



Jeannie Pierce

January 28, 1938 - January 27, 2010

There are some who see the role of being both a mother and grandmother as an opportunity to be a little less about oneself and a little more about someone else. Nothing could have been more true of E. Gene “Jeannie” Pierce as she lived to love and cherish her family. She could often be heard saying, “My babies are my heart,” and she treated each family member as a priceless treasure. However, Jeannie’s tender heart reached much further than her own family and she was always looking for ways to help others. It was plain to see that she shared an enduring love with her soul mate, who made it well known that he was the luckiest man in the world to share his life with such an extraordinary woman - a rare beauty both inside and out. Although the thirties were predominantly a time of hardship around the world due to the Great Depression, America was still striving to move forward. It was in the year 1938 that the top movie of the year was Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, and advancements in technology such as the ballpoint pen and the production of the first xerographic print were a sign of better things to come. This was a year for great celebration in the family of Fred and Lela (Strawbridge) Tarver as they welcomed the birth of their daughter, E. Gene, on January 28th. Jeannie, as she was most often known, was born in Picayune, Mississippi, the sixth of thirteen children. Her parents worked as farmers, and her father also served in both WWII and the Korean Conflict. Jeannie’s family moved around quite a bit, depending on where her father found work, but she eventually ended up in San Luis Obispo, California. Life took Jeannie in a few

different directions over the next several years. She was blessed to become a mother to three daughters, Debbie, Connie, and Tricia, all of whom she adored. She moved to Michigan during the mid-sixties and settled in the Owosso area. Big changes were in store for Jeannie once she was in Michigan when she met the man who would forever hold the key to her heart. His name was Larry Pierce, and they met while bowling. Jeannie was a stunning woman who immediately caught Larry's eye. They bowled every week at the same alley and Larry's league followed Jeannie's. Larry couldn't help being a bit smitten with Jeannie, and he told his buddies that if he ever married, it would be to her. His friends found this quite funny as Larry was a bit "nerdy," and they felt she was way out of his league. Larry found the courage to ask Jeannie out, although his friends bet she wouldn't show. In fact, she almost didn't, but only because she forgot about their date until her girls reminded her. They did have that first date on Valentine's Day and from that point forward, their hearts would be forever intertwined. They married on May 20, 1972, in Owosso. Her family always joked that their love story could have been titled, "The Nerd and the Knockout!" Throughout her life, Jeannie wasn't afraid to work hard and put forth her best effort in whatever job she was doing. She was versatile in her work abilities as she worked as a quality control inspector at Anchor Hocking Glass in Texas, a sales clerk and manager for Sears, Meijer, and a pizza restaurant, and she also worked as a welder for Strawsine Manufacturing in Owosso. Jeannie certainly pulled her own weight as a welder, as there was nothing the men could do that she couldn't do as well or better, including loading and unloading trucks. There was no job too big or too tough for her as she was always willing to try anything. During this time, Larry worked for the Army Corps of Engineers with the space shuttle program, which moved him all over the country. His work caused him to be a bit of a "government gypsy," and rather than feeling overwhelmed by this volatile way of life, Jeannie looked forward to the adventure. To Jeannie, there was definitely more to life than work. She enjoyed an active lifestyle filled with bowling, camping, boating, and fishing.

Jeannie also loved gardening, cooking, and sewing as well as walking on the beach in California and cheering for both Michigan State University and the Detroit Tigers. One of Jeannie's greatest joys was serving others as she would catch the fish, clean them, and cook it all up for many at one time. She and Larry traveled all over the country in their RV, usually visiting family along the way, often on impromptu trips. These were precious times for them both as they simply enjoyed being together. Jeannie was an animal lover and especially enjoyed the companionship of her Yorkshire Terriers, Scooter, Casper, and Tippy. As much as Jeannie enjoyed these other interests, her greatest love was reserved for her family. Affectionately called "Memaw" by her grandchildren, they all knew there was nothing their grandmother wouldn't do for them, evidenced by the many days spent sitting by her grandson Eric's side in the hospital. In many ways, Jeannie was truly one-of-a-kind. She was naturally striking, and always made sure she looked her best. Jeannie liked her "pretties," always styled her own hair, and thought that everyone deserved the opportunity to be gorgeous. She was stubborn, even strong-willed at times, yet was compassionate and selfless in her every thought, word, and deed. Some will remember Jeannie for the way she often said "gorgeous" or "you'd just croak" while others will remember her for her insatiable zest for life. All those who knew her will certainly treasure both her fierce determination and her tender heart. Jeannie Pierce passed away on Wednesday, January 27, 2010 at the Memorial Medical Center in Ludington following a two year battle with cancer. She was preceded in death by her daughter Connie Crandall in 1995, her parents, 2 brothers, and 3 sisters. Jeannie will be remembered with pride and great love by her husband Larry; her daughters Debbie (Randy) Frances of Fountain, and Tricia (Ron) Fredman of Overland Park, Kansas; her son-in-law Jeffrey Crandall of Fountain Valley, CA; her beloved grandchildren Reva (Tim) Goucher of Lansing, Tyler Darling of Allegan, Samantha Darling currently serving in the US Navy, Eric Meek and Amy Nicole Crandall both of Colorado Springs, CO, Tashia (Steve) Spencer of

Reading, MA, Olivia (Dan) Herald also of Lansing and Rachel Fredman of Overland Park, KS; 12 great-grandchildren; 4 brothers, and 3 sisters.