



## Janet Lynn Bennett

October 8, 1950 - November 4, 2007

Janet Bennett was a woman with an amazing heart. The type of person who would do anything for her family and friends, she made her family her life's work. Janet's personality shone like the sun – warm and compassionate for those around her. She made everyone feel special and left her mark on all those she came in contact with. The 1950s marked a quieter, more stable time in American history. It was a good time to grow up in America, and because of the baby boom, there were plenty of children filling the neighborhoods. Janet Lynn Roesler was one of those children. Born in Detroit, Michigan, on October 8, 1950, she was the fourth of six children to Richard and Virginia (McDonald) Roesler. Janet spent her early childhood growing up in Detroit, where her father worked at a BBQ restaurant. Wanting to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life, the family moved north to St. Helen near Roscommon, when Janet was just three. Here, her father found work at Fuelgas Propane in West Branch. Janet received her education in the area's two-room cobblestone schoolhouse through the sixth grade, and then went on to attend Roscommon Gerrish-Higgins High School. Because her father's job was transferred in 1965, the family moved to Manistee, where Janet graduated from Manistee High in 1968. Of the five Roesler sisters, Janet was by far the most obstinate and persistently fought with her sisters, much to her mother's dismay. However, when they put their heads together, they were great entrepreneurs. The family lived near the National Guard training facility of Camp Grayling, and the sisters came up with the idea of selling rocks for five cents to passer-

bys. When someone stopped, they told them to pick any rock they wanted from the driveway! The girls also picked wild berries when in season and sold them around the neighborhood. Shortly after high school, Janet married Frederick Vernimo, who was serving in the Army at the time and stationed at Fort Riley in Kansas. It wasn't long before the couple filled their hearts and home with the joy of two daughters, Machele in 1969, and Kimberly in 1970. Some time later, Janet and Fred's marriage ended in divorce. Then, in 1973, while chaperoning a dance in Free Soil, Janet met a wonderful man named Al Bennett, who was playing in the band. Al couldn't help but notice Janet, and it wasn't long before the two began a wonderful friendship. After a couple of years of dating, Janet and Al were married in the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Manistee on October 25, 1975. A year later, they delighted in welcoming the birth of their daughter, Trina. Janet and Al happily raised their family in the Free Soil area. Janet was a very attentive mother who took an active role in every phase of her daughters' lives. From volunteering for fundraisers and athletic banquets, for which she usually did all the cooking, too scorekeeping at basketball games and chaperoning dances and class trips, Janet's passion was to support her family. Besides being a devoted wife and mother, she also worked outside the home in various jobs, including as a machine operator at Star Watchcase in Ludington, a waitress at Dairy Depot in Manistee, a manager at Honeysuckle Restaurant and later at Heidi Hof Restaurant. And if that wasn't enough, Janet had a catering business with Al's cousin, Barbara Bruesch, called B & B Catering, wherein they did everything from weddings to graduation parties and every dish was homemade. But the catering parties were not the only ones who got to enjoy Janet's wonderful cooking; her family did too. They especially loved her fried chicken, potatoes, stuffing made with apples and to top it off, one of her delicious pies. Janet would even do all the cooking for the Roesler family reunions, which no one wanted to miss. But that was Janet, always thinking of others before herself. She was generous to a fault and would give her last dollar to anyone in need. Her compassion shone in many ways, and in doing so, touched many

lives. Time together as a family was always important to Janet and Al, and they took many opportunities to travel together, creating many unforgettable memories. They took trips to places like Toronto, Chicago, Cedar Point and Mackinaw, as well as countless day trips throughout northern Michigan, camping get aways, and outings to the Little River casino in Manistee and Blue Chip in Michigan City for some gambling fun. Although Janet and her sisters had lots of "sibling rivalry" in their growing up years, they grew closer than ever as they got older and enjoyed spending time together and with their families. Janet enjoyed many visits her sister Rickey and her family in Tennessee. And when her sister, Wendy, needed help with her newborn baby who was born prematurely, Janet didn't hesitate a moment to help out. Aside from her family, Janet also enjoyed being a part of her community in Free Soil. Every Halloween, she, Al and some friends would decorate a display in Free Soil, in which Janet was the "Free Soil witch" during trick or treating. Janet's family was the shining beacon in her life. She loved being surrounded by her loved ones, and loved spending her time being a wife, mother and grandmother to the people who brought her life extraordinary joy. She only wanted the best for them and did everything she could to make that come true. This included telling her daughter Trina that the young man she was dating at the time would make her a wonderful husband one day; and he did! Janet was especially in her glory surrounded by the love and smiles of her grandchildren, whom she adored. They were truly the light of her life! What gave Janet the greatest joy was sharing herself with her family, offering them the most precious thing she possessed – her time. It is a gift none of her family will ever forget. Janet Lynn (Roesler) Bennett, age 57 of Free Soil, MI, passed away on Sunday, November 4, 2007, with her loving family by her side, after a long battle with cancer. She will be greatly missed by her husband and best friend of 32 years Alfred; her daughters: Machele Vernimo of Rockford, Kimberly (John) Suttorp of Grand Haven, and Trina (Chris) Jozwiak of Grand Rapids; her beloved grandchildren Zachary Vernimo, John

and Ginna Suttorp, and Matthew and Avery Jozwiak; her sisters and brother: Donna Royce of Roscommon, Rickey (David) Babcock of Seymour, TN, Roseann (David) Luhmann of Scottville, Wendy (Dan) Crow of Stanwood, and Richard Roesler Jr. of Greenville; and numerous aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews. A Celebration of Life service will be held for Janet at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, November 9, at the Stephens Funeral Home in Scottville, with Rev. James Schroeder officiating. Burial will follow at Maple Grove Cemetery in Free Soil. Friends may meet with her family for a time of visitation on Thursday, November 8, from 6-9 p.m. at the funeral home. Those who wish may make memorial contributions to her family. Funeral arrangements are being cared for by the Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services ~ Stephens Funeral Home.