



Helen Goumas

February 17, 1925 - January 29, 2025

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our Mother and Grandmother “Yiayia” Helen (Eleni) Goumas. She was born in Gythion, Greece, on Feb. 17, 1925 and passed away peacefully on Jan. 29, 2025 at Mission Villa in Santa Barbara.

Helen was the youngest of five children born to Chrysoula and Christodoulos Goudis in Gythion, a small seaport town on the Eastern shore of the Mani Peninsula of southern Greece.

Her father was a fisherman in the village and died when Eleni was 4 years of age. Life thereafter was a struggle for the family surviving on day labor, harvesting olives, gardening and seamstress endeavors.

Helen was known throughout the village for her beautiful singing voice, and often sang with her sister Marigoula at local events, especially Church Feast Days, weddings, and baptisms.

She developed her cooking, sewing, and knitting skills during the indoor cold winter months – skills that continued through most of her life.

Accepting an invitation of an aunt to immigrate to the United States leaving the ravages of World War II and the Greek Civil War, Helen arrived in

Rockford, Illinois, after a two-week Atlantic boat crossing, followed by a train ride from New York to the Midwest.

She quickly adapted to her new homeland. Attending a Greek Orthodox Church picnic, she met and subsequently married a handsome and enterprising businessman, George Goumas in 1957. George had previously completed a voluntary three-year deployment to Panama with the US Navy, where he received training as a radio operator.

In 1958 George and Helen moved to New York City where George worked in sales, and they soon welcomed their daughter Rea (Sotirea).

A few years later George accepted a position with the Federal Aviation Administration as an airport air controller, and the family moved to Salisbury, Maryland, where son Christ (Christos) was born in 1961.

Three more transfers took the family to Danville, Virginia, El Centro, California, and finally to Santa Barbara in December 1965. Helen felt she had arrived in Paradise!

Helen worked in retail and as a seamstress, but her most treasured job was raising her children and helping to raise her granddaughters Eleni and Chrysanthe.

She had a strong belief in her Orthodox faith and was very involved with the St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church Parish Family, particularly the Women's Guild, which later became Philoptochos Society, and the Daughters of Penelope.

She was a day-long volunteer at every Greek Festival at Oak Park and every pastry/food workshop, and easily worked at the speed of three individuals. Her

culinary skills were legendary for beauty and taste. A visit to Helen's home was always a treat, especially when koulourakia were served.

Her beautiful knitted blankets, shawls, potholders and baby booties have been frequent gifts to friends and family, especially to first time parents and newlyweds.

Helen overcame early life challenges with vigor and determination, and became an incredible role model for her children and grandchildren. Everyone touched by her warm smile and talents will always be thankful for her love, wisdom, humor and friendship.

She was the classic Greek yiayia — strong, loving, joyful, generous, devout in her faith, and always thankful to God and Saint Barbara for her many blessings.

Helen is survived by her children Rea and Christ Goumas; son-in-law Greg Pantages; daughter-in-law Renee Goumas; and grandchildren Eleni Pantages (Brian May), Chrysanthe Pantages, Strat Goumas, Max Goumas; and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents and siblings; her husband of almost 48 years, George; and lastly her beloved companion chihuahua Souvlaki.

A Trisagion will take place at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 4 at Welch-Ryce-Haider Funeral Chapel, followed by a funeral service at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 5 at St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church.

Funeral arrangements entrusted to Welch-Ryce-Haider Funeral Chapel, 15 E.

Sola St., Santa Barbara.

Cemetery Details

Santa Barbara Cemetery

901 Channel Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 969-3231

Previous Events

Trisagion

FEB 4. 7:00 PM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Downtown
15 E. Sola St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 965-5145
info@wrhsb.com
<https://www.wrhsb.com>

Funeral Service

FEB 5. 10:00 AM (PT)

Saint Barbara Greek Orthodox Church
1205 San Antonio Creek Rd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
<http://saintbarbara.net>