

In Memory of Catherine Julia Lukaschewski

Nov. 25, 1894 – Nov. 18, 1966



Catherine Julia Lukaschewski was born in Detroit, Michigan on November 25, 1894.

Her parents, Anna Janzen and Rudolph Lukaschewski, immigrated to Detroit from Poland in 1887. Anna and Rudolph married in 1891.

Catherine was the third of seven children born to Anna and Rudolph: Frank, Philip, Catherine, George, Lucy, Helen, and Therese.

The Lukaschewski family lived on the Eastside of Detroit. They rented a house at 934 Dubois until 1895 when they bought a home at 470 Alexandrine Avenue at the corner of Dequindre. They lived on Alexandrine for many years but eventually moved to a house at 1254 Van Dyke, just a block from the neighborhood known as Indian Village.

According to the 1910 Census, Catherine worked as a dressmaker at the age of 15. She was quite active socially as a young lady. Several articles in the Detroit Free Press mention her involvement with the "Can't Afford It" girls club from 1915 to 1917. An article published in 1915 mentioned Frank Steil as one of the guests present at a meeting of the club.

On one occasion, the Free Press reported that the girls spent a weekend at a cottage in Lake Orion. Another mentioned that they spent an evening sewing, after which luncheon was served. A story on June 24, 1917, said that the club "enjoyed a social evening at the home of Miss Catherine Lucas" as "vocal and piano selections were rendered by several members of the club."

Catherine married Frank W. Steil on October 28, 1920, at St. Anthony's Church. Frank had also been an Eastside Detroiter prior to their marriage. But immediately afterward, the couple moved to 362 Fullerton Avenue, just a few blocks west of Woodward.

Catherine gave birth to Kathleen Jeanette Steil on December 16, 1921. The birth occurred at home at 2158 Fullerton. In 1928, the Steil family moved down the street when they bought a duplex at 2258 Fullerton.

Catherine and Frank attended Visitation Catholic Church. Kathleen attended Visitation Elementary School and later graduated from Visitation High School.

Catherine and Frank bought several lots of land in the Bunny Run area of Lake Orion in the early 1930s. They constructed a cottage where they often spent their leisure time. As a teenager, Kathleen often entertained her friends at the cottage. Frank and Catherine would hold family gatherings there, including Steil Family Reunions.

Kathleen married Murray Coleman on May 1, 1942. When World War II ended, they lived in the upper unit of the duplex at 2258 Fullerton. Their first two children were born while the Coleman's lived on Fullerton.

After Murray and Kay moved to Royal Oak around 1950, Catherine and Frank decided to move to Royal Oak so they would be closer to Kathleen and her family. The Steils bought a house at 209 N. Rembrandt, about a mile from their daughter's house at 3128 N. Blair Street.

Catherine was a homemaker. Frank was a tool and die maker. He worked first at Ford Motors, then Packard Motor Car Company, and later at General Motors until his retirement.

Catherine and Frank were loving and caring grandparents to the children of Kathleen and Murray. They gave gifts to the grandkids for birthdays and at Christmas and Easter. They spent many summer weekends at the cottage with the Coleman grandchildren.

Everyone loved Catherine's cooking. She was famous for her German potato salad and for her German chocolate cake. During the summers she would prepare a great Sunday breakfast at the cottage after returning from Mass at St. Joseph Church in Lake Orion.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Catherine served as a volunteer at the old Providence Hospital in Detroit. As a Gray Lady, she would visit with patients, help them write letters, or read to them. While in service as a Gray Lady, Catherine made the acquaintance of two women, Agnes and Helen, with whom she remained friends for many years.

Catherine fell ill in 1966. She was hospitalized on October 29, 1966, at Mount Carmel Mercy Hospital in Detroit where she was diagnosed with terminal breast cancer. She died in the hospital on November 18, 1966. She is buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery along with other members of the Steil and Lukaschewski families.

*Thomas F. Coleman
Thanksgiving Day
November 25, 2010*