR 156, Wynne, AR 72396; or Union Grove Memorial Association Fund, c/o Sandra Smith, P.O. Box 206, Blytheville, AR 72316.

Visitation will be 10-12 Saturday at First United Methodist Church with

services beginning at 12. Burial will be at Crosslawn Cemetery.
Kernodle Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **16**. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church of Wynne
800 Falls Blvd
Wynne, AR 72396

Funeral service

SEP **16**. 12:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church of Wynne
800 Falls Blvd
Wynne, AR 72396

Interment

SEP **16** (CT)

Crosslawn Cemetery
2950 Hwy 1
Wynne, AR

Tribute Wall

JS

“ Claude I am so sorry to hear about your mothers passing. Although I did not know her personally it is obvious through her children and grand children what kind of person she was. I know you will miss her but be comforted in the fact that you will see her again in Heaven.

Jeff and Tammy Smith

Jeff Smith - September 15, 2017 at 08:58 AM

EB

“ Eldridge Brawner lit a candle in memory of Mary Helen Brawner



Eldridge Brawner - September 15, 2017 at 12:26 AM

SH

“ I am so sorry to hear this!!! We so loved your precious mama and grandmother!!! She was such a kind, sweet, beautiful loyal lady that loved everybody Helen will be so missed by so many. She is with your daddy now and will be at the gate to welcome others as they come through!!!



Love you ALL !!! Sandra Hall

Sandra Hall - September 14, 2017 at 11:39 AM

BD

“ *The Brawner Family and Friends are in our Thoughts and Prayers,
Buddy and Jo Diebold*

Buddy Diebold - September 14, 2017 at 05:54 AM