

# HELEN "HAPPY" (GIRDIS) ZAPPA



Helen (Girdis) Zappa, 97, of Pittsburgh passed peacefully on November 19, 2023, surrounded by her loving family members. Born on June 29, 1926, Helen "Happy" was raised in the Lithuanian-American pocket on the Southside of Pittsburgh. She was a 1948 graduate of Carlow University after which she taught school at St. Lawrence Catholic Elementary on Penn Avenue in Pittsburgh's east end and

worked for the City of Pittsburgh for several decades. Helen was a lifelong women's rights activist who volunteered at the Women's Crises Center; she was an advocate for the visually impaired; and a Past President of St. Lucy's Auxiliary; she fed the hungry as a volunteer at the Jubilee Kitchen and cared for the elderly by volunteering at numerous nursing homes until the ripe young age of 90; she was civic-minded as evidenced by her membership in the Friendship Preservation Group and as a voting poll volunteer in her Bloomfield community for way too many elections; and, she was a devout Roman Catholic who volunteered her time at the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh. All who knew her would say she was a locomotive in a dress, always on the move for the good of others.

Most importantly, Helen was a loving mother to her three children, Donny Zappa (Alison), Vince Zappa (Krissy), and Anna Rizza (Bernie); involved grandmother in the lives of her grandchildren, Phil, Nina, Luke, Alena, Michael, and Sofia Zappa, as well as Alex and Julian Rizza; and the proudest of great-grandmothers of her great-grandchildren, Georgia and Bennett Zappa as well as Vera and Lola Rizza. She was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Helen Girdis; older siblings, Fr. Joseph, Bruno, and John Girdis; and her daughter-in-law, Maria Zappa.

Hers was a life well-lived as it was a purpose-driven one. Her passion for life and for her family will be sorely missed. May God grant her the eternal peace and love she deserves.

A viewing will be held at **SCHELLHAAS & SONS FUNERAL HOME**, 1600 Stone Mansion Drive, Sewickley, Pennsylvania 15143 on Tuesday, November 21st from 3:00-7:00 p.m. and a Catholic Mass at St. Alexis Church of St. Aidan Parish on Wednesday, November 22nd beginning at 11:00 a.m. Please meet at the Church. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Jubilee Kitchen ([jubileekitchen.org](http://jubileekitchen.org)). Please leave all condolences at [www.schellhaasfh.com](http://www.schellhaasfh.com).

Send condolences [post-gazette.com/gb](http://post-gazette.com/gb)