



Frances "Fran" C. Thurkettle

SEP 25, 1923 - JAN 6, 2010



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Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Events	Page 5
Tribute Wall	Page 6



Frances "Fran" C. Thurkettle

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Frances "Fran" C. Thurkettle, age 86, of Norton Shores passed away peacefully in her sleep on Wednesday, January 6, 2010. She was born September 25, 1923, in Ludington, MI, to Kleber and Blanche (Gensen) Hill and was a 1941 graduate of Ludington High School.

Frances was married to Frank Newlin on July 26, 1942, in Ludington. Their son, Michael, was born on August 30, 1943. Frank was killed in action on January 15, 1945, while serving his country in the U.S. Army during World War II. Frances was married to Erwin L.D. "Turk" Thurkettle on April 5, 1947, in Ludington, and he preceded her in death on May 2, 2007, after celebrating 60 years of marriage.

Fran had been employed as a bus driver for 30 years for Grand Haven Area Public Schools. She was a life member of the Order of the Eastern Star, and she enjoyed traveling. She had a special appreciation for music, good books, and her beloved Lake Michigan. Fran's infectious smile and charming laughter endeared her to young and old alike. She left us with a wonderful legacy of beautiful music, good books, fine wine, and respect and appreciation for all of God's creatures. She loved us with all of her heart, as we loved her. Fran and Turk spent 60 wonderful years in their home on their beloved Black Lake. It was their utopia and their heart.

She is lovingly remembered by her daughter, Wilda James of Grand Haven; her son, Michael (Laurie) Thurkettle of Huntington Beach, CA; four grandchildren: Barbara (Tim) Moran, Jed Thurkettle, Nicholas Thurkettle, and Margaret Thurkettle; two great-grandchildren: Jessica and Joseph Moran; several nieces and nephews; and a special great-aunt, Bertha Thurkettle. She was preceded in death by her parents, two sisters: Leona Petersen and Lois Conn; a brother, Harold Hill; and her son-in-law, Ken James on September 28, 2001.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. Interment will be in Lake Forest Cemetery. Memorial contributions to the Alzheimer's Association are appreciated.



Obituary

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Share memories with the family at their online guest book at
www.vbkfuneralhome.com.




Events

Frances "Fran" C. Thurkettle

SEP 25, 1923 - JAN 6, 2010

Service

 **Monday**, January 1, 1900

 12:30 AM ET

 A Memorial Service will be held at a later date



Tribute Wall

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SEP 25, 1923 - JAN 6, 2010



Anonymous posted:

I grew up down the road from Turk and Francis - they were the closest relations we had when we moved from Flint to Muskegon. I used to ride my bike up Lake Harbor and Pontaluna from our house near Hoffmaster to her house on Little Black Lake. Francis was always happy to see me, standing at her door, with a fishing pool in one hand and a can of worms in the other, regardless of what I had interrupted or when I showed up, always unannounced. It's been 20+ years since those days, but she knew me right away at my grandfather's funeral, calling me "Buddy's boy" and holding my hand at the church. I can see she will be missed and trust she is well recieved in heaven.##imported-begin##Andrew S. Hill (Grand Nephew?)##imported-end##

March 22 at 6:02 AM



Anonymous posted:

Wilda hold on to the happy memories of your mom. God will get you through the hard times.##imported-begin##Shirley Coleman##imported-end##

March 1 at 10:24 PM



Anonymous posted:

We knew of Fran's passing, but wasn't aware of the guestbook location until this week. Fran was not only my bus driver, as she was for so many, but also a dear neighbor. I remember falling down our steps and my older sisters summoned Fran to check me out as I lay crying at the bottom of the stairs since my parents were gone. She gave me a treat and convinced me I was fine. She also moved the bus stop to right in front of the house when I was the only Hostad left at the corner stop. We spent a lot of time with Wilda at Thurkettles and it was always fun and exciting. In more recent years, I took my two daughters, when they still lived at home, to Fran and Turk's house to trick-or-treat! She was amazed to get a trick-or-treater, but graciously invited us in to check out the costumes and to give us a treat. She'll always be fond memories to me.##imported-begin##Connie (Hostad) Wahr##imported-end##

March 1 at 3:15 PM



Anonymous posted:

Miss you "Lady Bus Driver"##imported-begin##Susie Deming Hill##imported-end##

March 1 at 1:24 PM



Tribute Wall

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SEP 25, 1923 - JAN 6, 2010



Anonymous posted:

Wilda and Mike, My sister, Charlene, notified me of your mother's death. I remember your Mom so well as bus driver, mostly for my younger siblings who rode her bus. My Mom and Fran shared together often about their kids, school, etc. Your Mom laughed with us and made us laugh readily. What a happy lady with the huge responsibility of transporting all those kids. She was perfectly matched to her job. When my Dad died June 1996, I stayed at my folk's house with my Mom that summer. Several days I'd walk with niece, Trisha, Char's daughter to get in 100 miles that summer for school award. One time we walked down Black Lake Rd. and your Dad was in the yard. He said come in and talk to Fran awhile. We reminisced about lots of fond memories of by-gone days. What fun to recollect with her. Be blessed that your Mom blessed others. That is neat she could live to age 86. I assume she had Ahlzeimers. So you have been through heartaches already. God bless you as you learn to live without your Mom. May you find peace and comfort in our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life". Love to you and your families, Carma Jean##imported-begin##Carma Jean Lund Johnson##imported-end##

January 15 at 1:43 PM



Anonymous posted:

Dearest Wilda- My thoughts and prayers are with you during this very difficult time. Aunt Fran was one of a kind. She was loved by many. I will treasure the wonderful memories of so long ago on the shores of Lake Superior. The laughter and joy during those family fishing trips, the sunbathing next to the cold cold water, and her ability to smile and giggle throughout any tense moment. I will hold you and your parents in my heart today and always. Love and Blessings to you, Robin##imported-begin##Robin Thurkettle Thomas##imported-end##

January 15 at 3:46 AM



Anonymous posted:

I miss my grandma more than words can ever say. She was a guiding light to me every day of my life, and the closeness we shared I will keep in my heart forever. I am so thankful I got to enjoy my grandparents as much as I did, and they have given me many wonderful memories. I am so thankful she is in a beautiful place now. Thank you, grandma, for being one of my best friends! I will always remember our times together. I love you forever, and someday we'll be together again-##imported-begin##Barb(granddaughter)##imported-end##

January 13 at 5:46 PM



Tribute Wall

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SEP 25, 1923 - JAN 6, 2010



Anonymous posted:

The first thing that comes to my mind is how she had a block of wood wired to her brake pedal on the school bus! How cute! She ruled that bus and we knew it! How funny thinking of the many times she'd have to pull over and ask us if we wanted to go back to Park St (the bus garage for a major scolding from George Piers!)....and a couple times she did! Little in stature, bit in personality. Your mother was such a neat lady. I'm so happy to have so many memories of her from Little Black Lake and visiting at Leppinks. God's peace to all of her family at this sad time.##imported-begin##Rita Garzelloni DeCan##imported-end##

January 12 at 3:41 PM



Anonymous posted:

Dear Wilda, you are in my thoughts and prayers with the loss of your mother. I viewed her story on-line. You look just like your mom, beautiful! Love the picture of her standing by her bus. Love, Doreen##imported-begin##Doreen Mara Perry##imported-end##

January 12 at 9:27 AM



Anonymous posted:

Dear Wilda, Barb, Tim and family. Very sorry to hear about your loss. She was a very special person to many people. Love and prayers. Vickie Steiner##imported-begin##Vickie Steiner##imported-end##

January 12 at 7:12 AM



Anonymous posted:

Gone but not forgotten. Our sympathy to the family.##imported-begin##Bob & Eileen Jenkins##imported-end##

January 12 at 5:04 AM



Tribute Wall

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SEP 25, 1923 - JAN 6, 2010



Anonymous posted:

Dear Wilda, What does one say? I love you, I rejoice with you and I ache with you. She's now the Mom of her prime. Enjoying her friends and loved ones that have gone on before---and she'll be waiting for you a long ways down the road. Can you imagine the hug she shared with your Dad? She's free, healthy & whole. While we know this on an intellectual level there is still a big hole, isn't there? Dearest Wilda, you were such a wonderful daughter and friend to Fran. Thank you for having the stamina to hang in there and for always being there for her. She needed you and you were there. You did everything just right!##imported-begin##Marcia Austin##imported-end##

January 12 at 2:59 AM



Anonymous posted:

To the best bus driver. Fran you drove my bus all through my school years. You were a good friend and like a second mother to me, you were there when I needed scolding and listened when I needed someone to talk to. I have thought of you often through the years since I left school. Wilda we are so sorry and our thoughts and prayers are with you. The Thompson Family Carolyn Cihos, Sue Litteral, Sherri Mitchell and Sandy Helferich.##imported-begin##Sandy Thompson Helferich##imported-end##

January 11 at 3:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

My sympathy to the family of Fran. She was an unforgettable lady. Always ready with a smile and something amusing to say. I worked with Fran @ GHAPA for many years. She lifted our spirits with her daily doses of humor. She made our job enjoyable especially on those bitter cold mornings. She will be missed but not forgotten##imported-begin##Marge Flahive##imported-end##

January 11 at 10:04 AM



Anonymous posted:

I remember "Ma Kettle's" laugh. I loved to hear her laugh. She was always so loving to me and made me feel safe in a very scary situation. She always was on my side and wanted the best for everyone. She gave me a book of Chaucer poetry on a visit that was very special to her. Years later I found out how special that book was and gave it back, with all my love. She will always be in my heart as is my best friend, Wilda. You did good Ma!!!!##imported-begin##Barbara Bradley##imported-end##

January 10 at 5:36 PM



Tribute Wall

Frances "Fran" C. Thurkettle

SEP 25, 1923 - JAN 6, 2010



Anonymous posted:

words alone can not express who my beloved Aunt Frannie was to me. Her loving smile and her warm kind laughter will be forever in my heart. There will not be a day that goes by that I won't think of her and Uncle Erwin sitting on dad's patio having a cocktail. I miss them all so very much. God Bless You Wilda, you are the best from both your mom and dad. You are in my prayers. I Love You...Your Cousin...Cindy###imported-begin##Cindy Inman (neice)###imported-end##

January 10 at 10:11 AM



Anonymous posted:

She came from good old Michigan Farm stock and managed our lives with those values. Her love of Music & literature lead to us filling our home with musical instruments, music and books. All of the items got well used. How she could dance when listening to Dave Brubeck while dusting and pushing a vacuum was beyond understanding. I would disappear for long time periods and we would take up the verbal banter that she was so good at when I showed up again. This included providing wise counsel in late porch meetings to a young Marine (myself) that was struggling to return to civilian life in a time when we were not so welcome to lots of folks. She motivated me to become a member of that first group in our family to have a college education. She also provided some needed quick cash for the birth of our second son Nick. I will miss her and I still owe her \$20.###imported-begin##Mike Thurkettle (Son)###imported-end##

January 9 at 9:50 AM



Anonymous posted:

So sorry for your loss. You will be in our prayers. Your grandmother was a special lady that always showed love to your friends and family. She will be missed.###imported-begin##Chris And Jim Wadaga###imported-end##

January 9 at 8:07 AM



Tribute Wall

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SEP 25, 1923 - JAN 6, 2010



Anonymous posted:

We adored Fran at D&W. I became friends with Fran and Turk and visited them at their home on Black Lake. I bought golfballs from Turk and he gave me firewood. I'd say 'how much for the wood?' and he'd say 'I don't charge for wood' So I would write him a check and say 'give the money to Fran' and he'd say 'Okay'. Fran loved company especially during the summer. She would always have a glass of beer ready if I wanted one. She would show me her view of Black Lake that she loved. I still have the 1982 Chevy van that I bought from them and I keep it on Beaver Island. She would ask about it all the time. I loved Fran and would give her a big hug every time I saw her. She was like a mom to me. It hasn't been the same around here at the pharmacy for some time now without Fran. We will always remember her. Tom##imported-begin##Thomas Spoelman, R.Ph.##imported-end##

January 9 at 5:01 AM



Anonymous posted:

Dear family of Fran Thurkettle,Such a wonderful "mother" Fran was to our children years back. She cared for them as though they were her own. Being their bus driver each school morning, we always felt so good putting them on the bus, knowing they would be cared for/looked after to and from school.Thank you Fran for your many kindnesses. You will be missed...##imported-begin## Ken/Geri Sturm##imported-end##

January 9 at 4:17 AM



Anonymous posted:

Dear Wilda and Family,We were all saddened to hear of the passing of Fran. She was such a fun lady. She always had a smile and hug to share when you seen her. I will always remember the trip out west with the Thurkettle family. We can't think of Little Black Lake School without thinking of Fran. Our prayers and thoughts are with you during this sad time.##imported-begin##Minda and Mark Smith and Lizz VanNoordwyk##imported-end##

January 8 at 5:25 PM



Tribute Wall

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Anonymous posted:

FRAN HAD A WONDERFUL SPIRIT AND SHE CARED ABOUT PEOPLE. SHE WAS MY BUS DRIVER WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL AND SHE ALWAYS MADE SURE WE WERE SAFE. I STILL HAVE A PICTURE OF HER STANDING BY THE BUS SHE DROVE ME TO SCHOOL IN. I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN FRAN BECAUSE SHE WAS A PERSON THAT TOUCHED MY LIFE WITH LOVE AND KINDNESS. NOW FRAN'S SOUL IS FREE TO MEET UP WITH THE LOVED ONES THAT PASSED BEFORE HER. MAY PEACE FILL HER FAMILIES HEARTS AT THIS TIME. FRAN, NEVER FORGOTTEN##imported-begin##Carolynne Glover##imported-end##

January 8 at 5:07 PM



Anonymous posted:

Mike - You have our sympathy in the death of your mother. Sound like she had a very active life plus a bus driver for 30 years!! I believe you were in our sophomore class and would like to be able to pass your e-mail address to other classmates if you would provide it to me. Gord & Claire Rooks-Groenevelt Class of '61##imported-begin##Gord & Claire Rooks-Groenevelt##imported-end##

January 8 at 4:37 PM



Anonymous posted:

Fran Thurkettle was the best bus driver I ever had. She always had a smile on her face to welcome us. My sympathy goes out to Wilda, Mike and the entire family. I know how much you will miss her.##imported-begin##Charlene Lund Mosley##imported-end##

January 8 at 3:15 PM



Anonymous posted:

Many of my fondest memories as a child involved going to my grandparents house. In all my memories the sun shone bright on their house and the trees surrounding the house. I remember playing on a swing that hung from a tree that appeared to be thousands of feet high. It was the biggest tree I had ever seen. I would run into the house, into my grandmothers kitchen, her and my mother visting or cooking. I could peek around the corner and my dad and my grandfather would be visting and laughing in the den. I would sit down on those rolling chairs and my grandmother would stop what she was doing and would pull a tin out of her cupboard that had Nutter Butter cookies and she would give me one. My grandmother made everywhere seem like a home. She was so warm. She was loving and caring and wanted the best and good fortune for all of her loved ones. She loved her home and her family. She loved to laugh. She loved to make jokes. She was such a big part of my life from my childhood into my teens and throughout my early twenties. I will miss her every day.##imported-begin##Margaret Thurkettle (Grandaughter)##imported-end##

January 8 at 11:36 AM



Anonymous posted:

I was pretty young and I was pretty upset – the details of it don't matter, I had been teased and I had let it get to me because I just hadn't learned the lesson yet. And Grandma was in town visiting, and she came into my room, and she told me about something the kids in her old schoolyard used to do to make her absolutely crazy."Fran, guess what?" they'd shout."What?" she'd answer."All around a pig's butt is pork!" I never forgot that. How ridiculous. How uncomfortable to young me. How perfectly illustrative of everything to me now. The words didn't matter; the words could be nonsense. What mattered was that it upset her, and even though I didn't want to believe it then, it meant she knew exactly how I felt. That was the kind of love and comfort she gave, the type to nourish you for years before you could even see it well enough to be grateful. Her goodness happened quietly; she was such a funny bird, with her bright scratchy laugh, but it hid her wisdom. On the most ordinary day of living she acted in a way that was quietly, stubbornly, grateful for it; whether it meant fussing over the stove, or trying to soothe a grandkid in a way he's still wondering about a quarter-century later. A strong spirit, and a joyful one. The wrinkles in her face were just more creases for her smile.##imported-begin##Nick Thurkettle (Grandson)##imported-end##

January 8 at 11:32 AM



Tribute Wall

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Anonymous posted:

My grandmother was always the inquisitive type. She was constantly fascinated by the events going on around her. Every new experience, every new gadget, every new happening... she always wanted to be in on just what exactly was going on, and how she might grab a piece of it to experience herself. She was also a person who was full of life and spirit. She would boldly sing all the songs that she came across, even if she didn't necessarily know the correct words. I can only imagine being one of the students that she ferried across the frozen tundra that Michigan sometimes becomes. If they, for one moment, experienced the same person who I feel so fortunate to have known, not to mention be descended from, I take heart in knowing that they, too, came from good stock. She left us as we knew her some time ago, but not as she was. But in our hearts and minds, those same happy songs still emanate from her kitchen on the shore of that little lake, and will always be with us. I have no doubt that the echoes of her very being still reverberate through that little piece of untamed wilderness that she called home.##imported-begin##Jed Thurkettle (Grandson)##imported-end##

January 8 at 11:26 AM



Anonymous posted:

Just her name brings back so many memories of growing up in the Little Black Lake neighborhood. From grade school through high school and beyond. Good people, good times, good memories. Goodbye Mrs. Thurkettle##imported-begin##Joan (Garzelloni) Link##imported-end##

January 8 at 8:40 AM



Anonymous posted:

I remember Frans kisses and smile she could make you smile no matter what kind of day you were having. A good friend of Fran would always say " Fran dont play" She was loved and will be missed.##imported-begin##jennifer vanoordt##imported-end##

January 7 at 6:14 PM



Tribute Wall

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Anonymous posted:

Dear Wilda and Family,I loved Frannie so much. She was such a light in my life, making me smile on days when it was hard to be at work or on a day when I was just plain down in the dumps. Her tender hugs and sweet kisses would put a smile on anyone's face. She also had a way to make us laugh with just a simple look or a few words.I will miss her more than words can say, and she will always hold a special place in my heart. I'll never forget my little Fran-O.Love, Rachel###imported-begin##Rachel O'Hara##imported-end##

January 7 at 3:59 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Frances "Fran" C. by
contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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