

Helen Grace Morehouse Howk
Aug. 16, 1918 - May 3, 2013

Helen Grace Morehouse Howk, daughter of John Ephriam and Mary Ellen Pigg Morehouse, was born Aug. 16, 1918, at the family home in Davenport, Neb. She died at the Dundy County Hospital, Benkelman, Neb., on May 3, 2013, at the age of 94 years, 8 months, and 17 days.

Just before Helen was two years old, the family moved from Davenport, Neb., back to the family farm in Cheyenne County, Kan., where her parents had homesteaded when they were newly married.

Helen grew up on this farm and attended the White Lilly School that some years was taught by her older brother, Albert, or sister, Gladys. Helen graduated from St. Francis High School, St. Francis, Kan., in 1935 and over the years enjoyed many reunions with classmates at the annual alumni banquet. In 2010 she and her classmates celebrated the 75th anniversary of their high school graduation.

In the summer of 1936, Helen began working with her brother, Dr. G. Albert Morehouse, in his office in Benkelman. In 1937 she entered nursing school at Children's Hospital in Denver, Colo., graduating in 1940.

Upon graduation and receiving her license as a registered nurse, Helen returned to Benkelman and worked with her brother at the Morehouse Hospital. Helen maintained that nursing license until just a few years before her death. She took continuing education courses until she was well into her 70s and after she received her first computer as a birthday gift for her 80th birthday, continued to educate herself online.

Helen was truly one of the pioneers of nursing in Dundy County, Neb., working alongside her sister, Bernice, to establish a superior level of nursing care way ahead of its time. During her final illness, Helen was the recipient of that high quality of nursing care still being practiced in the hospital where she worked so many long hours and that she loved so much.

Helen was a nurse practitioner before that role even existed. She maintained an office in Bird City for many years with her brother visiting once a week.

She was a first responder before that duty had a name, often going to the site of an accident and treating the victims on the spot before transporting them to the hospital where she often stayed to provide special duty care. Sometimes that transport meant flying with Ernie Bressler in his crop dusting plane to hospitals in Denver.

Even after the office had long been closed, Helen continued to give allergy shots and provide blood pressure checks, answer questions, and offer advice. She demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that nursing is a calling and "once a nurse, always a nurse."

While working at the hospital in the spring of 1943, Helen noticed a handsome young man visiting one of the patients. When he left, she asked the patient, Ilone Byers, who that young man was. Ilone told her

it was her nephew, Merle Howk, from Bird City.

The next evening Merle came to visit again, but this time Helen's brother, Albert, asked her to give Merle a sinus treatment. After the sinus treatment, Merle invited Helen to go across the street with him to the Hamilton Drug Store for one of Snap's (Howard Hamilton, owner) famous chocolate malted milks.

Helen and Merle were married on Dec. 6, 1943. That union lasted almost 36 years until the time of Merle's death in 1979. Helen and Merle made their home in Merle's family home in Bird City and Helen was still living independently in that home until the time of her death.

Early in their marriage, Helen and Merle helped to care for Merle's mother, who had Multiple Sclerosis, and during those early years, they also experienced the loss of their infant son who was born prematurely and died at birth. Helen was gravely ill because of complications in the late stages of her pregnancy and was told she should not attempt to have any more children.

In the summer of 1947, Helen was thrilled to receive a phone call on a Sunday afternoon telling her that a baby girl had been born in Denver and that she and Merle could adopt her if they wished.

Helen embraced motherhood and was involved in all the many community and school activities that keep the children of a community learning and growing. Helen was a 4-H leader for many years and sewed many dance costumes, cheerleading uniforms, etc., not to mention listening to the practice of countless recital pieces over the years. There were also many trips to Goodland for swimming lessons long before Bird City, or even St. Francis, had a swimming pool.

Helen took swimming lessons, too, as she had never learned to swim. She was a good student and overcame her long-held fear of the water.

If Helen embraced motherhood, she reveled in being a grandmother. Her only grandchild, Elizabeth Ann Hoffman, was born in 1976 and Helen could hardly wait for Beth to arrive each summer to spend an extended time with her during Beth's preschool years. They would go to the swimming pool daily and during the Thresher Show they would be at the show grounds from the first whistle in the morning until the end of the last activity every day.

Following Merle's death in 1979, Helen took over managing the family farming operation which she continued to do until about two years before her death when she began slowly releasing the reins to her daughter, Merla.

Helen loved the land and was proud to be a farmer. She learned about different varieties of wheat and which ones might be best to plant in certain years. She was almost the only woman who waited in line at the Farm Service Agency office to sign up for government programs, etc. and she has been known to

be waiting at the junction of US 36 and K-27 to find and hire a custom cutting crew as they arrived from the south. As with all Kansas wheat farmers, when her wheat was ready to cut, she wanted a crew in the field and ready to go.

Family was the highest priority in Helen's life and she would drop everything to go to one of her sisters or her daughter and her family when there was a need, particularly a need for nursing care. She spent months at a time in Arizona with her sister, Bernice, when her health was failing, and months in Colorado when her son-in-law, Mike, was gravely ill and not expected to live. She made daily trips to the nursing home in St. Francis for several years to feed her sister, Gladys, lunch and was deeply saddened when advancing age made that daily visit too much for her to manage.

Helen's faith was the lynchpin that held her life together. When she was growing up, she attend the Church of Christ with her family and the South Fork Community Church where the folks who lived in that part of the county all attended services.

After her marriage, she attended the Immanuel United Methodist Church, the church Merle had grown up attending. Hearing loss and increasing arthritic pain limited her church attendance in the last few years, but she continued her spiritual journey at home with daily Bible readings and listening to sermons on television. When the call came that her time had come, she was ready. Surrounded by many who loved her, when the moment arrived, she let go and let God, teaching us one last lesson in grace, courage and love.

Helen was preceded in death by her husband, Merle R. Howk; her parents, John E. and Mary E. Morehouse; siblings, Dr. G. Albert Morehouse, Blanche McDowell, Bernice Baker, and Dolores Klotz; son-in-law, J. Michael Hoffman; her mother-in-law and father-in-law, Lena and Clarence Howk; four brothers-in-law, and a sister-in-law.

Helen is survived by her daughter, Merla R. Hoffman; granddaughter, Elizabeth Ann Hoffman; sister, Gladys Neilan (deceased as of May 9, 2013); and a host of family and friends who loved and supported Helen throughout her life.

A celebration of life will be held in Helen's honor at 11 a.m. at the Immanuel United Methodist Church in Bird City, on June 29, 2013, Pastor Tom Bailey officiating. Helen has chosen to be cremated and her remains will be interred in the Bird City Cemetery.

Memorials may be made in Helen's honor to the Dundy County Hospital, Benkelman, Neb., the Immanuel United Methodist Church, Bird City, Kan., or the charity of the giver's choosing.

Fireworks and activities set for July Fourth celebration

The Cheyenne County July Fourth celebration is once again set in St. Francis with more fireworks and more activities.

Last year, drought conditions and a burn ban forced the celebration to be called off. Fireworks planned were put into storage for this year. However, they weren't completely paid for so this year, the committee of John Amack, Rodney Neitzel and Roger Neitzel, are asking for some more donations. They are also adding some more fireworks.

The activities will actually start the day before on Wednesday when there will be a family swim at the St. Francis pool starting at 7 p.m. At 8:45 p.m., there will be a movie and late swim, again, at the pool.

Sawhill Park will be the place for kids to be Thursday morning as the "Red, White and Blue Parade" will be held along with kids' games.

The all-American hot dog meal will be sold in front of Uptown Market on Main Street. Last year was the first year for the hot dog eating contest. People gathered around the 12 contestants eating hot dogs washed down with glasses of water. The winner was J.J. Warren of Gurley, Neb., who managed to chow down 12 hot dogs with buns in 12 minutes. Second place winner went to Chris McQuigg, St. Francis, who ate 11 hot dogs, laced with catsup, and dunked in water.

There were several younger kids who wanted to enter the contest so this year, Rodney Neitzel has announced there will be two age divisions: 12 and under; and over 12 and adults.

Committee asking for firework donations

Last year, the fireworks display set for July Fourth was canceled because of the dry conditions. This year, even though the fireworks were purchased last year, the committee is asking for donations.

We, the committee, Rodney Neitzel said, purchased the fireworks but as the weather continued to get drier and drier, the donations quit coming in because there was talk of not having the fireworks display.

This year, we still need to finish paying for last year's fireworks as well as for a few new ones recently purchased.

It is impossible to collect an

admission, he said. Instead, we will have several people in golf carts cruising the grounds around the fireworks display as well as going up and down streets, asking those sitting in their yards or porches to give.

If they have already given or when they donate, they will receive a flag so people will know not to stop at their place.

We appreciate the donations and support previously given so people can enjoy a spectacular display, Mr. Neitzel said. However, if we cannot raise the needed funds this year, we will give up the effort to have another fireworks display on the Fourth.

People wanting to enter need to call or stop by the Market to sign up. Rodney said he has already had several sign up for the adult division and this year, there will only be ten contestants allowed in each division.

In the afternoon, a patriotic sing-a-long will be held at the Old Country Church and the Cheyenne County Museum will hold an open house with ice cream, cake and lemonade.

Food vendors will be set up in the Park Hill Restaurant parking lot. The Shriners Candy Wagon will be serving cotton candy, snow cones, popcorn and drinks. Inside

the restaurant, the junior class will set up a hamburger meal money maker.

To keep the younger kids occupied before the fireworks begin, there will be Kiddie's Fireworks and games, sponsored by Hilt's Fireworks. It should be noted that kids need to be accompanied by an adult or older sibling.

The evening will end with a 45 to 50 minutes fireworks display set to patriotic music. It is a "Tribute to America," Rodney said. "Display the red, white and blue and come join the fun."

Student Graduates

On May 18, the degree of doctorate was formally conferred upon Jamie Aislinn Banister, Bachelor of Arts., Master of Arts, from The Catholic University of America; Washington, District of Columbia. Dr. Banister received her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the School of Theology and Religious Studies. Her dissertation is entitled Theopanies in the Minor Prophets: A Cross-Analysis of Theopanic Texts in Micha, Habakkuk, and Zechariah.

She received her Bachelor of Arts from Bethany College, Lindsborg, and completed her Master's at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Mo.

The Catholic University of America was founded on Dec. 2, 1884, by the bishops of the United States and named the University a month later. Pope Leo XIII gave formal approbation to the project on April 10, 1887. Immediately thereafter, civil incorporation in the District of Columbia was obtained. Papal approval of the first constitution

was given on March 7, 1889, and the University opened on the following Nov. 13.

The Catholic University of America became the principal channel through which the modern university movement entered the American Catholic community. In 1900, Catholic University was among the fourteen institutions offering instruction for the doctorate that formed the Association of American Universities.

Undergraduate programs were added to the offerings of the University in 1904.

Dr. Banister's parents are George and Kathy Banister of McDonald.



Banister

MAST ANTIQUE AUCTION
Sat., June 22, 2013
Sale Time 10:00 a.m. Central Time
113 West 4th St., Bird City, Kansas (American Legion Hall)
GUNS & MILITARY, ANTIQUE FURNITURE, CROCKS, BOAT & MOTORS, ANTIQUES AND COLLECTABLES, TOOLS, GLASSWARE, MISCELLANEOUS & CRAFT ITEMS.
DOROTHY MAST, OWNER • BEVERLY HIGGINS, GUEST CONSIGNOR
Lloyd Michael, Jr., Owner/Auctioneer
970-474-3693
www.michaelsauction.com

Hale Fire & Rescue Department
Barbecue
What: Free-will donation barbecue & dessert auction
When: Saturday, June 22nd @ 6pm
Where: Hale Fire & Rescue Dept.
From Idalia: 2 miles East to Hwy 385, South 2 miles to Road 7, 5.5 miles East to Road LL.5, 3.5 miles South to the fire hall

Plan to Attend
The 2013
Cheyenne County
July 4th Celebration
St. Francis, Ks
Thursday, July 4th
Daytime, Evening and Nighttime Events.
ParadeGames** Music****
FoodFireworks**
Donations for the evening events will be greatly appreciated.

Help Wanted
Clinical Case Manager position available at Good Samaritan-Atwood. Position is full-time (minimum of 4 days/week), working one week-end out of four. One day/week is office time; the rest are spent in an expanded charge nurse role, overseeing the total care of approximately 20 residents. RN licensure with at least one year of long-term care experience required. Must be MDS certified or willing to train for it - we provide training. Good communication and strong clinical skills needed. For more information, or to apply, call Pam Thomas, DNS or Shari Horinek, Human Resources at 785-626-9015. EEOC
Good Samaritan Society
Atwood
650 Lake Drive, Atwood, Ks. 67730
Atwood Good Samaritan Village is an EEO/
AAP - M/F/V/D employer

July 4th
Hot Dog Eating Contest
High Noon July 4th
In Front of Uptown Market
St. Francis
Two Divisions - Youth & Adult
8th Grade & under and 9th Grade & up
Sign up now - Call 785-332-2774
or stop by Uptown Market
First Place Trophies Awarded
Limited to 10 people per category
413 E. Washington, St., St. Francis

NOTICE • NOTICE • NOTICE
The Saint Francis Herald and Bird City Times will be closed July 4th.
Because of the holiday newspapers delivered on routes will be a day late!
Ad deadline for the Country Advocate will be Wednesday, July 3.
Happy Birthday America!