



Ruth A. Merillat

January 18, 1921 - August 19, 2020

ADRIAN – Our earthly loss is truly heaven’s gain. Ruth Alvera Merillat, co-founder of Merillat Industries, whose servant’s heart has forever benefited Lenawee County, passed in to the arms of God on August 19, 2020, from the home of her son in East Jordan. She was 99 1/2.

Born on January 18, 1921, in rural Pettisville, OH, she was one of four daughters born to the late Wilber and Edna (Leupp) Meller. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Orville Merillat, and two sisters, Evelyn Warner and Virginia Vinson.

Her legacy carries on in those left to cherish her memory, including her only son, Richard (Lynette Jacobs) Merillat; three granddaughters, Wendy R. (Craig) Lyon of Naples, FL, Collette C. Merillat of Northville, MI, and Tricia (David) McGuire of Ann Arbor, MI; great-grandchildren, Greyson Otwell, Madelyn, Jocelyn, and Nicholas Lyon, and Vaughn, StellaRose, and Evelyn Violet McGuire; and a sister, Marie (Robert) Everingham of Spring, TX.

Mrs. Merillat’s humble roots began in Fulton County, OH, where she worked on her father’s farm and graduated from Wauseon High School in 1939. She then attended beauty school. While in high school, she was introduced to her future husband, Orville Merillat, whom she married a day after her 20th birthday in 1941. Shortly after, Orville’s enlistment in the Coast Guard sent him

overseas during World War II; Ruth moved to Adrian, MI to join her mother in supporting the war effort by working in a factory for the 18 months of Orville's deployment.

Supporting her husband's entrepreneurial dream of beginning a cabinet shop, Ruth made many sacrifices and saved all the money she could during their early marriage to do so. In 1946, their dream became a reality with the construction of a modest 2,400 square foot building in Adrian. Ruth was instrumental in the day-to-day bookkeeping of their new business. Under her and Orville's leadership, Merillat Industries grew to be the largest kitchen and bathroom cabinet manufacturer in the United States, a company with 11 plants in seven states and nationwide distribution.

Ruth and Orville sold the business in 1985 to Masco Corporation; a decision not easily made, but a decision that blessed and benefited countless organizations and lives locally—and around the world—from the Merillat's philanthropic spirit. Perhaps their greatest contribution to the local community and another dream realized was their investment in founding Lenawee Christian School and the Christian Family Centre. Ruth's personal faith journey inspired her drive to foster Christian upbringings and advance the Word of God everywhere she could.

Mr. and Mrs. Merillat were longtime members of Trenton Hills United Brethren Church in Adrian. They lived by Malachi 3:10, giving a portion of everything they made to the Lords' work. They were proud benefactors of Focus on The Family in Colorado Springs, CO, Coral Ridge Ministries of Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Bixby Medical Center, Adrian College, Siena Heights University, Camp Michindoh, Huntington College, and many other organizations that shared their values.

She was the recipient of numerous local, state, and national honors, including

the Athena Award, The Salvation Army Citizen of the Year Award and the Maple Leaf Award which was given to both Ruth and Orville for their contributions to the community. She has also been recognized by Michigan Family Forum, International Society of Christian Endeavor, Lenawee Chamber of Commerce, Moody Bible Institute and Focus on the Family.

Later in life she enjoyed winters in Naples, FL at the home of her son, Richard and daughter-in-law, Lynette.

The family will receive friends while practicing responsible social distancing on Monday, August 24, 2020, from 3-8 p.m. at the Christian Family Centre (1800 US Hwy 223, Adrian). Due to COVID 19 restrictions, Ruth's funeral will be private. Live streaming of her service will begin at 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 25, 2020, via Facebook Live from the Lenawee Christian School Facebook Page. Ruth will be laid to rest beside her beloved husband in Oakwood Cemetery in Adrian. Wagley Funeral Home in Adrian is entrusted with the arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Ruth Merillat Memorial Scholarship Fund at Lenawee Christian School. Donations can be made online at www.lenawee.org/gift or via mail to LCS Advancement, 111 Wolf Creek Hwy, Adrian, MI 49221.

Following the Governor's executive order, all attendees are required to wear a proper face covering, with the exception of those under the age of five years old or those who cannot medically tolerate.

Online memories and condolences may be shared at www.WagleyFuneralHomes.com

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **24**. 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Christian Family Centre
1800 US Highway 223
Adrian, MI 49221

Tribute Wall



“ *Ruth A. Merillat*

January 28, 2023 at 12:24 PM



“ *Silvana Moghazeh lit a candle in memory of Ruth A. Merillat*



silvana moghazeh - August 19, 2021 at 04:00 AM



“ *Today is one year that my dear lady Ruth Merillat passed away , will remember her forever. God bless her soul. R.I. P.*

silvana moghazeh - August 19, 2021 at 03:59 AM



“ *I worked at LCS twenty some years ago while in college. I grew up in Adrian, and always admired Ruth and Orville's story. This is one story that is truly unique and remarkable. The gifts of their lives are ever present and are such a wonderful example. Christian or not, it is a story about humanity and an example that if we care for others and show love and concern, we will be blessed in return. The Merillat's were able to both fiscally and lovingly help others, but even those with less can make a difference with love and respect. It is a story for all of us. May they always lead those who knew of them to be better people.*

Chad Carson - August 26, 2020 at 04:25 PM

MM

“ Patti and I want to extend our condolences to Dick and his family. Ruth was such a lovely person, and we enjoyed having her as a neighbor for a while. She lived a full and inspiring life- someone we should all strive to emulate. Marinus and Patti Van Ooyen

marinus van ooyen, md - August 24, 2020 at 03:46 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Ruth A. Merillat.



August 23, 2020 at 04:58 PM

TU

“ Taylor University purchased the Your Light Shines for the family of Ruth A. Merillat.



Taylor University - August 21, 2020 at 04:04 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ruth A. Merillat.



August 21, 2020 at 10:31 AM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Ruth A. Merillat.*



August 21, 2020 at 09:35 AM



“ *I do not think I ever entered the parking lot of LCS without thinking about the amazing generosity of Mr and Mrs Merillat. Their generosity made a difference in the lives of so many children, including my own. The leadership and commitment to Godly values challenged me as a teacher and a parent. I keep thinking of the song “Thank you for giving to the Lord, I’m a life that was changed.”*

Jeanie L Thompson - August 20, 2020 at 09:17 PM



“ *Lynette and family,*

I was blessed many years to be able to assist Ruth in her endeavors when she visited the CROWN GIFT HOUSE in downtown Adrian.

I will remember the MERillat family for their generous and humble giving, letting nothing go unturned.

Rachel Bakowski

Rachel Bakowski - August 20, 2020 at 08:19 PM

CW

“ My memories of Ruth include her visits in to the Merillat Industries / Masco Cabinetry office. Her presence was warming and friendly. I also remember attending one of Ruth's birthday parties thrown by Gary & Cindy Gray at the same office. I believe it was her 92nd birthday 🎂 Ruth's love for God was contagious. Prayers and condolences to her family. ❤️

Cecelia Warrick - August 20, 2020 at 08:17 PM

LR

“ **LENAWEE COUNTY IS BETTER PLACE TODAY, BECAUSE OF RUTH AND HER HUSBAND. ONLY THE LORD KNOWS THE REACH OF GENEROSITY AND CARING THAT THEY PROVIDED TO OTHERS. THANK YOU FOR A LIFE TIME OF DOING THE LORD'S WORK.**

LOU & DONNA ROCKWOOD - August 20, 2020 at 02:41 PM