

MARY LOU HUFFMAN, 1929 - 2003

Maumee artist worked with disabled kids, helped at hospital

Mary Lou Huffman, a Maumee artist who helped disabled children and spent the past 13 years as a hospital volunteer, died Thursday in St. Luke's Hospital. She was 73.

Family members did not know the cause of death. Mrs. Huffman had heart problems and was diagnosed with diabetes two years ago. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in the 1960s and overcame the disease in 1968.

"She was a great woman," said Richard Huffman, Mrs. Huffman's husband of 52 years. "I characterize my marriage to her as the best roller coaster ride I ever had."

Mr. Huffman was the principal at Wayne Trail Elementary

School in Maumee for 29 years and a Maumee city councilman for 12 years. In 1987, Mr. Huffman ran unsuccessfully for mayor of the city against Harry Barlos, currently president of the Lucas County commissioners. During the campaign, Mrs. Huffman crafted the idea of buying nearly 5,000 pumpkins from a farm in Elmore, Ohio, and distributing them to residents with a campaign sticker attached.

Throughout her entire life, Mrs. Huffman enjoyed painting. She received art training as a child and for a period during the late 1970s and 1980s she operated a business painting pet portraits. She also painted contemporary works that hung

in the Huffman home.

Mrs. Huffman was born and reared in Detroit where she lived until moving to Toledo to attend college.

"She went to the University of Toledo for two years and then left school so we could get married," Mr. Huffman said. "I wouldn't say she put me through school, but she sure worked hard that first year of marriage to help me with my last year of college."

Mrs. Huffman took a job as a teller at the former Maumee Home Federal Bank in 1965.

Several years later, the bank opened a branch in Perrysburg and she was appointed its first manager.

After working for the bank for several years, Mrs. Huffman took a position with Lucas County Children Services at the former Miami Children's Center in Maumee. She traveled throughout the county inspecting and evaluating homes for disabled children.

In the late 1970s, Mrs. Huffman opened an antique store named Wood'n Stuff on River Road in Maumee. During the

recession of the early 1980s, Mr. and Mrs. Huffman decided to close the store because of poor sales.

Mrs. Huffman went back to working with children for several more years as an educational assessment aide at the Alternate Learning Center in West Toledo operated by the then-Lucas County Board of Education.

In 1987, Mr. and Mrs. Huffman retired and Mrs. Huffman began volunteering in the outpatient services department at St. Luke's Hospital.

Surviving are her husband, Richard; daughters, Terri Nau, Kim Biddle, and Beth Finical; sons, Scott Huffman, Thomas Huffman, and Joseph Thorpe; brother, Donald Woods; 18 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

The body will be in the Maison-Dardenne-Walker Funeral Home, Maumee, after 3 p.m. tomorrow. Services will be at noon Monday in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Maumee.

The family requests tributes to St. Paul's Episcopal Church or a charity of the donor's choice.

HUFFMAN

Mary Lou

Mary Lou Huffman, 73, died suddenly Thursday, January 30, 2003, at St. Luke's Hospital. She is survived by her husband, Richard W. Huffman; daughters, Terri (William) Nau of Apex, NC, Kim (Richard) Biddle of Waterville, and Beth (Todd) Finical of Monclova; sons, Scott (Karen) Huffman of Lexington, KY, Thomas (Sherrie) Huffman of Waterville and Joseph (Joyce) Thorpe of Maumee; brother, Donald (Erika) Woods of Carmel, IN; 18 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren. Mary Lou was preceded in death by a sister, JoAnne Radcliffe and grandson, Michael.

She is the daughter of the late Dorothy and Donald Woods Sr. Born in Detroit, and after high school moved to Toledo to attend the University of Toledo. She married Richard Huffman in 1950, and two years ago they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with family and many friends.

Mary Lou's primary occupation was a mother and homemaker. Later she was a bank manager, advertising secretary, social worker and she retired from the Lucas County Schools as an educational assessment aide.

She owned and operated the "Wood 'n Stuff" antique store on River Road in Maumee. She practiced her skills by refinishing furniture, rushing and caning chairs. It was during this time Mary Lou enjoyed working her magic on antiques and collectibles. In addition, she started a side business of painting pet portraits. One of her best works was a painting of a cat for a Hollywood legend, Lurenne Tuttle. In addition, with her husband by her side, the two of them were active in the Maumee Civic Theater and later, The Waterville Playshop. Mary Lou will be remembered for her many comic roles.

Mary Lou has been an active volunteer at St. Luke's Hospital for over 13 years. She has been involved at St. Paul's Episcopal Church as a church schoolteacher, vestry member, altar guild and an acolyte. In addition, she volunteered her time with the rummage sales. She also volunteered with the American Cancer Society in the "Reach for Recovery", a program for breast cancer survivors. Along with all these activities and duties, Mary Lou managed to open up her home to area-wide teens after football games for 10 years. She became known as "Mom" Huffman to many local youths.

The family will receive friends at the **Maison-Dardenne-Walker Funeral Home**, Maumee, on Sunday from 3-8 p.m. Funeral services will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Elizabeth and Wayne Streets, Maumee, on Monday, February 3, 2003, at 12 Noon. Private burial will take place at Riverside Cemetery at a later date. Persons may contribute to St. Paul's Episcopal Church or a charity of their choice. The family would especially like to thank the Monclova Paramedics; the warm staff at St. Luke's Hospital and numerous caring friends.

Area Deaths