



Donna Mae Heasley

November 25, 1931 - October 18, 2023

Donna Heasley, age 91, of Burnips, passed away on Wednesday, October 18, 2023.

Donna was born in Owosso, Michigan, and soon moved to Allentown, Pennsylvania, where her father continued his lifelong teaching in the Pilgrim Holiness Church Bible College. While there she traveled to nearby churches to provide music with her brothers, Roger and Elmorse. She played the marimba along with her brothers who played the accordion and the mandolin.

Following 13 years in Allentown they spent a year in Frankfurt, Indiana, and then five in Kernersville, North Carolina. After attending two years of Bible College, Donna moved to Michigan to live with her Aunt Vesta Heasley in Burnips, Michigan. She taught for four years (Kindergarten – 3rd Grade) in the two-room country school at Overisel. Aunt Vesta was teaching in the one-room school at Monterey Center and provided daily instruction to Donna.

She attended the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Burnips, Michigan, where she accompanied her brother Elmorse Hightower (the pianist) on the marimba. It was at the church that she met her future husband, Gene, and they started dating after a year. When Gene graduated from Hope College they were married on June 28, 1955, and pulled a 30-foot by 8-foot trailer house to Lawrence, Kansas, where Gene attended graduate school. Their first two

children, Lynn and Sylvia, were born, and Gene received a Ph.D. in Chemistry.

In 1960, they moved to Bethany, Oklahoma, just in time for the third child, Carl, to be born. Then followed 40 years where she was a partner with Gene in his Chemistry teaching at Bethany Nazarene College (now Southern Nazarene University). Their fourth child, Phillip, was born five years after they arrived in Bethany.

Donna gave herself enthusiastically to homemaking and caring for other professors' children until her children were off to college. She then turned to professional cooking where she quickly rose to become a cafeteria manager in the public schools of Oklahoma City. She joined Gene in retirement, and they moved back to Michigan at once, where she and Gene enjoyed 23 happy years while they worked together growing fruits and vegetables and selling some on a road stand across the road from her beloved farmhouse.

Donna's love language was preparing delicious meals for friends and family. She has served guests from all over the world. International students who were attending SNU were often included at holiday meals at her home. They entertained guests from Papua New Guinea at the farmhouse who helped harvest from the garden and orchard and enjoyed the home grown, home cooked meals that Donna served.

Donna and Gene traveled extensively, especially to be with her children. They visited all over the United States. They took a trip to Costa Rica to visit colleagues from SNU. They spent a semester in Toronto, Canada, when Gene was on sabbatical. They traveled twice to Papua New Guinea to visit Sylvia.

They were always faithful church participants wherever they lived, but they never enjoyed any church as much as LifeChange Community Church where

they became friends with a wide spectrum of wonderful people.

Donna is survived by her husband of 68 years, Gene Heasley; her children: Lynn Heasley, Sylvia Potter, Carl Heasley and Phillip Heasley; 10 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; as well as many extended family.

A funeral service in honor of Donna's faith and life is at 11:00 AM on Wednesday, October 25, at LifeChange Community Church, 3014 Newell Street, Burnips, MI 49323. Rev. Steve Jones will officiate. Visitation with the family will be from 4:00-6:00 PM on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at Yntema Funeral Home, 251 S. State Street, Zeeland MI 49464. As well as beginning at 10:00 AM Wednesday prior to the funeral at church.

Memorial contributions may be given to Life Change Community Building Fund (Making Room Initiative) <https://lifechangelifegroups.churchcenter.com/giving>.

www.yntemafh.com

Cemetery Details

Salem Township Cemetery (Burnips Cemetery)

2990 144th Ave.
Dorr, MI 49323

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **24**. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Yntema Funeral Home
251 S State St
Zeeland , MI 49464
(616) 772-2173
info@yntemafh.com
<http://langelandsterenberg.com/>

Visitation

OCT **25**. 10:00 AM - 10:45 AM (ET)

LifeChange Community Church
3014 Newell Street
Dorr, MI 49323

Funeral Service

OCT **25**. 11:00 AM (ET)

LifeChange Community Church
3014 Newell Street
Dorr, MI 49323

Tribute Wall



“ *Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Donna Mae Heasley*



Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes - October 23, 2023 at 04:29 PM

HM

“ *I was deeply sorry to hear of Donna's passing. Having lost my wife a year ago, I know how difficult it will be for Gene. I remember fondly being at the Heasley home for Thanksgiving when they opened their house for students that were unable to go home. It was a special time for me made even more poignant by her sincere hospitality. What a wonderful person and life.*
Howard Day MD

Howard Day MD - October 24, 2023 at 02:45 PM

BW

“ *Donna was a sweet lady. Always doing things for other people. She loved her family and her church but most of all her love of God was always shining through. So happy she is home with Jesus she will be missed here by many. My condolences to her family especially Mr. GENE!! WE LOVE YOU TWO!!*
Art and Bonnie Weatherwax

Bonnie Weatherwax - October 20, 2023 at 03:31 PM