



Helen Alice (Kellan) O'Brien

January 14, 1930 - May 19, 2025

Helen Alice O'Brien, loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, age 95, of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, died on May 19, 2025, at Medilodge of Sault Ste. Marie. She was born on January 14, 1930, in Munising, Michigan, to Leslie and Alice (Williams) Kellan.

Helen grew up in Forest Lake, Michigan and attended elementary school there in a one room schoolhouse. Helen and her siblings enjoyed growing up in the wilderness of the Upper Peninsula. She had many stories of the Au Train Falls and the tiny school she walked to through the forest. Helen did well in school and was an active kid who loved playing with her brothers and sisters. After a move to Appleton, Wisconsin, the family moved to Sault Ste. Marie in 1940. Helen attended the original Lincoln School and graduated from Sault High School in 1948. She most enjoyed singing in the choir. Helen and two of her sisters were Michigan Bell Telephone operators and worked in the downtown office. Helen met her future husband Bob while in high school and they were married in 1949. She left her job shortly thereafter to become a homemaker and raise their family in the Sault and in 1977, they moved to Iron Mountain, Michigan

Helen was a member of the First Presbyterian Church where she sang in the choir. Helen was active in civic issues, especially with her children's education. Helen was a room mother, PTA member and served on many

millage campaigns. She was also a member of the Gazelles of the Local 552 Elks Lodge. Helen took pride in her looks and how she presented herself. Her personality was lively and engaging. She was accepting and inclusive of all the people she met and taught her children to be the same. Helen enjoyed bowling, cooking and taking the family on picnics. Snowmobiling at the family cottage in Sullivan Creek was a special favorite. Her view of life was always "sunny side" up. Helen especially enjoyed the holidays with her specialty being Thanksgiving dinner with all the family, and at times, friends attending.

Helen is survived by her children, Barry O'Brien of Santa Rosa, California and Dr. Robert (Brenda) O'Brien of Anna Maria Island, Florida; sister, Nancy (Cory) Somes of Traverse City, Michigan; sister-in-law, Sylvia (Bill) Kellan of Oscoda, Michigan; grandsons, Barry (Michelle) of Minot, North Dakota, Jack (Raegen) and Katie O'Brien of Iron Mountain, Rob (Jackie) O'Brien of Cincinnati, Ohio, Dan (Kristen) O'Brien of Arlington, Virginia, Cara (Jay) Tazelaar, Cali and Anna Di Foggi of Sault Ste. Marie; and 13 great-grandchildren.

Helen was preceded in death by the love of her life and husband of 53 years, Bob; daughter, Janet; son, David; sisters, Leann Socia and Elizabeth Eichstaedt; brothers, Art Kellan and Bill Kellan; and sister-in-law, Jane Kellan.

Per Helen's wishes, cremation has taken place. A family Celebration of Life will be held in the future.

Helen will be laid to rest at Pine Grove Cemetery with her husband Bob, daughter, Janet and son, David.

The family wants to especially thank Helen's nieces, Patti Kellan and Sally (Socia) Mitchell and granddaughters, Cara, Cali and Anna, for all their loving care over the years. Also, a special thank you to the staff at Medilodge of

Sault Ste. Marie.

Memorial Contributions may be made in Helen's memory to Sault Area
Schools, 876 Marquette Ave.
Sault Ste Marie MI 49783

Family Life Funeral Homes Pickford assisted the family with arrangements.
Condolences may be left to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

Obituary as submitted by family.

Cemetery Details

Pine Grove Cemetery

5901 S Mackinac Trail
Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783

Tribute Wall



“ *Family and friends. Thank you for your posts calls and texts. She will be missed by many.* ”

Robert and Brenda O'Brien - May 23, 2025 at 11:57 AM