



## Helen W. Milliken

December 4, 1922 - November 16, 2012

Helen Wallbank Milliken, 89, passed away at home in Traverse city, Michigan on November 16, after an extended illness.

A native of Denver, Colorado, she attended Kent School for Girls there and was a graduate of Smith College (1945). She married William G. Milliken in Denver on October 20, 1945, following his service in the Army Air Force in World War II. He later became governor of Michigan (1969-1982).

She is survived by her husband; her son, Bill Jr., of Ann Arbor; and her sister, Elaine Jackson, of Denver. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Elaine, in 1993, and her parents, Stanley and Nellie Wallbank.

Her daughter, Elaine, following her University of Michigan law school studies, awakened in her a consuming interest in women's equality and women's affairs. She assumed leadership roles in the women's movement in the U.S., including national co-chair of ERAmerica and delegate to the International Women's Year conference in Houston. Her other board memberships included Women's Resource Center and Michigan Land Use Institute.

As Michigan's First Lady, she co-founded ArtrainUSA, an art museum housed in rail cars that visited over 850 communities across the U.S. since 1971.

Helen was awarded honorary degrees from the University of Michigan, Michigan State, Eastern Michigan and Central Michigan University. She was enrolled in the graduate program in landscape architecture at Michigan State University, an undertaking that her father, the inveterate gardener, would have taken great pride in. Gardening, her several West Highland Terriers and her Siamese cat, Vita, were always loves of her life.

The family is deeply indebted to Comfort Keepers for its ongoing support, and especially to Munson Hospice for the empathy and caring they so capably provided.

A memorial service for former Michigan First Lady Helen Milliken will be held at 1:30 p.m. in Traverse City on June 3, 2013 in the Milliken Auditorium at Northwestern Michigan College's Dennon Museum. A reception will follow the memorial service in the Museum's Sculpture Court.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions be made to Helen's House, c/o Women's Resource Center (<http://www.womensresourcecenter.org>), 720 South Elmwood, Traverse City, MI 49684; or Michigan Land Use Institute (<http://www.mlui.org>), 148 East Front, Traverse City, MI 49684.



# Comments

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“ To Bill and Family: I was a very young Republican back then.. It was during the 1972 campaign and what a beautiful person Helen was. A star on earth, is now a star in heaven. Peace to all of you at this most difficult time. Give thanks for the time that you had her and know that her legacy will live on.

**Rex J Ford** - November 24, 2012 at 06:40 AM

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“ Helen was on the Board of Director's at the Women's Resource Center when I started working there. One evening she was at the office for a meeting when I was introduced to her. Of course, I was calling her Mrs. Milliken. She said to me, "You may call my husband Mr. Milliken but you will call me Helen." She was a wonderfully fantastic, humble, intelligent, gifted and giving woman. I am blessed because I knew her and was the recipient of her wisdom. We all have another angel watching over us.

**Rebecca M. Garland** - November 19, 2012 at 05:34 PM

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“ Senator Glenn S. Anderson lit a candle in memory of Helen W. Milliken



**Senator Glenn S. Anderson** - November 17, 2012 at 12:44 PM