



## Helen Adriana Ruygt

February 25, 1928 - June 19, 2021

On June 19, 2021, Helen Ruygt passed away peacefully in her sleep at the age of 93. As the matriarch of the Ruygt & Van Winden Families she was a kind and caring soul, loved by many family and friends locally and in her homeland of Holland. She was born Helena Adriana Maria van Winden in Pijnacker, The Netherlands on February 25, 1928. She was the eldest of 7 children (1 deceased in infancy and another deceased at the age of 15 months). She was the daughter of Jacobus “Jake” and Maria van Winden (de Koning). Helen’s mother passed away when she was 14 years old, so it fell upon her to help with the household and her younger siblings at an early age. She also helped clean at her church, part of her growing devotion to her Catholic faith and helped an aunt weekly for spending cash. She learned to knit and made her first sweater at the age of 10, a skill she practiced her whole life. She first met her husband Louis G. Ruygt at the age of 15 along the “Molenpad” (Windmill path) while on a bike ride with her close group of friends but it was not until the age of 18 that she was allowed on their first date. Helen endured the hardships of 5 years of Nazi occupation during World War II and her family sometimes provided others with shelter or food from their farm. Helen and Louis married Oct 29, 1949, 6 days before her father, stepmother and siblings emigrated to the United States. The newlyweds were able to live in the family home in which she was born, and there they brought 5 children into the world in the next 6 years. Louis worked as a banker in The Hague but after the devastation of WWII, Louis did not see much promise in remaining in Holland and applied for immigration to the USA. In 1956 he was able to board his family on a 2-day airplane trip to California. Helen’s family was already settled in Napa, so they joined the family and Louis began working at his father-in-law’s nursery Van Winden’s Pueblo Garden Center. A 6th child was born to them 2 years later and a 7th perished near birth.

Helen was an impeccable housekeeper and always kept her children well dressed, often receiving complements for her ability to keep up with the needs of a large family. She was an excellent cook and seamstress, sewing numerous dresses and sweaters as well as making alterations to the dresses of her future daughters-in law and bridesmaid. She helped tend to the garden where they grew fruits, vegetables and a flower garden that was

admired by many. When Louis began to establish his own garden maintenance business, she often joined him after dinner to bring in additional income. It was because of her frugality and penny-saving that Helen and Louis were able to visit relatives in Holland periodically and go on many road trips to visit their daughter's family in Louisiana, Florida and Alabama and to their son in Arizona. Helen and Louis were so proud and felt especially blessed to have a son (Hans) who was ordained a Roman Catholic priest (April 1985) and visited him at the parishes he administered and served in California and Arizona. Helen remained in contact with many friends she made at each parish.

Helen had a strong love for nature and its boundless beauty. They traveled across the country several times sightseeing and frequently visited Lake Tahoe, Yosemite and the Sonoma Coast. From all these adventures she collected treasured memories in over 130 photo albums allowing her to revisit her travels in later years. She never forgot if someone else took a picture she wanted to add to her collection. She never forgot a birthday or anniversary although she had 100's of dates in her head. Helen was an avid letter writer and kept in contact with numerous relatives until she was no longer able to write. Always thoughtful and caring, she treasured the many letters and cards she garnered in response to her letters. Helen was a devoted Catholic, praying the rosary daily and attending Mass as often as she was able to, celebrating at home with her son Fr. Hans when he visited her. She was a long time member of the YLI (Young Ladies Institute) and the Women's Guild at Saint John the Baptist Parish and Saint Apollinaris Parish. She was awarded Woman of the Year. She also regularly visited the elderly as a member of the John Bosco Society at Saint John's Parish and was involved as a volunteer at St. John's School, while her children attended. Helen is survived by her brother Peter (Johanna) Van Winden and sisters Jean Coyle and Tina Lloyd (Jim). She is also survived by her children Marian Van Voast (Zachary), Jake Ruygt (April), Fr. Hans Ruygt, Helma Haines (Scott), Louis A. Ruygt (Elizabeth), and Fr. David Ostler whom she treated like a son. She is survived by nine grandchildren: Lainie, Wendy, Kimberley, Jennifer, Jessica, Andrea, Melissa, Megan and William as well as two great-grandchildren: Brandon and Cameron. She also leaves many friends at The Springs of Napa.

She was predeceased by her husband Louis G. Ruygt (2016), parents Jacobus "Jake" and Maria, her stepmother Wilhelmina Van Winden, her brother Adrian Van Winden, her daughter Lenny Ruygt and her grandson Jeffrey Warrington. She is also survived by numerous cousins, nieces and nephews in California, Canada and The Netherlands.

Visitation will be Sunday, June 27, from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Saint Apollinaris Catholic Church. The Rosary will be prayed at 7:00 PM.

Funeral Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated Monday, June 28, at 10:00 AM at Saint Apollinaris Catholic Church, 3700 Lassen Street, Napa CA 94558; celebrated by Fr. Hans Ruygt, Fr. David Ostler and several local priests. [stapollinarisparish.org](http://stapollinarisparish.org). (707) 257-2555

Committal Prayers and burial will be held at 2:00 PM at Tulocay Cemetery, 411 Coombsville Road, Napa CA [tulocaycemetery.org](http://tulocaycemetery.org)

Memorial Gifts are recommended for St Apollinaris Parish, Birthright of Napa, EWTN Global Catholic Television Network, Alabama; or St. Clare of Assisi Parish Building Fund, Surprise, Arizona

Condolences and memories can be shared on: [claffeyandrota.com](http://claffeyandrota.com).

Funeral arrangements by:  
Claffey & Rota Funeral Home  
1975 Main St., Napa, CA 94559  
(707) 224-5210

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 27. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

St. Apollinaris Catholic Church  
3700 Lassen St  
Napa, CA 94558  
(707) 257-2555

## Rosary

JUN 27. 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

St. Apollinaris Catholic Church  
3700 Lassen St  
Napa, CA 94558  
(707) 257-2555

## Mass

JUN 28. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (PT)

St. Apollinaris Catholic Church  
3700 Lassen St  
Napa, CA 94558  
(707) 257-2555

## Reception

JUN 28. 11:15 AM - 1:30 PM (PT)

St. Apollinaris Catholic Church  
3700 Lassen St  
Napa, CA 94558  
(707) 257-2555

## Graveside Service

JUN 28. 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM (PT)

Tulocay Cemetery  
411 Coombsville Rd  
Napa, CA 94558



# Tribute Wall



“ *Helen Adriana Ruygt*

September 29, 2022 at 04:54 PM



“ *Helen Adriana Ruygt*

September 29, 2022 at 02:55 PM

IR

“ *Dearest Helen, I miss you so much. My heart aches every time I pass by your door. You were such a good neighbor and a beloved friend. I love you. Inez*

**Inez Ritchie** - June 30, 2021 at 09:51 PM

KB

“ *My deepest condolences to the Ruygt family. I was so sorry to read of your Mothers passing. After many years, our paths crossed again when my Dad moved to the Springs in 2017. Helen was always so friendly and kind and helped my Dad feel comfortable in his new environment. I bless you all and hope your memories give you peace during this difficult time.*

*Sincerely,  
Kathy Olmstead Bonds*

**Kathy Bonds** - June 27, 2021 at 02:47 PM

“ Beste familie gecondoleerd met het grote verlies van tante Leny.

*Een paar weken geleden hebben we haar nog gesproken via een videobel gesprek waarvan we het heel leuk vonden om haar op deze manier te spreken met hulp van Hans.*

*Ze was een heel vriendelijk en zachtmoedige vrouw die altijd geïnteresseerd was hoe het met een ander ging. Zo bleven wij contact met elkaar houden en deelden foto's van ons en onze kinderen.*

*Ik herinner mij nog goed de meerdere keren dat ome Louis en tante Leny naar Nederland kwamen en voor een paar weken bij mijn ouders (Jan en Sjaan Ruijgt) in huis verbleven.*

*Ze gingen dagelijks op familiebezoek en maakte vaak uitstapjes om Nederland te bekijken.*

*Het was altijd een bijzondere leuke tijd voor mijn ouders en ons (Wim & Johan) als opgroeiende kinderen. De vele verhalen die ze over Amerika en hun reizen vertelde maakte op ons een enorme indruk en hoorde wij met grote interesse aan.*

*Via de brieven die ze schreef wisten we hoe het met de familie ging en werd de afstand tussen Nederland en Amerika verkleint. Ze was altijd heel open en dat maakte haar een bijzondere tante die we zullen missen.*

*Veel liefs, our sincerely condolences on the loss of your mother,*

*Wim, Petra, Lisa en Kevin Ruijgt  
Pijnacker*

---

**Wim & Petra Ruijgt** - June 27, 2021 at 02:26 PM

AV

“ Dear family, We would like to express our condolences to you all on the loss of your mother, mother-in-law or grandmother, my tante Leny, a very special aunt who sent several letters every year with birthdays and holidays and always accompanied with photos, and when I sent a letter back I always received an enthusiastic thank you.

When Ria and I came to visit for the first time as teenagers, we were so surprised with so much hospitality from your parents. They liked it so much that the daughters of Anny and Joop came to visit and showed us all kinds of highlights from the area, all in the car and drinking sandwiches and an apple. I can still see the many jars with applesauce and vegetables that had to be preserved every year. We will certainly miss her letters and interest.

Our prayers and thoughts are with you and your family.

Love Ton en Anneke

---

Anneke Verbakel - June 26, 2021 at 01:07 PM

NA

“ So sorry for your loss. Enjoyed visiting with her many times throughout the years!

---

Nancy and Louis Azevedo - June 25, 2021 at 01:57 AM



“ Guiding Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Helen Adriana Ruygt.



---

June 24, 2021 at 03:51 PM

PM

“ Paul Moncada purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Helen Adriana Ruygt.



---

Paul Moncada - June 24, 2021 at 02:32 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Helen Adriana Ruygt.*



---

June 24, 2021 at 01:06 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Helen Adriana Ruygt.*



---

June 24, 2021 at 12:43 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Helen Adriana Ruygt.*



---

June 24, 2021 at 11:53 AM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Helen Adriana Ruygt.*



---

June 23, 2021 at 10:52 PM