

Afterglow

*I'd like the memory of me
to be a happy one.*

*I'd like to leave an after glow
of smiles when life is done.*

*I'd like to leave an echo
whispering softly down the ways,
Of happy times and laughing times
and bright and
sunny days.*

*I'd like the tears of those who
grieve, to dry before the sun*

*Of happy memories that I leave
When life is done.*

Helen (Rook) Merritt was born December 12, 1951, in Canton, South Dakota, to Wilbur and Tillie (DeJong) Rook. Helen lived a life filled with love, laughter, and adventure.

Her journey took her to Denver, Colorado, where she met her husband, Vernon, began her career, and welcomed her first son. She quickly fell in love with the mountains, skiing, and cheering for her Denver Broncos. In Ventura, California, her second son was born, and Helen found joy on the beach, close friendships, and the beauty of Southern California life.

The family later settled in San Ramon, California, where Helen and Vernon raised their boys. She balanced a full career with Safeway, Inc. while never missing a moment of her sons' lives—from grade school to high school, sports to celebrations. She treasured family trips to San Francisco and Lake Tahoe and visits from her Iowa family.

After retiring, Helen moved to San Diego to be near her sons and grandchildren. She embraced her role as “Grandma,” finding joy in board games, puzzles, beach walks, and simply being surrounded by family.

Helen passed away peacefully on September 26, 2025, at the age of 73, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer, surrounded by her loving sons.

Helen's life was one of love, laughter, and faith. She will be forever loved, always remembered, and deeply missed.

She is survived by her sons, Steve (Dana) Merritt and Ryan (Jen) Merritt; mother, Tillie Rook; grandchildren, Carter, Mickey, Dylan, and Brinley Merritt; sisters, Joyce Murphy, Marlys Hamann, and Paula Brandimarte; and her beloved grandpuppies, Pablo and Cali. She was preceded in death by her father, Wilbur Rook; husband, Vernon Merritt; sister, Vickie Riphagen; and brother, Ricky Rook.

In Loving Memory

Celebrating the Life of
Helen (Rook) Merritt
December 12, 1951 ~ September 26, 2025

MEMORIAL SERVICE

11:00 AM, Saturday, October 25, 2025
Porter Funeral Home
Rock Valley, Iowa

OFFICIANT

Rev. Henry Lengkeek

*Helen's family invites everyone for a time
of food and fellowship immediately
following the memorial service.*



Helen Rook Merritt

December 12, 1951 ~ September 26, 2025