



## Mary Helen Buttman

September 20, 1942 - December 8, 2025

Mary Helen Young, a dedicated educator, devoted church leader, and beloved mother and friend, was born on September 20, 1942, in Kingsville, Texas, to Helen Faith (Lagrone) Young and William Maurice Young. Her childhood was spent in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she developed a lifelong love for learning. She pursued her passion for foreign languages at the University of Tulsa and Oklahoma State University before beginning an impactful career teaching high school in both Kansas and Bartlesville.

While teaching at Bartlesville's College High School, Mary Helen met the love of her life, Gary Lee Buttman, while he was on leave from the U.S. Army. Their first date was to a Col High-Sooner basketball game, marking the beginning of a legendary love story. Following Gary's return from duty in early 1971, the two entered a whirlwind romance and were married on March 20, 1971, at the First United Methodist Church in Vinita, Oklahoma. The couple joyfully celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in March 2021.

The early years of their marriage were filled with adventure. They lived briefly in Durango, Mexico, where they visited two movie sets, including one belonging to actor John Wayne. While there, Gary and Mary Helen worked as "extras" in a movie that was being filmed, as the production specifically needed light-haired, fair-skinned people to appear in the background. After returning to Oklahoma and living in Tahlequah while Gary completed his

master's degree, they settled in Bartlesville in 1972. On March 1, 1977, they welcomed their long-awaited and precious son, Wesley Craig Buttman.

Mary Helen was a cornerstone of Disciples Christian Church for 39 years. She served with deep faith as an Elder, chair of the Outreach Commission, and an active member of the Disciples Women. She was also instrumental in planning meaningful worship for the Oklahoma Disciples Women's retreats.

Her spirit of service extended deeply into the wider community. She spent many years volunteering for Pack the Backpack in Bartlesville, was an active member at the Dialysis Center in Bartlesville and served as a dedicated Guardian Ad Litem in Washington County. She was also a committed member of the Washington County Democratic Party and frequently volunteered her time at the voting polls.

Mary Helen passed away peacefully while in hospice care at The Journey Home on Monday, December 8, 2025, surrounded by the family she cherished.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Helen and William Young; her two brothers, Don and Chet Grossman; and her beloved husband, Gary Lee Buttman.

She is survived by her son, Wesley C. Buttman of Bartlesville; her sister, Elizabeth Johnson and her husband Neil of Virginia; and a special friend whom she loved as a daughter, Whitney McKisson and her husband Kenny of Bartlesville. She also leaves behind a numerous number of nieces and nephews, along with a host of wonderful and loving friends who will forever miss her presence.

A celebration of Mary Helen's life will be held at 11:00 am on Monday, December 29, 2025, at Disciples Christian Church, located at 5800 SE Douglas Lane, Bartlesville, Oklahoma. In lieu of flowers, the family

encourages donations to establish memorials at Disciples Christian Church and The Journey Home.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

DEC **29**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Disciples Christian Church  
5800 SE Douglas Lane  
Bartlesville, OK 74006  
(918) 333-1372  
<http://www.dccbville.org>