



Mary Lou (Nelson) Helland

September 22, 1952 - September 6, 2024

Mary Lou (Nelson) Helland, age 71, passed away in her sleep, early in the morning of September 6, 2024 at her home in Tallahassee, Florida. Mary was the wife of husband John Roger Helland. They shared almost 49 years of marriage together.

Born on September 22, 1952, in Marshall, MN (Lyon County) to the late Russell Berger Nelson and Dorothy Clara (Anderson) Nelson, Mary was the fourth of six children.

Mary asked Jesus Christ to be her Lord and Savior at an early age – 5 years old – and had ever since maintained a firm and unwavering faith in and knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ and in God's Word – the Holy Bible. Mary was a prayer warrior and huge encourager for her whole family. She was very much loved, respected, and appreciated by her entire family.

Mary graduated from White Bear Lake High School in 1970. After attending Bethel University in Shoreview, MN, and the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, MN, she graduated from St Paul Vocational Technical Institute in 1972 with a degree in Chemical Technology.

Mary's first job after graduating was at Medtronic, Inc. as a chemical research technologist. While working at Medtronic, Mary met her husband, John. They

married on October 25, 1975 in Shoreview, MN at Bethel College Chapel.

After giving birth to their first child, Mary resigned from Medtronic and became a full time mother and home maker, devoting her “full day’s work” to her husband and their three children, Michelle, Timothy, and Sarah. Mary became very involved in her children’s numerous church, school, and sports activities. In the kids’ schools, she was recognized by the Chisago City Elementary School’s PTA for her generous assistance with a special plaque. In addition, she was a recipient of a highly esteemed “Parent Volunteer of the Year” award from Chisago Lakes Middle School.

Mary was also a teacher in the Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) organization and she was the Sunday school Superintendent at both the United Methodist Church and the Evangelical Free Church that her family attended in Lindstrom, MN. She also led the children’s worship activities at both churches and she assisted John in teaching the junior and senior high school ministries until the Helland family made their big move to Saugus, CA in 1989, when John was offered a director level job at Siemens-Pacesetter. Mary continued her activity as a volunteer in her children’s swim teams and was awarded the Volunteer Parent of the Year for her huge support for and assistance to the Saugus High School Swim Team. Perhaps her most important “work” though was later-on in assisting each of her daughters, Shelly and Sarah, both before and after the deliveries of their children.

Mary always had a heart of gold. It showed in her love for her children, grandchildren, her love for John, and her love for others. She was almost always the first to notice someone in need of help and would do anything she could to offer assistance. She was the first to offer a word of encouragement to a person needing to hear it, and she was also quick to lend an ear when someone needed to talk. She has been “the village” for countless families. Always putting others first, she shined with a Christ-like character. As a busy

prayer warrior for all three of her children, their spouses, all six of her grandchildren, and her husband, John, Mary has been a huge and constant encourager for us all and her deep devotion to praying for all of us has been highly appreciated.

Mary is survived by husband, John Helland, adult children: Michelle (Shelly) (Helland) Pettersen and husband Peter Pettersen, and grandchildren: Zoey, Elsie, and Kenzie; Timothy Helland; and Sarah (Helland) Lowell and husband Paul Lowell, and grandchildren Johnathan, Kayla, and Claire. Mary's siblings are: Russell Nelson (deceased) and wife Marlys, Michael Nelson and wife Beth, Nancy (Nelson) Kopesky and husband David, Sue (Nelson) El-Eid, and Sarah (Nelson) Brown.

Mary will be missed by many. A family celebration of Mary's life will be held in Tallahassee, FL, October 19, 2024.

Memorials may be sent to:

Parkinson's Foundation

Ph # 800-473-4636

www.parkinson.org

Dayne Parker of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the Helland family with their arrangements.

Tribute Wall

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“ *Mary always showed interest, and would ask about, what was going on with our family.*

Also, we appreciated that she had a smile and positive attitude whenever we were with her.

Jerry and Emy Helland and family

Jerry Helland - October 15, 2024 at 01:21 PM