



John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr.

March 24, 1947 - July 19, 2025

John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp, Jr. passed away peacefully at his home on Saturday, July 19, 2025. He was 78. Born on March 24, 1947, in Alton, IL, he was the son of the late John Gilbert Helmkamp Sr. and Flossie Emma (Schwartz).

On January 23, 1971, Jack married Elizabeth "Beth" Whitney in Anderson, IN. She survives, along with their three sons and their families: John Gilbert Helmkamp III of Edwardsville, IL, and his daughters Taylor and Ella, along with his wife Ashlee; Ryan Helmkamp and his wife Kelsey of Newell, Iowa, and their children Jack, Lane, Jesse, and Kate; and Darren Helmkamp of Kirkwood, MO, and his children Chase and Anna, along with his fiancée Jenna. Jack is also survived by two sisters, Janice Farrell (Byron) of Marco Island, FL, and Jane Hadley of Charlotte, NC. He was preceded in death by his parents and his brother-in-law, Gregg Hadley.

Visitation will be held from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, July 25, 2025, at Gent Funeral Home in Alton, IL. A memorial service will take place at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 26, 2025, at Metro Community Church in Edwardsville, IL.

Jack graduated from Purdue University with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Industrial Management and built a career that began in construction at Helmkamp Construction before transitioning into banking at Illinois State Bank.

An advocate for civic progress, Jack chaired the East Alton Ice Arena Committee. He co-chaired the Clark Bridge Steering Committee, playing a

vital role in completing the iconic Clark Bridge in 1994. He was also involved in the extension of Illinois Route 255, working alongside key regional leaders. Jack enjoyed serving the community. He served on the boards of Lewis and Clark Community College—where he helped renovate and elevate the nursing program—Alton Memorial Hospital, Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation, Operation Blessing, the Alton-Wood River Chapter of the Red Cross, Twin Rivers Chamber of Commerce, and the Southwestern Illinois Industrial Association. He was given the Riverbend Growth Association’s Lifetime Achievement Award and he was inducted into the East Alton-Wood River High School Hall of Fame.

Jack served for 25 years with United Way and was presented with the Charles A. Bane Humanitarian Award of Excellence. The award recognized a lifetime of service to the people of Illinois and the United Way movement.

He also received the “Service Above Self” Award from the Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club in 2019 and was a member of the Young Presidents Organization, the Alton Nature League, and served as choir director at St. John’s United Church of Christ. A three-time Lockhaven Country Club Golf Champion, Jack loved spending time on the golf course with his family and especially cherished the memories they made together. He enjoyed family vacations and, later in life, traveling the world with his wife, Beth. Jack was also a lifelong fan of the St. Louis Cardinals and Blues, and found joy in hunting and the outdoors.

But most important of all was that Jack placed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul at a young age. His faith was important to Him and he strived to live his life according to the golden rule “do unto others as you would have them do unto you”.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Alzheimer’s Association Greater Missouri Chapter. When giving, please click “Dedicate this Donation” and enter Jack Helmkamp in the “Honoree Name” box. <https://www.alz.org/greatermissouri?form=FUNDHYMMBXU>

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL **25.** 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Gent Funeral Home
2409 State Street
Alton, IL

Memorial Service

JUL **26.** 10:00 AM (CT)

Metro Community Church
3551 Ridge View Road
Edwardsville, IL 62025

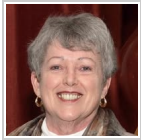
Tribute Wall



“ *Beth, we are so sorry for your loss. Jack was class to himself. Bob always remembers the very bitter cold day he was trying to dedicate the new bridge.*

Bob & Sharon Jourdain

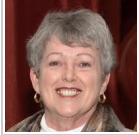
Sharon Jourdain - August 02, 2025 at 01:18 PM



“ *5 files added to the album HS Reunions*



Lynn Busby - July 26, 2025 at 11:42 AM



“ Facebook posting:

*Jack Helmkamp, fellow classmate and really good guy, has passed. We shared many good memories and from his obit I learned he did an outstanding job serving the greater Wood River - Alton, IL community. RIP
(Lynn Zacny Busby)*

Comments on Facebook to above announcement:

Ron Goode: RIP Jack you will be sadly missed

Bill Smith: The loss of a great guy. Rest in peace, see you when we meet again.

Terry Dossett: Jack and I were in the same confirmation class with a bunch of EAWR & RCHS kids. Always liked Jack, and BOY could he sing. Like Bill Smith said, we'll meet up again, in "house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens"!

Linda Schwartz: Rest in peace

Sam Pierce Sr.: RIP Jack, you will be missed. You and your family are in our prayers

Mary Ann Costanzo: Sad. He was a great guy

Ed Albertson: So sorry to hear. Rest in peace. Thoughts and prayers for your family.

Jackye Wilson: Prayers for his family and the loss of a great guy. Rest in peace Jack.

Jeri Snedecor: So sad to hear this news. Thank you Lynn for sharing.

Margaret Drew: Jack was a true leader, who will be missed. My prayers to his family.:

Terry Lawrence: Rest in peace Jack, you will be remembered

Bob Gibson: Sad news. His family were all wonderful people. Good memories.

Irma Hill: Sorry to hear this news prayers to the family

Gus Riggs: Rest in peace

Ginger Sossomen Donham: He was the best!!

Lynn Busby - July 26, 2025 at 11:36 AM

RB

“ I remember Jack as a sweet little boy when both our families went to St. John’s many years ago. I’m sorry for the family’s and community’s loss.

Rosalie Pearson Barabas

Rosalie Pearson Barabas - July 25, 2025 at 04:56 PM

JT

“ My most heartfelt condolences to Beth and the entire family. Jack was truly a kind, caring, generous, humble and compassionate gentleman. He was a true friend and mentor to me and so many others. It was an honor and pleasure to spend time together with him, especially during our annual Veteran’s Day Duck Hunt. The fun memories and stories shall live on forever and Jack’s memory will never fade - He was the best of the best. Jay Tomerlin

Jay Tomerlin - July 25, 2025 at 12:41 PM

CF

“ Carlton family and Warrick family purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr..



Carlton family and Warrick family - July 24, 2025 at 03:09 PM

TS

“ Terri Kaye Shaw purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr..



Terri Kaye Shaw - July 24, 2025 at 01:23 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr..



July 24, 2025 at 12:15 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr..



July 24, 2025 at 11:33 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr..

July 24, 2025 at 11:33 AM



“ Melissa Helmkamp, Riley, Anna and Chase purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr..



Melissa Helmkamp, Riley, Anna and Chase - July 24, 2025 at 10:46 AM

JW

“ Remembering the fun we had our senior year building the float for homecoming. We were all in the construction garage. Those memories of friendship will forever make me smile.
RIP my friend until we meet again 🙏🙏🙏

Jackye (Ranz) Wilson - July 24, 2025 at 12:03 AM

BG

“ I will never forget our kindergarten teacher (Mrs. Hepler) putting a chair in the glass room door with Jack standing on it. Then he sang! We went through school together ending in High School. What a guy, charisma above any others!
R.I.P. my friend, I will see you on the other side.
Bill Groppe

Bill Groppe - July 23, 2025 at 08:13 PM

BS

“ Jack was the leader of our graduating class from Wood River High School in 1965. He was a great classmate always having a smile on his face. Rest in peace good friend. Till we meet again.

Bill Smith - July 23, 2025 at 05:26 PM

DS

“ Dave & Stephanie Short purchased the Small Garden Dish for the family of John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr..



Dave & Stephanie Short - July 23, 2025 at 05:19 PM

JH

“ Jane Hadley purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr..



Jane Hadley - July 23, 2025 at 12:51 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr..



July 23, 2025 at 12:49 PM

DC

“ Thank you for every way you blessed me and my family, Dear Friend. You will always have a special place in my heart.
David L Chamberlain, (Virginia Chamberlain)

David Chamberlain - July 23, 2025 at 10:26 AM

FF

“ Fred & Charla Francis purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of John "Jack" Gilbert Helmkamp Jr..



Fred & Charla Francis - July 22, 2025 at 08:14 PM