

Helen Shelton Lesner

We are gathered here this morning to bear witness to the resurrection, the resurrection of all who are buried in Jesus Christ our Lord and the resurrection of Helen Shelton Lesner. Helen died this last Thursday after a period of declining health. She was 96.

Helen Shelton was born in Norfolk, VA, on May 13, 1913, the youngest of three and the only daughter. She grew up in Norfolk. In junior high school she met John Lesner, four years ahead of her. Shortly after she graduated from Granby High School, Helen and John married, on September 18, 1931. They enjoyed 61 years of marriage together and had one son, John, Jr, who was born in 1934.

John Lesner was a career employee of the Virginia ABC Board, rising from clerk in a retail store to Director of Vital Statistics and Public Relations. John's career was interrupted by his service in World War II. By 1951 John had risen to a level that brought the couple to Richmond. They bought their dream house on Jimmy Winters Road in Bon Air.

Helen loved her home in Bon Air, particularly sitting in her living room and watching the birds through the picture window that opened on to their back yard. She and John also loved furnishing their home with antique furniture, china, and clocks. Weekends were spent going to yard sales and dealers, as they fed their passion for collecting.

Their tranquil late middle age life changed in 1962. John was 56 and Helen was 52. Their son divorced and turned to his parents for help in his four sons. Overnight Helen was a mother all over again, with sons 3, 5, 7, and 9! Raising her grandsons became a sacrificial labor of love for her.

John, Jr. Lesner died at the age of 46 in 1980. Twelve years later, in 1992, John Lesner, Sr. died. Increasingly Helen preferred a retiring, quiet life at home. She often remarked, however, that though "she was alone, she was not lonely."

Helen had a quiet, gentle demeanor. Typically her best friends were her neighbors. Throughout their long marriage, Helen and John were inseparable.

As young adults Helen and John were members of the Lafayette Presbyterian Church in Norfolk. They joined Bon Air Presbyterian in 1966, and raised their grandsons there.

Helen Lesner was preceded in death by her husband, John M. Lesner Sr.; and her son, John M. Lesner Jr. She is survived by four grandsons, John M. Lesner III and his wife, Cheryl, of Chicago, Illinois, Richard B. Lesner and his wife, Tammy, of Ocala, Fla., Fred Lesner and his wife, Julia, of Hurricane, W.Va., and Thomas S. Lesner and his wife, Gina, of Virginia Beach, Va.; and numerous great-grandchildren. Interment will follow at 2 p.m. at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Norfolk, Va.

Having gathered for our mutual support and to hear the comfort of the scriptures, let us worship God.

R. Charles Grant
Pastor, Bon Air Presbyterian Church
Richmond, Virginia

Prelude

Seating of the family

Personal words

Opening sentences

Short prayer

Scripture Lessons

Matthew 6:25-34

John 14

Psalm 23

I Thessalonians 4, 5

Longer Prayer

Organ Interlude (organist's choice)

Sermon Text

I Corinthians 13:4-7, 12-13

Sermon "Faith, Hope, and Love"

Prayer

Benediction

Prelude

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