



MaryLou Van Heest

September 25, 1932 - September 14, 2019

MARY LOU (RICHARDS) VANHEEST, age 86, of Holland On Saturday afternoon, September 14, Mary Lou slipped away into the arms of her Lord. Under Hospice care for many months at her Lakeside Vista residence, she was regularly visited by children and grandchildren. Her beloved husband Neil died November 23, 2018 and has now been reunited with Mary Lou. Farm, Faith, Family. Mary Lou was raised on a Berrien Springs (MI) fruit farm in the Depression and WWII years. Farm chores, austerity, rationing, one-room schoolhouse, piano lessons, 4H Club, girls' basketball team and church choir were all formative experiences in her life. At age 14 she made the most important decision of her life, accepting Christ as her Lord and Savior. At Hope College she learned to play the Organ, sharing this gift with every congregation she and Neil served. Bible studies and church groups were always part of her calendar – already loaded with raising five boys. The lessons of her youth were carried well throughout life. Mary Lou is survived by sons Jim (Nancy), Wayne (Chantal), Paul, Tom (Barb) and John (Joy), all blessed to be West Michigan residents and in regular fellowship with Neil and Mary Lou. Also surviving are beloved grandchildren Jaime (Kylan), Allie, Zoë (Brian), Simeon, Sam (Jackie), Priscilla and Matt, and great-granddaughter Lorraine. Mary Lou is the daughter of Charles and Lina (Christopherson) Richards. Born September 25, 1932 in Benton Harbor (MI), she was predeceased by her parents, sister Ruth and brothers Charles and David. She enrolled in Hope College, was an Education major and member of Sibylline

Sorority, graduating in 1954. She and Neil were married August 6, 1954 and remained in Holland until the 1955 completion of Neil's MDiv degree at Western Seminary. During this one year Mary Lou taught First Grade in Zeeland (MI). Mary Lou enthusiastically joined Neil as he pastored RCA congregations in Fultonville and Schenectady (NY), Portage, Holland and Grand Rapids (MI) and Sheboygan (WI). Her important legacies were modeling a life of service, the Fruits of the Spirit and tireless devotion to Faith and Family. Significant among the Fruits was "Joy," and its visible reminder in a special plaque: "Jesus, Others, Yourself." Her five boys learned Art and Music; gardening; service and volunteerism; and stewardship of limited resources. She made garments, knitted Christmas stockings and afghans, and was a tireless note-writer for any occasion. She cheered on her boys at sporting events, trying to raise them properly while providing a shoulder to cry upon when young hearts were broken. A memorial service will be 10:30am Wednesday, September 25 (her birthday), at Central Park Reformed Church, 614 Myrtle Avenue, Holland. Visitation will be 6:30-8:30pm Tuesday, September 24, at Langeland-Sterenbergh Funeral Home, 315 East 16th Street, Holland. In honor of Mary Lou and Neil's ministry and the broader family legacy in ministry and overseas mission, the family encourages consideration of memorial gifts to the John and Lucile VanHeest Mission Fund at Hope College, supporting mission experiences for Hope students.

Tribute Wall



“ *Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of MaryLou Van Heest*



Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes - September 14, 2019 at 12:00 AM



“ *MaryLou Van Heest*

August 31, 2022 at 01:26 PM



“ *"Wayne and Chantal, sending you my deepest sympathy and loving thoughts during this time of loss."*

Jill Fehrenbach - September 23, 2019 at 12:00 AM