



## Helen R. Staley

October 4, 1925 - September 6, 2017

Helen Raynes Staley

October 4th, 1925 - September 6th, 2017

Born in the Bronx, she attended New York's HS of Music and Art, Queens College and the University of Pennsylvania. A beloved professor of English literature, and published author, she taught at Skidmore College, Russell Sage College and the Junior College of Albany, as well as other institutions in France and the People's Republic of China. She was committed to her family, friends in the Albany community, her students, her political ideals, literature and the arts. She is survived by her husband of 65 years, Dr. Harry C. Staley, as well as her son Gregory, grandson Steven and daughter in law Virginia of Silver Spring Md. A memorial gathering will be held Saturday October 14, 2017 from 10am to 12pm at the Magin & Keegan Funeral Home. Relatives and friends are invited.

# Events

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**OCT** **Memorial Gathering** 10:00AM - 12:00PM

**14**

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Magin and Keegan Funeral Home Inc

891 Madison Avenue,, Albany, NY, US, 12208

# Comments

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“ With much love I remember you, with much hesitation, I say goodbye. Thank you for everything you taught me and for all the help you gave...May you rest in Peace!  
Charlz R.

**Charles Smith** - December 04, 2019 at 02:11 PM

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“ Fondest thoughts and condolences to Harry and family on Helen's passing. Wonderful meeting you both in Wexford and then later on Lake Champlain VT. Literary lights in a darkening world!  
John Goggins, Wexford.

**John Goggins** - October 15, 2017 at 03:53 AM

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“ Sorry to hear of Helen's passing. She was a wonderful woman. We - Patti and I- first met Harry and Helen through Patti's brother Michael who brought them too see a play of mine. We became staunch friends and we would see them whenever they came on their annual stay in Wexford. They would come to our house for a meal or else we would visit them at The Lock House. Driving down and then up that treacherous drive was a challenge and an adventure to say the least, but it was worth it to hear their stories and their poetry, not to mention their command - and indeed their love- of the English language which was a joy to witness and behold. They were and are so well thought of in this neck of the woods and I would give anything to be back there once again for a moment or two. Deepest sympathies to Harry and family, Our thoughts are with you all now.  
Billy Roche.

**Billy Roche** - October 14, 2017 at 03:52 PM

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“ Heartfelt condolences to Harry, Greg and Ginny and to her grandson, Stephen. When I first started teaching at Sage College of Albany, then JCA, Helen was a shining light. As a Professor of English, she brought guest writers for her “Off the Shelf” series and the students were introduced to many of the poets, novelists and journalists from the area, NYC and beyond. I always enjoyed attending and her generosity added to the culture of the college, the students, and the community. She was also the literary editor for THE VERNACULAR, the college art and writing publication. She was a published author, world traveler and taught in France and China. For many years their summer residence was Wexford Ireland and she and Harry both gave readings there. A favorite photograph of her was taken atop a camel in Mongolia. She was a dear friend to me and to my husband, Tom Speight.

Willie Marlowe

willie marlowe - October 14, 2017 at 12:25 AM

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“ Saddened to hear of the passing Helen Staley, a dear friend. She and Harry were highly thought of in Literary Circles in Wexford, Ireland. For many years they fostered and encouraged local talent, and were most encouraging and affirmative of our writing endeavours. Wonderful memories of enchanting evenings in the cellar restaurant of Wexford Arts Centre where they and ourselves would read poetry and prose, backed by or interspersed with, magical musical performances. And at their summer home, the Lock House, Helen was a charming, hospitable, and very welcoming host. Deepest sympathy to Harry and Greg, and all relations and friends. Fond memories forever. Fintan and Vera Murphy.

Fintan Murphy - October 13, 2017 at 07:14 PM

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“ With deepest sympathy on the death of the lovely Helen. We had wonderful times in Wexford.

from Anne Comerford, Wexford, Ireland.

Anne Comerford - October 13, 2017 at 05:32 PM

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“ Joe and I are so very sad to hear the news of Helen's passing. Both herself and Harry were such an interesting couple who we first met through Denis Collins at the Wexford Arts Centre and we soon discovered we shared many things in common. She continued writing to us and I have all her letters - so full of affection, humour and politics. She was very supportive of Joe's books, especially of Francie (his grandmother's life story). We also loved her writing. Our thoughts go out to Harry and her son Greg at this time. You will be long remembered Helen. We have precious memories of you here in Wexford.

Judy and Joe Robinson

**Judith Robinson** - October 13, 2017 at 05:27 PM

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“ I first met Helen and Harry Staley in Wexford Ireland at Wexford Arts Centre. They had just dropped in and saw a great number of people making a community art installation. Later they came to an open mic session and both read their work and enjoyed the work of others. After that we met regularly during their Summer visits to Ireland. They would come to Wexford to artistic events or I would go to visit them in St Mullins or at the Lock House in Tinnahinch. We found we shared many beliefs and interests and we became very good friends. We also discovered we had mutual friends in the Murphy family. We often talked late into the night over many cups of coffee or for Helen cups of Russian tea with lemon.

I vividly remember Helen standing on a garden chair outside the Lock house shouting up at her mobile phone because the signal was so weak there. Helen often read her stories in her wonderful voice keeping us all entranced for far longer than any other prose writer could, you always wanted to find out what happened to her characters. I was also delighted to be able to organise an exhibition of Helen's photographs at Wexford Arts Centre and they were very favourably received.

I was also delighted to be able to visit Helen and Harry at their home in Albany a number of times, including for the launch of Harry's first poetry collection. I remember sitting with Helen in the morning while she worked the phone to order in provisions or plan trips. We went out to eat in a variety of restaurants and with many friends including Frank and Patti. H & H also introduced me to Willie Marlowe and Tom Speight who have since become my very good friends. They also introduced me to their son Greg on a trip they made to meet me in DC. I remember Helen playing the piano beautifully and remembering many events from her most interesting life. On a trip down to NY once Harry told Helen that only in driving was he a conservative and that keeping her hands on the wheel might be a good idea, Helen had spend the whole journey pointing things out to me.

Only last week was I wearing a beautiful shirt that was once Harry's, it was of a Russian design and is now quite worn at the edges but still very serviceable and beautiful. I remember Harry remonstrating with Helen when she gave it to me with a wonderful glint in his eye and Helen insisting that I had to have it.

But mostly what I remember is a beautiful pair of people very devoted to each other, who were very caring and supportive of each other. Helen Staley was a very good friend to me always and she is often in my thought and in my conversation. I thank her for always being very supportive of me as well. I thank her for being a wonderful woman. I thank her for the fact that this note could go on and on with the most wonderful memories of a most wonderful woman.

My deepest sympathies to Harry and to Greg from one of Helen's Irish family.

I also bring sympathy from her friends Anne Heffernan and Anne Comerford.

Helen farewell from Denis.



“ A memory (or two) of Helen:  
When we first met, Helen recounted how she and Harry had met my partner Patty, on the occasion of the publishing of Harry's first book of poems under the aegis of the Programs in the Arts for the State University of New York. She and Harry were waiting, and a woman entered, surveyed the situation and took charge. For this, she, Helen, was not prepared; she never got over it - in the best possible way!  
Later she also told me that, at a time when Patty and I had broken up for a while, she heard terrible tales of what I horrible person I was from Patty, and was astonished to find, on meeting this beast for the first time, that I was actually not; another astonishment.  
It took at lot to astonish Helen!

**George Hofmann** - October 10, 2017 at 11:28 AM

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“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Helen R. Staley.



October 10, 2017 at 11:16 AM

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“ Helen and I were office neighbors for 20 + years, and retired the same year. We shared much more than close-by office space. Warren (Also now gone) and I spent time in France with Helen and Harry, , and, in general, much wonderful time together. WE go back a long way, Helen. You will be very much missed. Love, and condolences, to Harry and the family.  
Nina Reich

**Nina Reich** - October 06, 2017 at 03:07 PM

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“ So sorry for your loss, Professor Staley. I knew you only through my undergraduate years (1960 -1964) in English and Theater at SUNYA's old campus, but you made an impact. I'm glad you had loving companionship for such a good long part of your journey. You were both very fortunate.  
Love, Gloria Avner

**Gloria Avner** - October 04, 2017 at 09:08 AM