

Helen Levina (Pearce) Linke passed away on January 22, 2015, at Stoneleigh Residence, a hospice in Lansing.

She was born October 2, 1918 on the family fruit farm in Brown Township near Chief in Manistee County. She was the seventh child and third daughter of Arthur Loren Pearce and Mabel Emma (Snyder) Pearce. Two more brothers would be born a few years after her birth. The family left the farm when Helen was five years old, making the move into Manistee in the winter via sleigh. They later settled in Filer City.

She was preceded in death by her parents and by all of her siblings – brothers Franklin, Ray, Joseph, Loren, William and Ward Pearce; and sisters Fern Pearce Davis and Mabel Pearce Jankowski. She was so proud of all of them.

She also was preceded in death by her daughter Linda Lou Linke, who died in 1943 at age three, and her son Donald Wayne Linke, who passed away in Spokane, Washington in 2008. At his parents' 50th wedding anniversary party in 1989 Don called his mother, "the gentlest woman I have ever known."

Helen is survived by her husband of 75 years, Wayne Harrison Linke; daughter Mary Ann Linke Shinn; son-in-law David Shinn; grandson Erik Shinn (Cindy Maldonado); and great-grandson Alex Shinn, all of Haslett. In Spokane, WA, she is survived by her daughter-in-law, Marilyn Parker Linke; granddaughter Samantha Linke (Jon) Kam; and great-grandson Izak Kam. In Manistee, Helen is survived by sisters-in-law Mary Pearce, Sylvia (Linke) Willett and Myrna (Linke) Schuelke; in Battle Creek, brother-in-law Arnold (Linda) Linke; and in St. Charles, MO, brother-in-law Arvid (Laurie) Linke. Many well-loved nieces and nephews also survive her.

When Helen was a little girl living on Franklin Street on the north side in Manistee, she was playing bride in the yard one day with a curtain as a bridal veil. Across the street from the house was a vacant lot, and a man was working there loading gravel onto a truck. A car drove up with a woman and two little boys who were bringing lunch to their husband and father. That was the first time Helen saw the boy who would one day become her husband. Helen married Wayne Linke in 1939 at Guardian Angels Church. When people would express amazement at the length of their marriage, Wayne would say that it was easy to be married to Helen.

Helen was a graduate of Manistee High School (Class of 1938), where she was a member of the National Honor Society. Before her marriage, Helen worked as a secretary at Filer Fibre in Filer City. She had a fine mind and amazed her family by her sharpness and perception, even in her later days.

She was born on the Feast of the Guardian Angels, and she said that throughout her life she felt their comforting presence. Helen suffered many losses in her life, and at her death she was a 66-year survivor of cancer. She rose above the losses and made a wonderful life for herself and her family.

Helen was a beautiful lady but one who did not mind getting her hands dirty. She consistently and lovingly prepared delicious meals for her family. She canned, baked, sewed, knitted and crocheted, and made her home a warm and welcoming place. She always participated at her children's school events and PTA organizations and for many years volunteered for the American Cancer Society and March of Dimes fund drives. She loved to read and travel. She

taught her children to look at the beautiful night sky and to appreciate birds and animals and the natural world, as she did.

Helen loved to fish and golf and square dance (Boots and Bustles) and polka with her husband. From the time of her marriage she was a communicant of Guardian Angels Church where she was a member of the Holy Family Society and Saint Margaret's Circle. For many years she was a member of a sewing club, Lakeside Club, and Manistee Golf and Country Club. For a time, when her husband was mayor of Manistee, Helen was the first lady of Manistee. She always was the first lady in the hearts of her family.

Helen Pearce Linke was a kind, loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She leaves us a legacy of courage and grace.

The family is being served by Gorsline Runciman Funeral Homes of East Lansing and Lansing, and Herbert Funeral Home of Manistee. Funeral arrangements for a service at Guardian Angels Church in Manistee will be announced at a later date.