



## Helen Marie Gaither

May 17, 1922 - October 20, 2018

Helen Marie Keeling Gaither passed away October 20, 2018, at the age of 96. She was born May 17, 1922, the daughter of Grace Kapfer and Ross Custis Keeling. She is survived by her son Robert Max Gaither Jr. and daughters Charlotte Marie Gaither Adair, Peggy Gaither Adams (David Griffith), daughter-in-law Susan Bledsoe Gaither, sisters-in-law Juanita Rapan Keeling and Janice Gaither Crissman (Tom) and many nieces and nephews. Marie had five grandchildren: Jeffrey Bryce Adair (Elaine), Lee Adair Baker (Paul), Jennifer Lynn Adair, Diana Marie Gaither, and Robert Max Gaither III. She had four great-grandsons: Matthew Scout and Benjamin Stone Adair and James Tyler and William Michael Geary. She was married for 72 years to her college sweetheart Robert Max Gaither Sr., who died in 2013.

Marie Gaither was born on a farm near Oakley, Kansas, and moved to Topeka in time to attend Boswell Junior High and Topeka High School, where she played the bassoon in the orchestra and graduated in 1939. At Washburn College she began voice lessons. Music continued to be a lifetime passion. She also met Max during astronomy class. She took one look at the handsome, blonde football player and knew he was “the one.” Max and Marie eloped in 1941 after Max’s last football game, three weeks before Pearl Harbor. Max’s uncle married them during halftime of the radio broadcast of the KU vs. K-State football game.

Marie learned to fly in pre-war pilot training classes and took Max for his very first flight. She was too young to join the air corps, but Max joined the Army Air Corps. After the war, they settled in Topeka where they raised their family and lived full, active, and social lives.

Marie was loving, nurturing and caring with her immediate and extended family as well as friends and neighbors. She loved hosting dinners and holidays, playing bridge, traveling, and planning activities for family and friends. She was the neighborhood "Grannie." She continued singing in church choir at Westminster Presbyterian Church as well as for weddings, funerals and special events at surrounding churches. She helped found Dance Arts of Topeka, made costumes for numerous productions, and served Topeka Symphony Society and Community Concerts. She was a member and in some cases served as president of several community organizations including: Westminster Presbyterian Church, Nautilus Club, Music Study Club, the Woman's Club, Women's Kansas Day Club, Presbyterian Women, Daughters of the American Revolution, Washburn Alumni Association, and Topeka Opera Society. She later returned to Washburn University, gave her senior recital that filled White Concert Hall, and graduated from Washburn University with her bachelor degree in music in 1991, the same day her granddaughter Diana Gaither and nephew Ross Keeling graduated from KU.

Marie's visitation will be Thursday, October 25, from 5:00 to 7:00PM at Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka, Kansas 66614. A private burial will be held Friday morning, October 26. Marie's memorial service will be at 11:30AM on Friday, October 26, at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1275 SW Boswell, Topeka, Kansas 66604.

Memorial contributions may be made to Westminster Presbyterian Church or to Friends of Washburn Music, Washburn Alumni and Endowment Association, 1729 SW MacVicar, Topeka Kansas 66604.

Arrangements are by Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home and online  
condolences may be sent to [www.kevinbrennanfamily.com](http://www.kevinbrennanfamily.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **25.** 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home  
2801 SW Urish Road  
Topeka, KS 66614  
(785) 272-7888  
info@kevinbrennanfamily.com

## Memorial Service

OCT **26.** 11:30 AM (CT)

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
1275 SW Boswell Ave  
Topeka, KS 66604

# Tribute Wall



“ Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Helen Marie Gaither



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**Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home** - October 23, 2018 at 05:09 PM



“ Helen Marie Gaither

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January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ I knew Marie through Topeka Chapter DAR. On a Scout Sunday at Westminster, we saw each other. My son was in Pack 3, then Troop 3. Always on Scout Sundays after that, Marie made sure I sat with her and whatever family and friends surrounded her. She was gracious and made sure I had someone to eat with at the chili feed after the service. Even last June when I saw her, she was asking about my son and where he is now. She was such a delight to know and I always think of "lady, warm and loving" when I think of Marie. She will be missed but I know she is happy back with Max.

Gayla Hoyt

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**Gayla Hoyt** - November 11, 2018 at 04:43 PM

JP

“ Oct 24, 2018

*To The Family of Marie,  
What a wonderful person and you all were so fortunate to be part of  
her special life. Words say very little at a time like this, but knowing  
people care and praying for all of you, maybe helps. I hope so.  
God Bless You All  
Jackie Campbell Petersen*

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**Jackie Campbell Petersen** - October 24, 2018 at 03:37 PM

JD

“ *Marie was the "chord" for our Plass Avenue.  
thanks for sharing the beautiful video of a life so well lived.  
Joyxe DeCoursey*

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**joyce DeCoursey** - October 24, 2018 at 02:09 PM