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Helen Carstens



Helen Carstens, 88, of Grinnell, died April 22, 2021.

Her remains will be interred at Washta, Iowa, at a future date.

She was born on a farm in Washta on Nov. 19, 1932, to Ellen and Ray Roberts. She attended Washta Consolidated Schools and graduated in 1950. In December of 1951, she married Merlyn Carstens and together they raised five children. Living in many different communities, she was a stay-at-home mom until the children were older and then worked many different jobs including at Weigh Tronix in Armstrong, Iowa, and then cleaning and selling her own dried flower wreaths at the Des Moines Farmer's Market after moving to Grinnell in 1984.

In retirement, they spent their winters in Mesa, Ariz., where she took up painting in 1995. Most of her paintings were of landscapes, birds, and flowers in watercolor or acrylics.

She is survived by her husband; five children, Susan Davisson of Iowa City, Scott Carstens of Iowa City, Jill Crofts of Grinnell, Anita Laffey of Des Moines, and Christopher Carstens of Slayton, Minn.; 12 grandchildren; 10 great grandchildren; and her siblings Bill Roberts and Bob Roberts, of Cherokee.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sisters Betty Samuelson, Faith Varvil, and Mary Gum; and one grandchild.