

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Helle Silpala

Age 66 died early Saturday morning, June 5, 2010 at her home in Edina, Minnesota. She was born July 29, 1943 in Tallinn, Estonia to August and Erika Aurora (Virkov) Söber. She was a long time resident of Golden Valley, earned her master's degree at the University of Minnesota, and was a school teacher in the Hopkins School District.

Helle was preceded in death by her parents August and Erika Aurora (Virkov) Söber.

She is survived by her husband, Mauno Silpala and children; Siiri Doan and husband Hung, Markus Silpala and wife Tricia, and grandchildren; Alexander Doan (son of Siiri and Hung) Aurora Silpala (daughter of Markus and Tricia), her brothers, Toivo Söber and wife Annelie, Taavi Söber and wife Gale, niece, Valerie Volk-Söber (daughter of Toivo) and her nephew, Paul Larson.

Helle was born in Tallinn, Estonia. The turmoil of WWII brought her and her family to a displaced persons camp in Germany, where they remained for five years, and where she formed her earliest memories. Thanks to a new immigration law and a generous church congregation in Center City, Minnesota, they immigrated in 1949 to live for a few years on the Hasselquist family farm. She spent most of her school years in Minneapolis, where her parents had found employment and a home of their own. In 1970 Helle married the love of her life, Mauno Silpala. The couple moved to Golden Valley, Minnesota, raised two children, and remained active in the Twin Cities Estonian community.

All her life, Helle was a frequent traveler, a linguist, and—professionally—a teacher, teaching German and French in the Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Hopkins, and Maple Grove school districts. Always passionate about her teaching, she gathered materials for use in the classroom while traveling in Europe. Groups of her students joined her several times over the years when she organized extended field trips to Germany. Late in her career, she had the opportunity to live in several international places as her husband's United Nations job took them there: Vienna, Austria; Jerusalem; Damascus, Syria; Beirut, Lebanon; and Sochi, Russia.

Barely into retirement, she contracted a progressive motor-neuron disease in 2005. Even as she fought it mightily, it slowly took her physical strength away; eventually taking her away from her family and life earlier than she would have liked. On the morning of June 5th, shortly after asking Mauno what time it was, she died peacefully in her sleep. Despite her declining health she remained an avid traveller till the end; she and Mauno took multiple international trips in each of her final years. On the last of these, they celebrated their 40th anniversary during a cruise to Acapulco, Mexico, just six weeks before her death.

She leaves a legacy of siblings, children, grandchildren, friends, and former students who have felt unconditional love and acceptance—because she offered it them.



MEMORIAL SERVICE

Saturday, June 12, 2010

12 Noon - *visitation 1/2 hour prior*
Lakewood Cemetery Chapel
3600 Hennepin Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408

INURNMENT

Lakewood Cemetery
(*following the memorial service*)

MEMORIALS PREFERRED TO

The Estonian
Lutheran Church
of Minneapolis
OR -

ALS Association
of MN Chapter
www.alsmn.org