



## John "Rex" Helton

December 22, 1926 - June 7, 2015

John Rex Helton, 88, a respected, longtime building contractor in North Central Washington, died Sunday, June 7, 2015, in Central Washington Hospital, Wenatchee.

He was born Dec. 22, 1926, in Cardston, Alberta, Canada, to John Franklin and Alice Maude (Gibb) Helton. He lived the first 21 years of his life in the Cardston area where he attended a one-room schoolhouse. His father's first wife, Julia Redford, had died leaving 3 children, and this second family lived meagerly through the hard years of the Depression.

When Rex was just 11 years old, his beloved mother died at age 36 from a series of small heart attacks. Rex began working at age 16 for a farmer who expressed great confidence in his work ethic. At age 17, Rex left 11th grade to build houses in Cardston for 50 cents an hour. At age 18, Rex built entirely on his own his first home for his father. They sold it and the next year he built another one next door. Rex had found his lifelong profession as a builder. In the spring of 1948 he received word that his family was moving to the United States. He joined his family in Wenatchee in March 1949 and was hired to help build a brick kiln at the Wenatchee Brick Mill, located on Ninth Street. Ron Byrd, the owner, was partners with Jim Goodfellow Construction. Rex joined the union and was hired by Goodfellow to install sidewalks between Fifth and Ninth Street on Chelan, Mission and Emerson Streets, working at a wage of \$2.65 an hour.

He met the girl of his dreams on a double date. It tickled him that he "ended

up with the girl” of his friend. He married Ella Van Gaston on Dec. 16, 1949, in Monitor. They were later sealed in the Cardston LDS Temple on June 5, 1956. At the time of their marriage, Rex was working on an addition of the courthouse at Waterville. He built his own home on Ramona Street in Wenatchee. Rex and Ella moved into it before it was completed in 1952 because their first child, Vicki Lynn, was soon to be born. He built spec homes when the construction of the Alcoa Aluminum plant near Malaga greatly increased housing demand.

On Nov. 11, 1953, his father died and his was the first funeral held in the new LDS church building which is now owned by the Salvation Army.

In 1955 the Heltons bought a lot on Marie Street. Their two sons, Phillip Rex, and John Curtis, were born while they lived here for the next 5 years. They built in Sunnyslope and lived there nearly 25 years, finally building a home next to Ella’s mother on the river at Monitor in 1983. They lived happily there until the first of this year, 2015, when illness forced them to have assistance.

Rex started his own construction business in 1959 and worked primarily building beautiful custom homes from Lake Wenatchee, throughout the Wenatchee area, up to Lake Chelan. He was joined by his sons, Phil and Curt, after their high school graduations although the boys worked many happy summer hours for their father while growing up.

He worked on many structures in the valley including St. Joseph’s Catholic School; Sunnyslope Fire Station; Eastmont School District headquarters; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Chapel on Maiden Lane which was completed May 1971; and oversaw the building of the LDS Stake Center in East Wenatchee which was completed in 1978. The first structures that he built in the Wenatchee area include the Don Pybus home which started a long association with architect Bob Rowe and many of the prominent residents of the Wenatchee Valley. Many realtors reported to the family that a “Helton-built home” was a selling point.

In his personal history, Rex wrote: “I have always felt it important that people feel I was honest in my dealings with them and I feel quite satisfied to have a

reputation as an honest businessman.”

Rex served in many callings in the LDS church including president of the Young Men’s organization; elder’s quorum president; stake missionary; high councilor; and Bishop of Wenatchee First Ward from 1969 until 1977, ordained by Apostle Howard W. Hunter. He was called as Wenatchee Stake Patriarch in 1980 by Apostle James Faust.

Survivors include his wife of 65 years, Ella, Wenatchee; daughter, Vicki (Tim) Larson, Sunnyslope; sons, Phil (Camiea) Helton, Sunnyslope, and Curt (Laurel), Wenatchee; his sister, Alice Irene Kern, Port Orchard; 7 grandchildren, Blake (Kim) Larson, Lane (Jannica) Larson, Erin (Russell) Lake, Beth (Tyler) Dew, Briggs, Carly and Cole Helton; 6½ great-grandchildren; a sister-in-law, Joy Helton, Leavenworth; and many nieces and nephews including these in the Wenatchee area: Alan Helton Scott Helton, Kim Cornell, Dondi Gangle, and Randy Henry, all of Wenatchee; and Scott Henry, East Wenatchee. He was preceded in death by his sisters, Flora Jane Herron and Isabel May Strop; brother, Richard Morgan “Dick” Helton; and half-siblings, Lamont Delbert Helton, Myra Elizabeth Thelin, and Franklin Vernon Helton.

Funeral Service will be held at 11:00 A.M on Monday, June 15, 2015 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint, 1621 Maiden Lane, with Interment following at Wenatchee City Cemetery. Visitations will be at 10:00 A.M prior to the service at the Church. In lieu of flowers, Memorial Donations may be made to Boy Scouts of America, Our Home Cancer Care, or LDS Humanitarian Aid. Please express your thoughts and memories on the online guest book at [jonesjonesbetts.com](http://jonesjonesbetts.com). Arrangements are by Jones & Jones-Betts Funeral Home.

# Cemetery Details

## Wenatchee City Cemetery

1804 N. Western  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

# Previous Events

## Service

JUN **15**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Wenatchee  
1621 Maiden Lane  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

# Tribute Wall



“ Jones & Jones - Betts Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of John "Rex" Helton



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**Jones & Jones~Betts Funeral Home** - June 15, 2015 at 05:00 PM

JR

“ So sorry to hear about the loss of Rex Helton. He gave me my Patriarticle Blessing, I am so grateful for the man he was on this earth. He raised an amazing family and I feel blessed to call many of them friends. Bless his family at this time. Wish I could be there to support, know I am with you in Spirit. Lots of Love to you, Julie Reynolds



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**Julie Reynolds** - June 10, 2015 at 03:41 PM