



## Helga Skjeie Stoner

November 1, 1921 - October 21, 2015

Our beloved mom, grandma and great-grandma went home to the Lord on October 21, 2015. She was born in Lone, WA, on November 1, 1921, to Ole and Lydia Skjeie, both immigrants, Ole from Norway and Lydia from a Swedish colony in Finland. Helga was born in a small wood-framed shed, one of two such structures that served as the family home. She was the fourth of six children, having three brothers and two sisters. Helga's father was in the process of building quite a nice Craftsman farmhouse on their 160-acre piece of property when she was born. The family moved into that four-bedroom house when Helga was one year old. It had indoor plumbing, but electricity was not yet available in Lone. Helga attended school in Lone and graduated from Lone High School in 1939.

About a year after high school, Helga moved to Seattle to go to business school, but when offered a job as a telephone switchboard operator at Sears, she took the job. World War II interrupted whatever school or career plans she may have had, as she decided that she should do her part in the war effort. Helga's intention was to join the Waves, but the recruiter told her about the new women's Marine Unit that was just starting. So she became a Marine and was sent to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. After basic training she was assigned to the base postal office where she drove a mail truck and delivered mail within the base. It was at church on the base that she met Paul Stoner, her husband-to-be, who was a Chaplain's Assistant. Mom loved his violin

playing and his outgoing personality, but most important were his Christian beliefs. They were married four months later, even though Dad had to ask her for a date 29 days in a row before she finally said yes!

Following the war, Paul's pursuit of higher education and advanced degrees, and then Professorships in Music, took the family from Lawrence, Kansas, to Iowa City, Iowa, then to Ottawa, Kansas, and South Pasadena, California. From there it was to Greeley, Colorado, and finally to Bellingham, Washington. During those years, son Larry was born in 1946, son Craig in 1948, daughter Marji in 1951, and son Daniel in 1958.

It was in 1961 that Paul received a job offer from what is now Western Washington University as an assistant professor of music and he accepted. Thanks to GI loans available to both Paul and Helga, they were able to purchase a lot and build a home in Edgemore with a stunning view of Bellingham Bay and Lummi Island. Helga and her family moved into that home in 1962. In June 1971, they then moved to Lake Samish. Paul retired from WWU in 1982. On Christmas Day 1994, he passed away from cancer.

Paul's death ended an almost 50-year marriage which was a beautiful romance. Their children called their marriage the romance of the century. Helga would never acknowledge it, but she was a beautiful woman, and Paul was quite handsome – attributes that just added to the romantic aura of their marriage. It wasn't just good looks, though, as both were loving, had great strength of character, and strong Christian beliefs. Their family was always their priority, and all four kids feel blessed to have had two such wonderful parents.

Helga volunteered for many years at St. Joseph's Hospital and the Bellingham Food Bank. She donated generously to numerous charities that she strongly believed in: Bellingham Food Bank, Lydia House, Habitat for Humanity,

Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch in Bend, OR, and Construction for Change.

Helga is survived by her daughter Marji Lykke, sons Larry (Vicki), Craig (Kay) and Dan (Lynne), nine grandchildren (Jenn, David, Sarah, Melissa, Jesse, Jason, Jamey, Breeana and Nick) and 13 great-grandchildren with one more on the way. Helga was just the type of person that everyone loved. She loved everyone the same, whether her child or their spouse, but her greatest joy had to be her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Her gentle, humble, giving, helping personality and her graceful presence drew family and friends to her. Her unwavering faith in Jesus Christ and the love of God shined brightly through her. She was a behind-the-scenes person, but a prayer warrior of the first order. From behind the scenes, she built a foundation of love and faith that will influence and last for generations.

The family wants to thank the staff and volunteers at Hospice House for their wonderful care of Helga these past few weeks. In lieu of flowers, donations are suggested to Hospice House or one of the charities Helga supported, as listed above.

A burial service with military honors will be held Wednesday, November 4, 2015, at Bayview Cemetery at 2:00 p.m., followed by a celebration of life at Moles Farewell Tributes, 2465 Lakeway Drive. Reception following. You may share memories with the family at [wordpress-271002-1416095.cloudwaysapps.com](http://wordpress-271002-1416095.cloudwaysapps.com).

# Tribute Wall

BH

“ Thinking of the Lykke and Stoner family at this sad time my thoughts and prayers are with you all  
I knew Helga while babysitting for David and Sarah she was a very special lady

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**Brenda Hudson** - October 21, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ Marji, Larry, Craig and Danny, Today a piece of music I heard reminded me of your mom and heading to Google discovered the beautiful tribute you wrote to her, and your dad also. The lives of your family and ours crossed paths in a numerous ways. I have such vivid memories of visits with your family in both So. Pasadena and Bellingham – way too many memories to list. Your mom’s gentle ways, her smile, her beautiful singing, and her great laugh stand out in my mind and your dad’s violin music was always a treat to listen to. Although many years have passed since your mom passed away, please accept our very sincere condolences. Helga and Paul are reunited and making beautiful music together. Susan (Strong) MacLaren

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**Susan (Strong) MacLaren** - October 21, 2015 at 12:00 AM