



Helen Tapick Lerner

February 25, 1929 - November 26, 2018

Helen Tapick Lerner
1929-2018

Helen Tapick Lerner, age 89, passed away peacefully at her home in Houston on Monday the 26th of November. She was a loving and devoted daughter, wife, sister, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. In addition, she was the beloved matriarch of her 75 year-old family business, Martin Preferred Foods.

A native Houstonian, Helen was raised in a house on Byrne Street in the Houston Heights, one of eight children born to Joseph Nagar and Sadie Abadie Nagar. As difficult as it is to imagine today, all ten of them shared a single bathroom. Yet despite growing up in those close quarters (or perhaps because of it), the Nagar siblings - Sidney, Adele, Lynn, Gloria, Helen, Rena, Doris, and Joyce - all remained close throughout their lives, vacationing together, sharing holidays together, raising their families together.

Helen graduated from John H. Reagan high school in 1947. Like all of her siblings, she worked in the family grocery store, the Nagar Food Market, located on Chenevert and Jefferson streets in downtown Houston. It was at

the family grocery store that Helen met her first love, Melvin Tapick. Melvin and his brother owned a business that supplied the Nagar Food Market with groceries, and he had been told about a beautiful girl named Helen who worked there. After making his delivery, Melvin introduced himself to Helen, and asked her out on a date. Although their signals got crossed, causing Helen to inadvertently stand him up on their very first date, true love prevailed, and the couple were married in 1948. They remained married nearly thirty years until Melvin's untimely passing in 1978. In 2001, Helen married Judge Allen Lerner, and they remained married for these past 18 years.

In 1960, Helen began working as the bookkeeper in Melvin's family business, Martin Preferred Foods. For the next 58 years, Helen played an integral part in their family business's growth and evolution, overseeing the company's accounting and finance departments with the help of her devoted sister Joyce Schneider and niece, Debbie Lerner. After Melvin's untimely passing in 1978, Helen and her son Michael became partners in the business, and for the next forty years they worked together side by side to grow the company. As the matriarch of the business, Helen instilled a true family atmosphere in the workplace. She was beloved by her co-workers, employees, suppliers, and customers for her generosity, her kindness, her warmth, her smile, her laugh, and her wit. When once asked her official title at the company, she deadpanned "I'm the owner."

Helen is survived by her and Melvin's only son, Michael Tapick (Betty), and her step children Donna Mazow (Mark), Robert Lerner (Leslie), and Randy Lerner. Melvin and Helen were blessed with two grandchildren, Jeffrey Tapick (Rebecca) and Lisa Ansari (Amir), who affectionately referred to her always as "Nana." In her later life, her four great-grandchildren, Jordan Ansari, Allison Ansari, Elijah Tapick, and Ezra Tapick, brought her immense joy.

Helen was predeceased by her beloved first husband Melvin, her parents, Joe

and Sadie Nagar, her brother and sisters and their spouses: Sidney and Micki Nagar, Adele and Macky Schnitzer, Esther Lynn and Sol Schnitzer, Gloria and George Frederick, and Rena and Jerry Schwartz. She is survived by her second husband, Judge Allen Lerner, her sisters Doris Mock and Joyce Schneider, her brother-in-law, Aaron Schneider, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Her family would like to thank her caregivers Carol Latigue, Juanita Brown, Brenda Richardson, and Jackie Martin for the warm and compassionate care that they provided.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made in Helen's memory to Congregation Beth Israel, Seven Acres Jewish Senior Care Services, or the charity of your choice.