



Ruth Olive Lesausky

May 5, 1921 - January 10, 2010

It didn't faze Ruth Lesausky to get her hands dirty. She worked hard right alongside her husband on their family dairy farm, and reaped the many blessings of their efforts. She had a large, loving family and considered them to be her greatest treasure. No one was a stranger when entering her home, and she welcomed all with open arms. Spunky when she needed to be, Ruth learned to take life in stride with quick wit and profound inner strength. Although she will be dearly missed, Ruth leaves a legacy of memories for her family to cherish. At a time when the American dream was alive and well, the turn of the century brought good fortune and the era of the Roaring Twenties ushered in fads like the Charleston. Charlie Chaplin starred on the big screen and Babe Ruth's baseball was all the rage. While farming continued to be the mainstay of rural communities, cities like Grand Rapids, Michigan were bustling with business and industry. It was in this community along the Grand River that William and Augusta (Stahelin) Lynch welcomed Ruth Olive into their loving arms on May 5, 1921, the fifth of six children in the Lynch household. Their close-knit family suffered a great loss when Ruth's older sister died of polio as a young woman. Ruth's father worked as a railroad switchman for 30 years, until he suffered an injury that eventually cost him his life. His time working on the railroad allowed his family the advantage of free train trips and they made use often of this travel benefit and the adventure it held. Even in the midst of these difficulties, Ruth's mother Gusta was tenacious and persevered in raising her family. Ruth attended the local

schools, working hard at her studies and also learning to play the violin and the piano with a deft touch. Ruth went on to attend Michigan State University and earned her Bachelor's Degree. She pursued her Master's Degree and completed most of her studies, but decided against continuing on with the thesis requirement. Ruth attended college during World War II, and while the war effort was on the hearts of many, it was especially the focus for young people like Ruth. In fact, it was during this time that Ruth was part of a group who completed the actual drawings used in the design and manufacturing of landing gear for planes in the war. Eventually teaching for Mason County Eastern Schools, she taught for one year for the Free Soil School District and also spent some time as a social worker. Ruth's life took a turn in a new direction when mutual friends introduced her to a man named Albert Lesausky. A dairy farmer, Albert was born and raised living and working on his family's dairy farm. After a time of courtship, Ruth and Albert were joined in marriage on April 19, 1952 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Custer, Michigan. Albert and Ruth together made a wonderful life, and worked side by side on the farm as a team. Getting her hands dirty was never a problem for Ruth. She wasn't large in stature, but she was very determined and it only proved her inner tenacity. From milking cows to driving the tractor, Ruth baled hay and cleaned the barns. She truly embraced her role as a farmer's wife and her eye for detail helped in every aspect of running and working the farm. Along with the many chores that farm life entailed, Ruth was also busy keeping house and raising their family, which in time came to include six children. John, Ellen, Tom, Jim, Therese and Sue blessed Ruth's life immensely. She was always busy lovingly tending to the needs of her family. Along with tackling endless mounds of laundry and many meals to cook, Ruth grew most of the vegetables in their family garden, canning and preserving them for year-round eating. Chicken dinner was a staple and greatly enjoyed meal in their home, and they raised many of the chickens for their own use. There was always enough to go around at Ruth's table and all were welcome. Ruth was a dedicated homemaker, sharing her meals and her home with friends and

family alike. As in most large households, Ruth's home was usually a flurry of activity. Her children found plenty of mischief, but Ruth didn't usually get too excited about it. She allowed the kids to work out their differences, but when it did get out of hand, a pancake turner or a ping pong paddle came in handy to get her point across. Although her children had their fair share of split lips, black eyes, and other childhood mishaps, they were usually the result of defending or fighting with each other, but Ruth took it all in stride. It was important for Ruth that her family's close ties were fostered. They are indeed a close knit group and their ability to stand by each other was always encouraged by Ruth. As hard as Ruth worked on the farm and in raising her family, she stood by her children with encouraging words and devotion. Ruth had a knack for sewing and made many of their clothes, especially when they were young. The children loved listening to their mother play the piano and have many fond memories of her doing so. A talented pianist, Ruth provided piano lessons for those who wanted them, but the most important lessons Ruth taught her children were about hard work, helping out, and being there for one another. Family meant everything to Ruth. Proud of her family history, Ruth recounted many family stories to her children and grandchildren. She enjoyed pointing out that their family lineage included Jesse James from the wild west, and that their very own grandmother had once dated Orville Wright. A special treat for Ruth was visiting her sister Adine who lived on a nearby lake. After chores were done and if she could break away, Ruth would take everyone over to Adine's to spend time with her enjoying the beautiful setting and fun of the lake. When the kids were young, they knew if the first cutting of hay was done by the fourth of July, they had the opportunity of possibly spending that day at the lake with Aunt Adine. Over the years, Ruth and Albert took the opportunities that they could to travel. Albert was a U.S. Army Veteran of World War II, and Ruth was proud and supportive of the ties he maintained with his fellow veterans. They traveled many times to the reunions that were held each year for the 10th Armored Division in different places

around the country, with their son John being instrumental in making sure they were able to attend. These trips became very special for Ruth and Albert as they looked forward to connecting with the many people they met along the way. They enjoyed fun times at home as well. Especially when family and friends came over in the evenings after a day's work to play pinochle, with their fun and games often lasting until the early morning hours. Ruth dearly missed her beloved Albert when he died on October 20, 2000. Ruth's mother had worked hard running a boarding house to provide each of her children with a college education. Five of them went to MSU, then known as Michigan State College, and one to Notre Dame. After providing college for her own children, Augusta herself went to Michigan State college. In 1955, it was a proud day for Ruth watching her own mother graduate at the age of 75 and it meant so much to her as she raised her own family. An avid reader, Ruth enjoyed many genres of reading, especially biographies, and in recent years she had begun writing her own autobiography. Well-informed and a sharp thinker, Ruth enjoyed working crossword and word search puzzles. She continued to enjoy her farm and she could often be found zipping around in her trusty golf cart. Ever the watchful mother and grandmother, Ruth continued to play a role in the lives of her family, keeping an eye on them and wanting the best for them. Ruth died on Sunday, January 10, 2010. For Ruth Lesausky, a wonderful legacy was left for her family – that the most important role she played in life was that of loving mother and homemaker. She loved her family above all and will be dearly missed and fondly remembered. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Albert, her brothers Bill, Joe & Harry Lynch, sisters Helen Lynch and Adine Hurd and her daughter-in-law Kathryn Lesausky on December 4, 2008. Ruth is survived by her children John (Kathleen) Lesausky, Ellen Shangle (Brian Hvizdos), and Tom Lesausky, all of Custer, James (Judy) Lesausky of Silver Lake, Therese (Robert) McClure and Susan (Leo) Uber, also of Custer; 18 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, with one more on the way. She is also survived by her sisters- and brothers-in-law, Gloria Lynch of Hart, Joe Astrauskas of Pentwater,

George (Joan) Lesausky of Rochester Hills and Alice Huryk of Muskegon Heights, as well as many nieces, nephews and cousins. A Memorial Mass will be held for Ruth at 11:00 AM on Thursday, January 14, 2010 at St. Mary's Catholic Church with Rev. Mike Cilibraise as celebrant. A graveside service will take place in the spring at St. Mary's Cemetery in Custer.