



## Helen Wahlberg Fritz

February 2, 1917 - June 22, 2014

After a lifetime of service to country and community, Helen Wahlberg Fritz died in Chestertown, MD, on June 22, 2014, from complications following a recent stroke. She was 97.

During World War II, she was a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps, one of its first women officers. During her 25-plus years as a resident of Chestertown, she was a member of the Kent County Historical Society, serving as its secretary for many years, the Questers, and the Marine Corps League in Centreville. She also regularly participated in events sponsored by the C.V. Starr Center, Washington College, and other local organizations.

Helen Ruth Wahlberg was born on February 2, 1917 in Largo, FL. She was raised on a citrus farm, owned by her parents, Emil and Irene Gagner Wahlberg, who had emigrated from Sweden a few years before. She was a 1938 graduate of the University of Illinois with a B.S. in Home Economics. After teaching school for several years, she was employed by the Hotpoint Division of General Electric in Chicago as an engineering home economist to work on and improve kitchen appliances.

By the spring of 1943, "World War II was paramount," she wrote recently, recalling that period. "The company became completely involved with military orders, as the nation's economy was on a war footing. Our department, which

produced goods for home use, became non-existent.” She decided to enlist in the Marines. She was 26 years old.

In June 1943, she joined a troop train of newly enlisted women in Chicago, bound for Camp LeJeune, NC, for boot camp training. By fall, she had completed Officer Candidate School at Camp LeJeune and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. She was assigned as Mess Officer for the approximately 1500 women there, who as part of the permanent staff, performed the secretarial, transport, and clerical work that helped, “Free a Man to Fight,” as urged by the posters that were everywhere.

Second Lt. Wahlberg saw room for improvement. “In time, we were able to change our menu from the standard one by serving a light breakfast, light lunch, and dinner to satisfy the caloric needs of our patrons as compared with that of the men who required more food. This was done using the same “stores,” as required by headquarters and keeping well below cost allowance.”

Toward the end of the war, she was assigned to the air station in Santa Barbara, California as Mess Supervisor. “Handling food at an air station was completely different from a line base. Weather and other conditions were huge factors.”

“When the bombs dropped on Japan in 1945, we all knew the long war was over.” She was discharged on December 31, 1945 and was “happy to return to peacetime and my old job in Chicago.”

In 1947, she moved to New York City where she worked as an assistant editor for the Ladies Home Journal for several years. In 1948, she married Laurens H. Fritz and relocated to suburban Philadelphia, where in 1955, she and her husband formed Fritz Creative Services. For over 30 years the company specialized in food photography, recipe development, and publicity for national

clients. While a partner in this home-based enterprise, she raised five children.

All five children gathered in Chestertown to be with her during her final days.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Larry, and her sister, Irene Wolf. She is survived by her son, Karl Fritz; stepdaughter Karen Ashley, both of Chestertown, MD; daughters, Linda Bell of N. Palm Beach, FL; Lenore Budd of Hinesburg, VT; Barbara Schaff of Rancho Palos Verdes, CA; twelve grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held on July 15 at 1 p.m. at Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home in Chestertown. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that contributions be made to The Kent County Historical Society, P.O. Box 665, Chestertown, MD 21620 or the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, c/o Women's Memorial Foundation, Dept. 560, Washington, DC 20042-0560.

# Cemetery Details

**Private**

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JUL 15. 1:00 PM (ET)

Chestertown Location  
130 Speer Road  
Chestertown, MD 21620  
(410) 778-0055  
[info@fhnfuneralhome.com](mailto:info@fhnfuneralhome.com)

# Tribute Wall



“ *Helen Wahlberg Fritz*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Helen Wahlberg Fritz*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Helen Wahlberg Fritz*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *My condolences to the family. The death of a loved one is the most difficult thing we deal with. I wanted to take this time to express my condolences to you for your loss. May you find comfort from Jehovah God's word the Bible. (Psalms 83:18) The Bible promises: "And he (Almighty God Jehovah) will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore." (Revelation 21:4) Death will be removed from all the earth. (1Corinthians 15:26) Tears of sorrow will vanish. No one will die from natural causes or weep. The Bible also promises: "And no resident will say: "I am sick." (Isaiah 33:24) These are promises that will soon be a reality. The Bible plainly states: "It is impossible for God to lie." (Hebrews 6:18) May you find comfort from Jehovah God's word the Bible. And may Jehovah God of all comfort be with you. (2Corinthians 1:3,4)*

*For more encouragement please visit [www.Jw.org](http://www.Jw.org).*

sherries lee - July 02, 2014 at 01:37 PM

JB

“ Joyce & Wayne Bradley lit a candle in memory of Helen Wahlberg Fritz



Joyce & Wayne Bradley - June 26, 2014 at 08:31 PM

JB

Wayne is a member of the Rock Hall American Legion Color Guard and every year they were invited to post the Colors at the annual Marine Corp birthday bash @ the Centreville Legion. Mrs Fritz was always there and thoroughly enjoyed the event. We haven't been for the past few years, I think they found a Marine Corp Color Guard to do the honors, but I hope she was able to continue attending the event.

Joyce Bradley

Joyce Bradley - June 26, 2014 at 08:40 PM



“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - June 26, 2014 at 02:50 PM

CB

“ My condolences to Aunt Helen's family as well. She led an amazing life and I'm grateful for the couple of times I was able to visit with her over the years. For nearly thirty years, my Aunt Helen was for me the vital link to my family's history - I'll miss her dearly and remember her fondly.

Chad Bleuel - June 26, 2014 at 10:59 AM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home** - June 26, 2014 at 07:02 AM

JB

“ *John Bleuel lit a candle in memory of Helen Wahlberg Fritz*



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**John Bleuel** - June 24, 2014 at 11:29 AM

JB

“ *My condolences go out to Helen's children and grandchildren. Helen was an amazing woman. I was very fortunate to have visited her on a few occasions over the last several years. Helen always spoke fondly of her family and I enjoyed her stories. She was kind, wise and the most amazing hostess I've ever known! My children, Casey and Emily also had the honor and privilege to know Helen. She was like a grandmother to me and a great grandmother to my girls. We especially enjoyed hearing about her Service in the US Marine Corps!*

*Aunt Helen will be missed but we will always have wonderful memories of her. She lived an awesome life.*

*Warmest regards!*

*John Bleuel*

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**John Bleuel** - June 24, 2014 at 11:28 AM

HC

*The Historical Society of Kent County send their condolences to the family of Helen Fritz. She was an integral part of the Society until the very end. She will be greatly missed by many, many people.*

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**Historical Society of Kent County** - June 25, 2014 at 11:52 AM

CS

*I was fortunate to work with Helen on the Board of the Historical Society of Kent County. She was secretary for over twenty years and was also a member of the museum committee. She was involved with preserving and displaying our historical clothing. I always viewed her as a member of the "Greatest Generation" because of her wartime contribution. She was a gracious, kind woman who always greeted me, and everyone, with a smile. I feel fortunate to have known her these past seven years.*

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**Carol Schroeder** - July 15, 2014 at 08:27 AM