



There is no love like the unconditional love one receives from their mother. Our Mother was exceptional.

Rita Helen Caulfield was born July 4, 1932. The fifth of six children, the youngest daughter of four. When Mom was nine, her father, who was the fire chief of Piqua, Ohio, died from a heart attack after fighting a fire. Mom loved her father dearly and missed him greatly throughout her life.

She graduated in 1950 from Piqua Catholic High School. Mom, with her sisters, traveled by bus daily from Piqua to downtown Dayton to work at Rike's department store.

The first time our father, Clarence Barhorst, asked her out, my mother turned him down. Mom was the first member of her family to get married. She was so proud that she purchased her all satin and lace wedding dress in 1953 for a mere \$50.....using her employee discount of course!

Mom transitioned from city life to a farmer's wife and then to motherhood. Together our parents raised six of the most strong-willed, independent, stubborn, yet successful children.

When we were children, it was not uncommon to see Mom drive a tractor, baler, and hay wagon down the road and she did not know how to drive a car. Mom did not get her license until after all six of us were born.

Mom did a great deal of farm work. She helped bale hay, feed calves, and milk cows. She never complained. She did what was needed to help. She was a fantastic cook, with the timing of a logistic engineer. How she would plan, make holiday dinners and have everything ready at the same time was an Olympic feat.

One Sunday afternoon someone had the bright idea that Dad and his four sons should go cherry picking. We had a great afternoon with plenty of entertainment with Dad getting stuck in a tree and the harvesting of 147 pounds of cherries. Picking them was the easy part. Pitting the cherries for freezing was a different story. Mom stuck the four boys in the booth of our farmhouse kitchen with the rule no one leaves until the cherries were pitted. Every few minutes the boys

would burst into laughter, and no one knew why until several months later. On a beautiful summer day our aunt, the nun, Sister Julianna SC, with a carload of nuns, came for one of their annual visits. We soon realized why the boys were laughing so hard during the cherry pitting activity. Mom was serving her delicious homemade cherry pies when we noticed several of the nuns had rows of cherry pits on the heirloom white Haviland China that mom used for special occasions. Mom was embarrassed, to say the least, but handled it well.....as they say.... one seed in a cherry pie makes the pie taste better.....but 20?

Mom was always concerned more about others than herself. Her two most common questions: "Did you eat?" and "Did you get enough to eat?" Whenever I brought some friends home, I warned them that the dining table would become the refrigerator and Mom would make you eat!

Mom always put others first and would help in any way possible. If there were dirty athletic uniforms, farm clothes or even college laundry, Mom was on task of washing them. If you said that you didn't expect her to do your laundry, she would continue and say: "It's the one thing I can do for you."

When the youngest was approaching graduation from high school, Mom decided she needed something to do. She got a job working at a local retirement community. Once again, serving others. Later, our parents had the opportunity to manage a Dairy Queen for one of the sons. They ran the Greenville DQ for 24 years. Mom and Dad started to travel. They became snowbirds mostly in Florida and sometimes Texas. Dad could tell you the mpg of the car; Mom could tell you the number of rosaries she recited upon arrival at their destination.

Mom had a deep faith as evidence by her prayer journals. She had a strong devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. When she found out that one of our best friends had a serious cancer, she stated with such confidence and sincerity: "You tell them everything will be fine because I will pray for him." We believed Mom had a direct line to God.

Mom had a vivacious and vibrant personality. She loved to laugh and tell stories. She loved her family immensely; all six kids, their spouses, her 14 grandchildren and 35 great-grandchildren. Our parents had a deep, loving relationship. Usually if you saw one of them, the other was close behind.

As they aged, that love became even more evident. The way they looked at each other; the way they took care of each other. They did everything together. One of our favorite things was taking them to do their shopping at the local Walmart. We were convinced they played a secret game of hide and seek. Each would get a cart and go their merry way. Dad was easier to spot with his Tim Conway shuffle. Mom was the challenge as she could hide between the aisles better than any three-year-old!

There are many other stories to share, and we could go on forever. We hope this snapshot helps explain who our mother was and how much she meant to us.

We were fortunate enough to be loved by such a wonderful, selfless person.

We loved Mom and we know Mom loved us..." a bushel and a peck and a huge hug around the neck."