



## Norma Joan Wood

July 10, 1928 - May 26, 2025

ADRIAN- Norma Joan Wood was born to Gladys and Herbert Matthay on July 10, 1928, in Greenville, Pennsylvania. Her big sister was named Corrine. Norma's earliest memory was sitting in a patch of sunshine on the living room floor of that house, looking up into the eyes of a beautiful woman lying on the couch. Her dark eyes smiled down at Norma, radiating such love that Norma felt it penetrating deeply into her heart, spreading throughout her entire body and warming her like the sun shining through the window. She remembered feeling completely loved, and although no words were exchanged, there was a clear understanding that this love was mutual. The woman gazing at her was her dying mother, who passed away when little Norma was just three years old.

Losing her mother at such a young age gave Norma a profound and lasting understanding of mortality. She lived her life with an awareness of how ephemeral and rich life is, and encouraged those around her to listen to their truth and act on their passions, recognizing that we are all impermanent. When Norma was 5 yrs old her father married Arlene. Arlene loved Norma and Corrine and was a wonderful mother to them. She gardened, cooked, canned, cleaned, sewed all their clothes and took care of them when they were sick. A few years later when Norma was 7 yrs old, her sister, Pat, was born and her brother, Herb came along when Norma was 16 yrs old. She loved and helped care for them as they grew up.

Norma met her delightful and devoted husband, Wilson Flann Wood, in Greenville while attending Thiel College in 1947. Introduced by his brother, Harry, they were married in 1948. Until their last days together, they treated one another with reverence and respect. During their final years living on Maple Street, they could be seen walking hand in hand into the sunset. In Bill's last days, Norma gently climbed into bed next to him to cuddle with him before his passing in 2022. Their sweet relationship served as a strong and stable example of an excellent, healthy partnership for generations to come.

They lived in numerous homes across various cities during their 74-year marriage, often relocating wherever Bill's work took them. Norma supported Bill through seminary school and his long career as a Presbyterian minister. Although she did not particularly enjoy the expectations placed on a minister's wife, she found many ways to share her gifts with the congregations they served. In addition to her passion for Bill, she was enthusiastic about peacemaking. She led peacemaking groups in the church and advocated for cultural partnerships, organizing projects such as folding 1,000 paper cranes to send to the Peace Park in Hiroshima, Japan. Together, she and Bill welcomed several international exchange students into their home. These students affectionately referred to them as "Mom and Dad." They often visited them and were visited by them around the globe throughout their lives. Norma also had a lovely alto voice. She sang in the church choir and in community choirs, including the Lenawee Community Chorus. She was dedicated to fostering a sense of community and devoted her time and energy to nurturing the caring friendships that she and Bill cherished across several decades.

The young couple welcomed their daughter, Patricia, into the world in 1951 and added their son, Jeff, to the family nine years later. Their family life was filled with love, music, and adventure. They traveled across the United States, often visiting national parks, where they hiked and camped, ending their

nights by singing together and telling stories around the campfire while roasting marshmallows. When Bill retired, the two of them moved to Adrian, Michigan to live near Patty and her husband Bob Gray and their five children.

While Norma never gained confidence in baking the perfect pie crust—she often recounted a story about throwing a ball of dough against the kitchen wall in frustration—she mastered many other domestic arts and was incredibly creative in her own right. Her kitchen always steamed with the aroma of delicious food filling the air. Chicken and dumplings, homemade macaroni and cheese, grilled cheese sandwiches, and tomato soup, along with scrumptious cinnamon bread... she was constantly preparing comforting meals to lovingly serve her family. For many years, every Tuesday night, she treated her family to breakfast for dinner; waffles and pancakes, sausage and the like, always followed by root beer floats for dessert. She was also a fantastic seamstress and knitter; she made many of her children's and grandchildren's clothes, including wedding and prom dresses, and knit incredible, imaginative sweaters that have been passed down over several generations.

She had a profound love for children. Regardless of which home she lived in, she consistently created delightful play spaces for the children in her life, especially her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She set out vibrant watercolors and creamy paper, along with scissors, string, and old National Geographic magazines for collages. She arranged dress-up clothes and toys (everyone who played was referred to as Mr. and Mrs. McGillicuty) and felt thrilled when a child offered her a pretend ice cream cone or asked to put on a play for her. She took long trips to visit her grandchildren's children and never tired of holding and singing to babies. It was a quiet joy to watch her rock her soft baby grandchildren and great-grandchildren, singing an Irish lullaby until their eyes grew heavy and they fell into a gentle rest. At the end of most days, she settled on the couch or in bed and read to the children and to herself. She

regularly participated in book groups and kept up with the world's happenings. She remained curious and caring towards the people she met, especially those she loved; she was authentic in telling people, "Oh, Dearheart, you are so smart and talented and beautiful. I hope you know how special you are."

Before she passed away in Adrian, Michigan, on May 26, 2025, Patty, Bob, and all her grandchildren, along with many of her great-grandchildren, gathered around her. They sang several of her favorite songs, including "Daisy Daisy," "Amazing Grace," and "All Night All Day." She had been residing in Charlotte Stephenson Senior Living Community, where she formed wonderful relationships with many of the caregivers and residents, who treated her with kindness and respect during her time there. She died under hospice care and was honored by many who loved her, cherished her, and will never forget her as she leaves this earth, perhaps to reunite with her dear mother, family, friends, and sweet Honey, Bill. They will welcome her and say, "Oh Dearheart, you are so smart and talented and beautiful. I hope you know how special you are." And they will be right.

Norma is survived by her sister, Pat (Warren) Roth; brother, Herb (Melodee) Mathay; daughter, Patty (Bob) Gray; grandchildren, Heather Gray, Laurel (Tim), Gray-Ganun, Catherine (John) Skinner-Gray, Matthew Gray, Beth (Marcus) Gray- Roll; and 11 great-grandchildren.

Memorial Services will be held on Thursday, June 5, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Adrian with Rev. Christopher Brundage and Dr. Scott Elliott officiating.

Memorial contributions may be made to the First Presbyterian Church or Hospice of Lenawee. Online condolences and memories may be shared at [www.WagleyFuneralHomes.com](http://www.WagleyFuneralHomes.com).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JUN 5. 2:00 PM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church  
156 E. Maumee Street  
Adrian, MI

# Tribute Wall

GA

“ *Gisela & Albert purchased the Basket of Memories for the family of Norma Joan Wood.* ”



---

**Gisela & Albert** - June 03, 2025 at 03:36 PM

FC

“ *First Presbyterian Church lit a candle in memory of Norma Wood* ”



---

**First Presbyterian Church** - June 03, 2025 at 09:08 AM