



**H**elen H. Cloutier Schmock \*1909-2002\* — Our W8GJX ex W9GJX Tribute. This story has taken a long time to organize because of this very talented pioneer radio lady. Her life's accomplishments are many and unlimited talent.

Born Helen M. Hargreaves at Manistique Michigan in 1909 to Henry (railroad Super.) and Carolyn Hargreaves. Helen was the middle of three children and the only survivor. She would take the place of the son her dad always wanted. Helen adored her dad who would become W8ZKR.

As she stated “Her 17 careers, any one of which could have been a life’s work.” A dancer, hair dresser, amateur radio operator, author, commercial radio ticket, free-lance writer, commercial radio broadcaster, photographer, educator, teaching, painting – College Grad, Motorola writer & music.

Helen studied music, the pipe organ (which she played at the local theater all during high school,) and dancing in Chicago and Detroit with many noted radio and theater artists each summer. For six years after moving to Escanaba Michigan she had a dancing school (plus running a beauty shop.) One of her students, Kenneth Owens, has been very successful in the theater, he traveled the country with the shows Oklahoma and Up in Central Park, Helen said.

The year 1929 during the summer Helen managed a beauty shop in Frankfort Michigan where she also was able to attend a radio school in the evenings and by September she obtained her commercial license. She operated a low powered transmitter at the school which gave her plenty of practice in procedure and transmitter quirks, plus a bit of student operating at WFK. When she returned home

she immediately went on the air with her first station, W9GJX. Hargreaves is especially pleased with being the first lady operator accepted to membership in the world wide Quarter Century Wireless Association as ham radio became an integral part of her life.



Our subjects first station consisted of a Hartley transmitter, about 15 watts on all bands, a Silver Marshall receiver and a doublet antenna. With that station she worked all states and plenty of

DX and during those first few months spent ten hours a day on the air.

During WW2 Helen taught radio for the Armed Forces. Continued

She also took some ground work and did some flying. When the war ended the Civil Air Patrol started to train students and she was asked to teach radio. W9GJX (pre-war) was put back on the air too, only now W8GJX due to district boundary changes.

Ms Helen had been writing since 1940 and attended Northwestern University's writers conference each summer. She added "I've written 6 books." Plus a series of children's publications.

She was then doing free lance magazine and newspaper writing with photography. She has her own dark room, combined with writing, it has threatened to become her vocation. All of this plus raising two boys, getting three meals a day has kept her busy.

A few years ago your author received Helen's biography of 410 pages from her son Charlie Cloutier, titled "I Never Shot A Rabbit" It was a good read and he had stated Mom just recently entered a nursing home and was still in reasonably good health at 91 years young. Charlie said "She is shooting for 100" Ham radio was her life for so many years. Mostly now, she enjoys the present, helping the old people at the facility as she puts it. Quite a gal and we're proud of her.

Concerning Helen's Quarter Century Wireless Association membership, she was bestowed the "John DiBlasi Award" this was an honor bestowed to her via the QCWA who has over a long period of time made an outstanding contribution to the honor and preservation of ham radio. This is the third highest award given by the QCWA.

One of Helen's early books that received recognition was "Isle of Royale Calling" A radio adventure that was a good seller. It meant a lot to your author because of sailing on Lake Superior and working aids to navigation there at that wonderful place "Isle of Royale." The Governor of Michigan - G. Mennen Williams, who publicly endorsed Helen's "Isle of Royale Calling" - Isle Royale, then Michigan's only state park, is one of the Governor's favorite projects.



RIP Helen 21 Sept 2002 rests at Manistee, Michigan (Ironic that she was born in Manistique on Michigan's Upper peninsula.) Cards courtesy of [www.w8jyz.com](http://www.w8jyz.com)