

Honoring HELEN EDWARDS

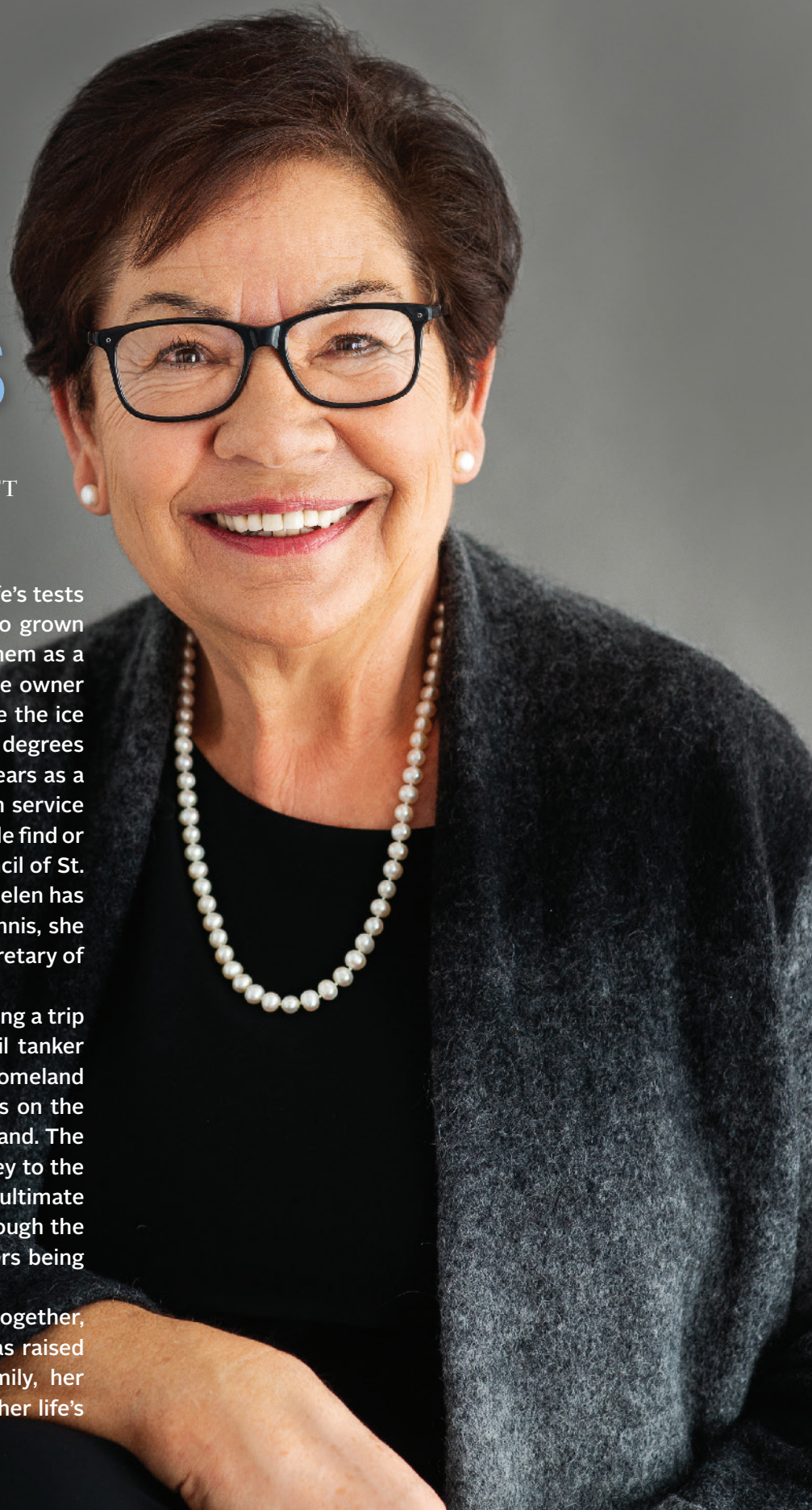
BY LISA STAMOS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDA M. BARRETT

HELEN EDWARDS HAS FACED many of life's tests with flying colors. She's a parent of two grown and successful children, having raised them as a single mom. She is an entrepreneur. First as the owner of the erstwhile Barrington Dairy Queen, where the ice cream income funded her children's college degrees and gave local students summer jobs. For 40 years as a Realtor, she's earned a reputation for top notch service with integrity and shares the joy of helping people find or sell their homes. A president of the Parish Council of St. Nectarios Greek Orthodox Church in Palatine, Helen has served the Council for over 12 years. Avid in tennis, she has earned many trophies. She was the first secretary of the Barrington High School Quarterback Club.

Perhaps the greatest test of all was confronting a trip across the world as a 14-year-old girl on an oil tanker named "Hellas" when her family left their homeland to come to America. Born in Greece, Helen was on the last ship that dropped off immigrants at Ellis Island. The dark, wet, and dilapidated final leg of her journey to the "island of hope, tears, and fears" was her life's ultimate moment of truth. Would her family make it through the inspection, or be separated, with some members being sent back home?

Fortunately, her family made it through, together, and they settled in Illinois. For this girl who was raised with honor, and love of God, home, and family, her unshakeable faith was rewarded and has been her life's guiding principal ever since.





Helen's daughter, Laura Edwards joins her Mom's Realtor team at Baird & Warner in Palatine, Illinois.

Rebecca Bremer

When I think of Helen, one image comes to mind: Helen standing with open arms, a huge smile, and a warm word of welcome. She is one of the lucky people—she is beautiful, not only in appearance, but also from within. My husband (Bill) and I first met Helen as she greeted us at our church's open house. She exclaimed at the newborn in my arms and I instinctively handed our seven-week-old, first-born daughter to her. Astonished, I looked at my husband who was not nearly as shocked that I had done so, as was I. We both knew that Helen is one of the few people who we ever would ever meet whose genuine, loving spirit was worthy of instant trust.

In the more than 35 years since, we have been dearest of friends. In the Greek tradition, we've become family, as Helen sponsored Bill in his conversion to Greek Orthodoxy. To my daughters, she is "Aunt Helen". To me, she is like a favorite aunt. We laugh at silly things, share confidences, cry over our heartaches, and celebrate everything we can. She's taught me how to make difficult Greek dishes and always supplies us with her beautiful delicacies.

Through the years, Helen's generosity has been ever-present. There is no entertaining without my reaching for something and thinking, "Helen gave me this piece." She's generous not only in her lovely gifts, but in her sage advice and unselfish time. She is passionate about all things and all people in her life and is filled with abundant energy. Helen is one of the loveliest ladies—a truly dignified woman. I love her dearly and am so blessed that she is in our lives!

Kelly Sandor

How do I possibly pay tribute to a quintessential woman like Helen? Helen has worked so hard to build her career while working multiple jobs and building her reputation as a successful real estate agent in Barrington. She raised Steven and Laura, as a single parent. She is the type of person who does not worry about how she will find strength, but simply keeps moving, stays positive, and the strength follows her. She is enormously proud of her career and family and genuinely loves sharing her joy and happiness with everyone she encounters.

Helen is a fiery spark full of passion and determination. She looks to inspire a deep connection with everyone she meets and always displays respect and warmth. If she is not working, you will find her cooking, running an errand, or offering support to a friend or client (actually, Helen is generous to a fault if anything). She has incredible energy, and her positive attitude is infectious. Helen is deeply connected to her faith and loves the Church. Integrity defines her character, and her moral compass will never waiver. She enjoys travel, good food, entertaining, time in her garden, and being with family and good friends.

We first met when I rented an apartment in the city with her daughter, Laura. Little did I realize Helen was going to be one of the most important people in my life. Over the years she babysat our kids, sat at numerous athletic tournaments, attended all their major life events, and is still one of the few people they visit when they come home from college. Helen will forever be a role model to my boys.

Helen has an innate ability to make everyone she meets feel like they are the only person in the room. If you are reading this and have not met Helen, you must make it a point to meet her. Helen has given her heart and soul to Barrington and will leave a legacy that will be tough to beat. My deepest love to you, Helen.

Nancy A. Summers

I have known Helen for 20+ years and she has never changed who she is as a person, a friend, and a professional. Although I initially met her in a business setting—she as Realtor and me as an attorney—our relationship has grown over the years and I consider her my other "Mom" and affectionally address her in that manner.

Helen cares about ANYONE who is lucky enough to call her their Realtor, neighbor, or friend. She is loyal, always asking what she can do to help a situation and she's a great cook! Anytime I am lucky enough to be invited for dinner she makes my favorite Greek dish which is stuffed peppers and zucchini.

Helen has her opinions and points of view and although some may consider them strong, they are rooted in her experiences of growing up in Greece and immigrating to this great country and becoming a successful businesswoman. She is equally proud of her heritage, both countries, and adheres to her convictions with pride. In my opinion, she has earned that right and respect from all of us. May God continue to bless her, her health, and her business.

HELEN EDWARDS IN HER OWN WORDS



What historical figure do you most identify with? Alexander the Great! **What do you enjoy about being a Realtor?** I love people. **What do you dislike most in others?** False pride. **What traits do you admire the most in others?** Humility and generosity. **Favorite travel destination?** The Greek Islands. **Favorite place to shop?** Nieman Marcus. **Greatest achievement in your life?** My children. **Favorite book?** Little Women, and My Secret Garden. **What is your favorite food?** All Greek food. **Greatest regret in life?** I have no regrets. I've done the best I could. **Favorite ice cream flavor?** Mint chocolate chip. **Personal philosophy that guides you?** My Orthodox faith. **Do you have a real-life hero?** My Dad, Harry. **What advice would you give to people entering the work force for the first time?** Be yourself. Be honest. Provide service with honor and dignity. Be truthful no matter what. **What's on your bucket list?** To take a cruise to Alaska and travel back to Italy. **Best movie you've seen?** Love Is a Many Splendored Thing, and The Man Who Knew Too Much. **Where's your happy place?** At church, and in my garden. **What are you most proud of in yourself?** My strength. **Words to live by?** Love, live, and learn. **Do you collect anything?** Fresh flowers and lemons. **What is something that others would be surprised to know about you?** That I'm a quiet person, and I enjoy being alone, in solitude. **Is there a cause you are passionate about?** I abhor any kind of abuse towards women, and children especially child trafficking. **What was your best subject in school?** History. **Your greatest passions in life?** Music, children, and flowers. **Personal motto?** I came, I saw, I conquered. **How is your life quintessential?** My love of people. Gardening. My good health. Cooking. And giving back. U



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