Lucille was the kind of woman who welcomed new neighbors with baked goods. She made detailed photo albums, volunteered in the community, and knew the proper outfit for every occasion. But more than these things, Lucille was a loving friend, mother, and wife. She was a woman people weren’t just proud to know, they were thankful to know her, too.

Lucille was born to Leonard and Susan (Campbell) Damskey in Mandan, North Dakota, on December 23, 1926. During her early years, Lucille was pretty much the only girl around. With two brothers, Leo and Walter, as well as a neighborhood full of little boys, “Celie” quickly became just “one of the guys.” In fact, Lucille was a regular tomboy. She played sandlot baseball and even when the North Dakota winters were at their coldest, she ice-skated every night on the city rink. Leo recalls wild rides clinging to a toboggan with Lucille, Walter, and their dad, as Lucille’s mother roared down a frozen river, the toboggan hitched to the family car’s bumper.

But things in North Dakota changed one day, when Lucille learned that her uncle had died. Lucille’s father announced that the family would be moving from North Dakota to Michigan, to be closer to Lucille’s widowed aunt. Lucille began her final year of high school in Muskegon, Michigan. She made friends quickly in the band, where she played clarinet. After graduation, Lucille worked as a secretary at Continental Motors and for Mr. TenBrink, a superintendent of schools in Muskegon County. Lucille eventually met a handsome young man named Edward J. (Bud) Meier. They married on June 19, 1948, when Lucille was 21 years old.

A woman of her times, Lucille took up a “career” raising seven children: Michael, Barbara, Christopher, Jeffrey, Brian, Eric, and Suzanne. Lucille transferred her organizational skills from the office to the home. Lucille meticulously recorded each family trip, and labeled every photo with place and date, no exceptions. She charted cleaning assignments weekly so that none of the children could complain about having the hardest room to clean.

Lucille was involved in Home and School Association at St. Joseph’s School, Mercy Guild, Amdoes, an auxiliary of American Business Club (AMBUCS) to which Bud belonged, Jaycees, CAM Club and Town Club, two dinner dance organizations. She and Bud held West Shore Symphony and Community Concerts season tickets for many years.

She volunteered at the Nearly New Shop for Greater Muskegon Service League, Nims Neighborhood Association and was in golf, bowling and tennis leagues.
The years passed all too quickly, with Lucille hanging laundry outdoors, patching jeans, darning lots of socks and carting children to school, and to doctor and dental appointments—notifying Bud whenever there was an emergency requiring his presence. And while Lucille was busy with cooking and cleaning, volunteering or bridge, on many hot summer afternoons she would take the children to Elks Park for a swim. Bud would meet them after work, and the whole family would enjoy a lovely picnic supper.

Lucille was one who formed lasting friendships easily. A close friend in North Dakota, Gloria Feickert, maintained ties to Lucille even after the Damskeys had moved to Michigan. Likewise, Lucille’s network of Michigan friends was close, and included neighbors Nancy Pearcy and Lillian Barton, fellow volunteers and auxiliary members, church friends, relatives, bridge club and dance club friends, swim class members and sports partners. Lucille was a real people person, always willing to be wherever she needed to be. For instance, Lucille never failed to prepare her “funeral casserole” for bereaved families.

Some of Lucille’s best moments were small, yet wonderful. Like when the children in their beds would hear her laughter from downstairs, in response to the Tonight Show monologue or cocktail party jokes. Regardless, her children remember the wonderful sound of their mother’s laughter, and the way it carried through every room in the house. As for cooking, Lucille was known for her creativity. Nearly every new dish was deemed “a winner;” however, that was not the case with her infamous prune whip. Apparently, Bud escaped trying this concoction by insisting, “I’m not hungry for desert tonight.” Likewise, Chris’s portion miraculously “disappeared” after he took it into the next room, where the dog just happened to be. (“All I know is the dog was sick that night,” Brian said.) The rest of the kids weren’t so lucky. Lucille insisted they finished their prune whip. Finally, everyone choked it down and escaped to a school skating party. Lucille took note and never fixed prune whip again.

The Meier children had an appreciation for art and music thanks to Lucille. There was a new rental painting over the mantel each month. Sometimes the children even helped pick it out at the Muskegon Museum of Art, where Lucille later volunteered her skills in the office. Lucille gave the children a piano, other instruments, and lessons - and took them to plays and musicals. In the summer the children ran around McGraft Park while Lucille and Bud listened to summer concerts. And at home, particularly on Sunday afternoons, there was always a record on the hi fi. “Seems like we sang along with Mitch Miller every Sunday after Mass,” remembers Barb. Of course, the kids weren’t always so appreciative of their musical exposure.

Once, Brian, Janie, Jennifer and Stephen giggled through an entire concert given by the Celebration
Singers, a group in which Lucille sang for over 20 years. Brian insisted that “Gloria in excelsis Deo” really meant “Gloria with the day-old eggshells,” and there was just no holding back the laughter after that.

Lucille kept herself busy with family and community, always taking time to enjoy the people she was with. Even as clouded memory and cancer deleted her number of activities one-by-one, Lucille retained moments of quick wit and laughter. Her family is very thankful that caretaker Char Barnes came into Lucille’s life in 2005, introducing her to Red Hat Ladies and shopping sprees and word-play jokes. Lucille’s family also expresses its thanks to caretaker Nancy Perri, who connected with Lucille these last few months, tending to her needs in such an excellent manner.

Lucille will be remembered for many things: her laughter, the kindness she showed toward all people, her gift for showing life’s skills and joys to others, and perhaps most of all, her success in living such a full life.

Lucille M. Meier, age 79, died Wednesday, December 6, 2006. Lucille is survived by her husband, Edward J. (Bud); children: Michael Meier of Palo Alto, CA; Barbara (Douglas) Aardema of Whitehall; Chris Meier of Tarpon Springs, FL; Jeff (J. Hillery) Meier of Denver, CO; Brian (Janie) Meier of Muskegon; Eric (Susan) Meier of Rocklin, CA; Suzanne (Leo) Szost of Muskegon; 17 grandchildren: Gaelen, Brendan and Katie Meier; Megan and Nathan Aardema; Lacie Boehm, Nick (Anastasia) Meier; Stevie, Brittany and Alex Meier; Stephen (Jessica) Meier, Jennifer (Bernie) Brown; Stefanie (Marc) Hiatt, Michelle Meier; Josh, Jeremy and Ryan Szost. Seven great-grandchildren: Jayden and Evan Hiatt; Atticus, Penelope and Gordon Boehm; Caleb and Andrew Brown. Two brothers: Walter (Frances) Damskey of Grand Rapids, Leo Damskey of Lathrop Village, MI.

Funeral services for Lucille will be held Monday, December 11, 2006 at 11 a.m., at St. Michael’s Catholic Church with Fr. Phillip Witkowski officiating. Friends and family may visit with Lucille’s family Sunday, December 10 from 3-6 PM, at the Clock Life Story Funeral Home - Muskegon, with a Scripture Service at 4 PM. Memorial donations can be made in Lucille’s memory to the Alzheimer’s Association. Please visit www.lifestorynet.com to leave a memory or sign the online guest book.