



Karen Buell Henderson

December 11, 2025

Karen Buell Henderson, age 82, of McAllen, Texas passed away peacefully on December 11, 2025. In her final days, Karen was surrounded by her loving family who will be forever grateful for the compassionate care demonstrated by the doctors, nurses, admin and personnel at DHR Hospital and DHR Hospice.

Karen was born on March 24, 1943 in Big Spring, TX, the daughter of Richard Lee Buell and Helen Ruth Menning. When Karen was six years old, the Buells moved to McAllen to open The Palm Drive-In Movie Theatre located on, what is now, 10th and Nolana Ave. Karen graduated from McAllen High School in 1961 and continued her education at Pan American University where she graduated with honors in 1965. She was an active member of the Kappa Delta sorority and was crowned Bronco Queen in 1964.

Shortly after university, Karen started dating Jim Henderson in what can only be described as an adventurous courtship. An adventure that continued for 50+ years and took her from rat hunting in the city dump to re-creating the Lewis and Clark expedition in a pontoon boat. They raised 3 boys and 1 girl in McAllen where she lived until her passing.

When she wasn't entertaining Jim's crazy ideas or raising a young family, Karen poured her heart into her career in education. She taught at Fields

Elementary and St. John's Day School where she was promoted and served as director from 1990-2001. However, St. John's was never just a workplace to Karen; it was her church home for 76 years. Within those very walls, she received the sacrament of marriage and baptized her 4 beautiful children. Karen gifted her time, talent and treasure to St. John's many ministries over the years and left a lasting legacy of love, strength and compassion.

Karen's retirement in 2001 allowed her to step into her favorite role as Gigi. She and Papa Jim doted on, chased, watched and nurtured 13 grandchildren. Not many grandparents get to have 13 grandchildren raised in the same city. They kept Papa Jim and Gigi busy! You could find them at football games, soccer games, volleyball games, track meets, awards ceremonies, dance recitals, birthday parties and everything in between.

Karen is preceded in death by her parents, Helen and Richard Buell, her brother, Rick Buell and her husband Jim Henderson. She leaves behind her sons, Jimmy (Brenda) Henderson, Chris (Tiffany) Henderson, Brandon (Flo) Henderson and daughter Ashlee Henderson. Also, her 13 grandchildren Colton, Macy, Hailey, Lori — Gunnar, Westyn, Mallory, Emmory — Haden, Jonah, Finn — Braxton and Brynn.

Gigi - We love you, miss you and we will never forget you!

The funeral will be on January 5th, 2026 at 4:30 PM at St. John's Episcopal Church in McAllen with a reception to follow at Chris & Tiffany Henderson's home – 1611 Kerria Ave, McAllen, TX. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. John's Episcopal Church where they will be given to their Faith Builds the Future Capital Campaign.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN 5. 4:30 PM (CT)

St. John's Episcopal Church
2500 N. 10th
McAllen, TX 78501

Tribute Wall

DC

“ Karen was one of the first people who welcomed me to McAllen in 1976. I was fresh out of college and did not know anyone. She was so lovely to introduce me to St John’s church and school. I will never forget her smile and fun spirit.

Deborah Case - December 18, 2025 at 02:12 PM

CN

We are so sorry to hear that Karen has passed. She will be missed by all who knew her. Our deepest Sympathies and condolences to all the family. God bless you.
Carolynn & Morris Nelson

Carolynn B. Nelson - December 18, 2025 at 08:47 PM

BS

I cannot imagine two people more meant for each other than Jim and Karen Henderson! What a joy to witness their early dating and marriage. I was best man at their wedding and Jim was best man at mine. But Jim and Karen were always the best man and best woman in any room they entered. I will miss them for the rest of this life and look forward to a great reunion with them both one day. Love them both with all my heart!

Bill Spencer - December 22, 2025 at 01:43 PM

KC

Karen was a beautiful person in and out and one of the first people we met when we moved from Florida to McAllen. She was a wonderful leader at St. John's and we will always have fond memories of her.

Kay Cole - December 30, 2025 at 08:31 PM