

Helen B. Henderson, 77

Aug. 5, 1919 - May 17, 1997

ELK HORN - Helen B. Henderson, daughter of David and Grace Brown, was born Aug. 5, 1919, near Aledo, IL. She grew up on a farm and graduated from Aledo High School in 1936. She attended Western Illinois State Teachers College, Macomb, IL and Monmouth College, Monmouth, IL, where she majored in speech and drama.

Oct. 5, 1940, she married James D. Henderson. To this union five children were born. After their marriage, they made their home in Cedar Falls. After their children had grown they moved to West Des Moines and later to Anita. She was known throughout Iowa for her advocacy for the mentally retarded. Having a retarded daughter of her own, she realized the lack of social services available to parents in the 1940's. She organized the local county chapters of the Association for Retarded Citizens in 1950 and was elected the first president of the Black Hawk County Association for Retarded Citizens in 1954. She continued to work actively with this group through 1963. She was appointed by two Iowa Governors to serve on 12 different state commissions or councils from 1956 to 1984. She served as the Field Representative for the Iowa Association for Retarded Citizens from 1963 to 1970 and its Executive Director from 1970 to 1978. From 1978 to 1983 she was the Executive Director for Polk County Health Services and later served as a consultant to Polk County Health Services until 1991. She received many honors and recognitions throughout her career. As a result of her outstanding contributions to Iowa's retarded citizens she was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame by Governor Terry Brandstad Aug. 27, 1992. She was a 50 year member of PEO, being inducted first in Cedar Falls and then transferring to the chapter in Anita, when she moved there in 1980. May 17, 1997, she died at Salem Lutheran Nursing Home in Elk Horn at age 77 years, five months and 17 days.

She was preceded in death by her parents and two sisters, Doris Nelson and Ina Mae Warnock. Surviving are her husband, James of Anita; her son, Dr. James D. Henderson, Jr. (Marge) of Milwaukee, WI; son, David J. Henderson (Theresa) of Long Beach, MS; daughter, Jane G. Henderson of Des Moines; Jean G. Porter (Bruce) of Harlan; Cynthia A. Lippman (Ernest) of St. Louis, MO; nine grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. She also is survived by a sister, Irene Kimball of Aledo, IL, and two brothers, David Brown of Milan, IL and Clarence Edwin Brown of Galesburg, IL and other relatives.

Funeral services were held May 20, 1997, at the Hansen Chapel of the Salem Lutheran Home in Elk Horn, with Rev. Albert Sherbo officiating. Graveside services and burial were held May 21, 1997 at the Waterloo Memorial Cemetery in Waterloo. Casket bearers were Julie Honer, Scott Henderson, Carrie Lippman, Kevan Henderson, Bridgette Galles, Mark Henderson and Michael Henderson. Pauley Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.