



Zora Helena Vannett

February 5, 1920 - October 1, 2009

Although petite in stature, Zora Vannett's fiery personality and unique red hair made her hard to miss. She was a woman of faith whose vibrancy and zest for life often radiated to those around her. Zora faced a good many hardships throughout her life – experiences that shaped her life in many ways. She was not afraid to work hard and was very handy, often working on her projects well into the morning hours. Zora could be spontaneous and outspoken, and her fun-loving personality will be missed by those who knew her. As the 1920s were beginning, times were looking up in America, emerging from WWI as a world leader, and expanding industry to meet peacetime needs. It was also during this time that James and Elma (Johnson) Mitchell were celebrating the birth of their daughter, Zora Helena, on February 5, 1920 in Stanwood, Michigan. Zora's parents raised their family on their farm, Zora and her brother James Stanley, known always by his middle name. Their sister Cela, unfortunately died at a very young age. Much of Zora's younger years were spent during the Great Depression when the times were cloaked in hardship. These difficult times greatly affected the way that Zora lived her life in the years to come. She made her way through school and graduated from Morley High School, ready for new and exciting changes in her life. One fateful evening, Zora attended a dance where she noticed one particular big guy who stood out from across the room. Upon their introduction, she learned that his name was Carlton Beckman, and after a time of dating they were united in marriage on May 5, 1942. The newlyweds initially lived in White Cloud, but

shortly into their marriage Carlton was drafted into WWII , serving with the special forces. Zora was actually pregnant before he left, and she moved to California, taking a job to help with the war effort. In California she gave birth to their son Carl in 1943. Sadly their son only lived one year, and Zora was unable to share the news with her husband until he was discharged from the service. The heavy burden of carrying her grief alone was very difficult for Zora to bear. The couple welcomed their second son Mark in 1948, but he too died shortly after his birth. When their son John was born in 1951 there was much rejoicing and time proved his fate was to be remarkably different than his two older brothers. Although Zora and Carlton's marriage ended in divorce in the early sixties, they remained close friends. Zora was a successful career woman, working as a bookkeeper for Ebasco Engineering Corporation, the general contractor for the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant owned by Consumers Energy on Lake Michigan near Ludington. The company moved Zora to Connecticut, then to Midland, Michigan, then on to Houston, Texas in 1979. Her job also introduced her to a co-worker named Junior Vannett with whom she became friends. Eventually their friendship grew into love, and they were married in 1969. Zora retired, but after a short time the company asked her to return, presenting her with an offer that was too good for her to turn down. She returned to work, and then officially retired in 1986. After retirement, Zora moved back to Scottville where she lived on the corner of Thomas and James Street. In many ways, Zora was a unique woman. Growing up during the depression impressed upon her the need to keep and fix things until they could no longer be repaired. She was extremely handy, and throughout her moves she remodeled each house she in which she lived. Zora was willing to tackle any project - everything from construction to paint. She also helped her son remodel his home throughout the years, and would work until the job was done. Zora treasured her family and when she became a grandmother, she was involved in her granddaughters' lives. She rarely missed one of their ballgames and was never afraid to provide them with constructive criticism in order to help them play better. When granddaughter

Erin had the opportunity to go to England to study, Zora paid her way, with the stipulation that Erin had to take lots of pictures to share. Erin honored that request and they spent hours reminiscing through the photo albums she had made, creating some of Zora's favorite times. With her leisure time, there were a variety of activities that Zora enjoyed. She liked bowling and was on the Pratt's Jewelry team at Scottville Recreation and Spartan Lanes. Zora was always traveling, especially throughout northern Michigan. She often took spur of the moment trips to the casino in Manistee with her neighbor, Lillian Coker. The two of them frequently visited the café in Scottville as well. Zora attended Scottville United Methodist Church, was a member of Our Savior Lutheran Church, and had recently attended Calvary Baptist Church in Ludington with friends Torfe and Molly Gedraitis. She was a gifted seamstress who always had to alter her own clothes since she was so petite. Zora also made pillows, stuffed animals, and clothes for her granddaughters including "footy" pajamas when they were in college. These mementos have become priceless treasures to her granddaughters. As a patient at Tendercare, Zora discovered that she loved to sing karaoke, and would often hog the microphone! Zora Vannett was a rare gem whose personality was certainly unmatched. She was a strong-willed lady whose one request in life was to have her own way! Zora was always on the move whether she was traveling, tackling a remodeling project, or cheering on her granddaughters from the stands. As her health declined during her later years, she was tenderly cared for by her daughter-in-law Gloria. Although her family and friends say goodbye for now, they hold tight to the many moments they were given with Zora. Zora Helena Vannett died on Thursday, October 1, 2009 at Tendercare of Ludington. Zora's family includes her son John (Gloria) Beckman of Scottville; her granddaughters Erin (Stacey) Swiatlowski of Scottville, and Kendra Beckman of Sandy, Utah; her great-granddaughter Ashley Taylor of Fountain; and her stepson David Vannett. Zora was preceded in death by her parents; her husbands, Carlton Beckman and Junior Vannett; her sons Carl and Mark Beckman; her sister

Cela Mitchell; her brother James Stanley Mitchell; and her nephews Larry and Gregg Mitchell.