



## Miss Helen Powers

June 18, 1925 - November 8, 2013

Helen A. Powers, 88, of Asheville died Friday, November 8, 2013 at Memorial Mission Hospital after a period of declining health. Born in Madison County, to the late Robert L. and Bertha Randall Powers, she made her home and heart in Asheville.

She was a graduate of the School of Bank Administration at the University of Wisconsin and the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at Rutgers University.

Helen began working at American Enka Company in 1945. Quickly rising above her secretarial role, she became the first woman within the firm to begin handling managerial responsibilities.

She joined the Bank of Asheville in 1960 and served in a variety of ever increasing management roles throughout the years. Following 20 years as a senior operating officer, Helen led negotiations with North Carolina National Bank (NCNB) when Bank of Asheville was acquired. Retiring in 1980 as Senior Vice President of NCNB, she was widely regarded as the most outstanding "Lady Banker".

Her record of public service spanned the fields of business, education, government, health care and philanthropy. In 1985, she was appointed the first woman Secretary of Revenue by Gov. James G. Martin where she served

five and one-half years. During that time, she participated in a number of initiatives designed to improve state government and the NC tax structure in particular. A major accomplishment during her tenure in state government was the design and completion of a \$36,000,000 modernized efficient revenue building which now stands in her honor in the government complex in Raleigh.

Returning to Asheville following her time as Secretary of Revenue, Helen helped to reshape the financial services industry in the Carolinas. She was active in numerous groups and played a pivotal role on various business, civic and charitable boards.

Serving on the board of directors of Mission Hospitals and the Mission Foundation, she devoted much time and effort seeking to improve the health services for needy women and was instrumental in establishing an advanced maternity and pediatrics unit at Mission Hospital where the women's center is named in her honor. She went on to raise funds for a mobile mammography van to reach women in rural western NC.

Helen was also active on the board of Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa where she chaired the college's finance and development committee. During her time there the school saw tremendous growth.

She served on the NC Banking Commission for 12 years and chaired the NC Capital Management Trust for 6 years. Throughout her career, Miss Powers received many awards and special honors. She was awarded the Outstanding Woman of NC in 1987, in 1999, she was the first business woman inducted into the NC Business Hall of Fame and she received an Honorary Doctorate from Appalachian State University in 2007. Her many achievements and contributions ensuring the well being of the State of NC and its citizens, she earned the title of Distinguished Woman of North Carolina and was often referred to as the First Lady in NC Business.

She was a member of Grace Episcopal Church.

During her later years, Helen was blessed to have special doctors and caregivers. She was especially fortunate to have Dr. Michael Unks as her Cardiologist and Dorothy Sharpe and Judy Williams who gave excellent care and assistance to Helen.

A funeral service will be held 2:00 PM, Wednesday, November 13, 2013 at Grace Episcopal Church, 871 Merrimon Avenue, Asheville with Reverend Gary Coffey officiating. Interment will immediately follow at Calvary Episcopal Churchyard, 2840 Hendersonville Road, Fletcher.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Grace Episcopal Church, 871 Merrimon Avenue, Asheville, NC 28804; Mission Rathbun House, 890 Hendersonville Road, Suite 400, Asheville, NC 28803, or Asheville Humane Society, 14 Forever Friends Lane, Asheville, NC 28806.

# Cemetery Details

## Calvary Episcopal Churchyard

2840 Hendersonville Road  
Fletcher, NC 28732

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

NOV 13. 2:00 PM (ET)

Grace Episcopal Church  
871 Merrimon Avenue  
Asheville, NC 28804  
graceparish@bellsouth.net  
<http://graceepiscopalchurch.us/>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Miss Helen Powers*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *I am so sorry for your loss. The Bible provides comfort during these difficult times. Revelation 21:3-4 states, And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away. Very soon now, we will never experience losing our loved ones in death. Hope these words give you a new hope.*

**Ana** - November 13, 2013 at 06:19 AM



“ *Transferred to the Asheville office of the Bank in 1995 and immediately discovered Helen. She was a tremendous mentor and friend for my 2years in Asheville as well as after by phone and seasonal cards. Absolutely loved talking politics and banking with this wonderful woman. I celebrate her life with you and will miss her deeply.*

*Tony Blackwell*

**Tony Blackwell** - November 13, 2013 at 03:07 AM



“ *Wonderful woman who inspired all of us here at NCDOR. She was a true blessing.*

**Lynne Muirhead** - November 12, 2013 at 04:08 PM

LM

“ *Lynne Muirhead lit a candle in memory of Miss Helen Powers*



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**Lynne Muirhead** - November 12, 2013 at 04:05 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Miss Helen Powers.*



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November 12, 2013 at 02:29 PM



Eleanor  
Campbell

“ *It was a honor to work for and be mentored by this great lady while I was at the Department of Revenue. There were not a lot of examples of successful, female, executives out there in the late 80's, so she inspired young women like me to consider professional careers, at a time when marriage and children were the only acceptable goals. It was also her style of leadership --giving us the rules and the framework, then trusting us, challenging us, to do whatever we could to provide excellent customer service, whether or not it was our "area"-- that really inspired me, built up my self confidence, and ultimately led me to start my own business. Thank you, Miss Powers, for empowering me.*

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**Eleanor Campbell** - November 12, 2013 at 08:01 AM

JD

“ *It was an honor to work for Helen throughout the years and share good times and bad. She was an amazing woman and one of the most intelligent in the Asheville area. She will most certainly be missed in the community and by those that worked with her and for her. Our sincere condolences are shared with her many friends and church associates.*

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**Jerry and Barbara Deal** - November 12, 2013 at 06:20 AM