

Obituary – Helen Margaret Faust Blackledge

BLACKLEDGE - Helen Margaret Faust Blackledge, the former Marble Lady of Albuquerque, will miss family and friends and laughter and stories and puzzles and hummers and doggies and cacti and sunshine and doo-wop and loving and smiling and Hershey's milk chocolate with almonds. Helen was born 1 Nov 1943 in Silver City, NM to Jerry Williard Faust II and Helen Elizabeth (Brand) Faust. She died peacefully at her home in Albuquerque on Sunday, 5 March, 2006. Helen attended numerous schools while her stepfather was transferred to various aerospace engineering jobs. She attended Antelope Valley H.S. in Lancaster, CA, in 1960, and remembered Frank Zappa refusing to stand for the national anthem. She graduated in Jun 1961 from Cobre H.S., Bayard, NM. Helen attended the University of New Mexico and told stories of rooming with Penny Marshall, later of Hollywood fame.

Helen met Michael Allan Blackledge in Albuquerque (Feb 1966) when he was first assigned to Kirtland AFB and applied to the computer dating service she managed. Four months later they married and their Air Force career carried them to Colorado Springs, the Pentagon, Las Vegas, NV, and back to Albuquerque in 1979. During this time, Helen raised her two outstanding sons (Douglas and David), tended bar at the Blue Front in Glenwood, NM while her husband was stationed in Thailand, worked for Beauty Built Homes in Las Vegas, and learned the estate and storage locker recovery business with her close friend Jean Young Tollefson.

Helen formed and operated three businesses in Albuquerque: **Anne-tiques/ PROMOTIONS** (Collectibles) on 636 San Mateo SE (with Anne Lindsey, 1986-1988); the **Auction Company** (with Richard Brewington, 1987-1989); and the **Antique Manor** (with Jodie England and Sue Craven at the original location, 2222 Eubank, 1988-1993; then managed two other locations until she retired the Manor in Dec 2001). Helen's specialties were antique marbles and costume jewelry. She was known as "*The Marble Lady of Albuquerque*" until she sold her collection of over 70,000 antique (hand and machine-made) marbles in 1996 to her soul mate Gerry Colman.

Helen is survived by her husband, sons, daughters-in-law Robin and Tricia, and grandchildren Charlie and ID, as well as her sister Annabeth Balance of Atlanta, and brothers Jerry Faust of Perkasio, PA, John and Joe Faust of Glenwood, and Bill Faust of Albuquerque, and numerous nephews and nieces. Helen loved her family and friends, and her very special grandchildren, Charlene Kaiya Blackledge and Ian David Blackledge. Helen had a wonderful sense of humor and greatly enjoyed working crossword puzzles, reading newspapers and other fiction, and watching *Law and Order*, *CSI*, and *Max Headroom*. Nephew Bob Faust has said of Helen, "She has been an inspiration to me since I have known her. She is one of the few people who can see clearly for miles ahead and still see the minute details within."

Helen had dramatic flair and creativity. We'll remember the way she'd shake her head to show off her huge earrings. We'll picture her brewing a huge vat of chili for the enjoyment of others or giving her throaty laugh as she throws her head back and puffs cigarette smoke upward. This was a woman who enjoyed life, its sins, sinecures, and sophistications. She could read a person or a storage locker and know value in an instant. Children, animals, and plants took to her wide and loving embrace.

Helen's cremated remains will be interred at the Santa Fe National Cemetery on Thursday, 16 March 2006. In lieu of flowers, Helen had suggested donations to **New Mexico Boys and Girls Ranches**, 6209 HENDRIX NE. ALBUQUERQUE NM 87110 [web site: <http://www.theranches.org/>] [phone: 505-881-3363]. The family will host an open house for Helen's friends at her home on Sunday 19 March 2006 from 1 pm to 5 pm [details at <http://www.mike.blackledge.com>].