



Helen L. Robertson

October 25, 1950 - January 14, 2025

Helen Leonie Robertson died on Jan 14, 2025. She was 74 years old.

Helen, the daughter of Charles and Verna Roberston, grew up in Jamaica and in the South Bronx. After graduating from Cardinal Spellman High School, she attended the University of Wisconsin Madison.

Helen became interested in politics while in high school when she attended summer school classes at Columbia University. She was active in the black student and anti-war movements at the University of Wisconsin and worked at a southside social service agency. Helen left school before graduating and moved to Milwaukee where she participated in the social justice movements of the late 60's and 1970's.

Helen was an organizer with the Milwaukee Welfare Rights Organization with her dear friends Cassie Downer and Betty Glossom. She was employed by the Briggs and Stratton Corporation where she was active in the union reform effort. Later, she was a leader of the movement to oust the notorious Judge Chris Seraphim and played a leading role in the fight for a new North Division High School.

Helen was also active in the national civil rights movement. She helped organize one of the first African Liberation Day Celebrations in Washington

DC and in 1978 traveled to Tupelo, Mississippi to work with the United League of Mississippi in its fight against the Ku Klux Klan. She was the keynote speaker at UAW Local 72's celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's birthday in 1981 to call for the establishment of his birthday as a national holiday in Kenosha.

In the late '70s Helen returned to school, enrolling in UWM, and earned her Bachelors and Master's degrees in English. Helen was an avid reader who loved literature. She was active in local writers' groups and eventually went back for a second Masters degree in creative writing from Warren Wilson College. She published several short stories. She was a compassionate and effective educator.

Helen taught English at North Division High School and later at Milwaukee Area Technical College where she was one of the first coordinators of that college teacher education program. Helen was loved and respected by her students. She frequently invited students who were single parents to her home for a meal and fellowship. There were always wine glasses, even if all they drank was water. She believed that everyone deserved to feel respected and treated with dignity. Helen ran into former students frequently. Once when she was having lunch at Katie's dinner the waitress approached asking, "are you Helen Roberston?" When Helen replied affirmatively, the young woman who was working a second job, said, "You were my teacher at MATC. You inspired me to continue with my education and get my degree. You changed my life. Thank you for everything." Helen was held in high esteem by her colleagues and was an active member of AFT Local 212, the faculty union.

Helen was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and retired early due to the illness. Helen fought her illness with the same commitment, effort and passion that had characterized her organizing. And despite its debilitating nature, she continued to take an avid interest in literature and politics and in the lives of

her children and grandchildren. Helen never missed an election. Her last vote was for Kamala Harris for president of the United States. As a friend wrote, she persevered against great odds for a long time. When I knew her, she was a ray of sunshine.

She is survived by her son Jesse Rosen, daughters, Corinne Rosen (Susan) and Gina Rosen, 2 grandchildren, Leonie and Maximilian, her brother Eric Roberston and sister Veronica Roberston of New York City. Further survived by her nieces Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich, Kikelomo Amusa-Shonubi, Adedayo Perkovich and nephew Jarrett Robertson. She was preceded in death by her sister Pat and brother Winston. In lieu of flowers please direct donations to Gina Rosen to be dispersed to Helen's Charitables. A celebration of Helen's life will be held on March 1 at 1pm at the Wisconsin Country Club. May her memory be a blessing.

Previous Events

Celebration

MAR 1. 1:00 PM (CT)

Wisconsin Country Club
6200 Good Hope Road
Milwaukee, WI 53223

Tribute Wall

GI

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Gina - February 06, 2025 at 12:47 PM

GR

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Gina Rosen - February 05, 2025 at 02:18 PM

DP

How can I contact Gina Rosen ?
Denny Borges PA : 1-888-815-7782

Denny Borges PA - April 10, 2025 at 09:43 PM

MR

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



michael d rosen - February 05, 2025 at 01:55 PM