Marilyn Ingersoll was a very special woman who dedicated her life to her family. Always caring and thoughtful, she found great happiness in the simple pleasures in life. In every word and deed, Marilyn shared her love with her family, the people who brought extraordinary joy into her life.

1925 found the country right in the middle of the Roaring Twenties. For those living in big cities, it was a time of flappers and speakeasies. Yet, those living in small mid-western towns, it was a time of hard work and raising families. Russell and Grace (Martin) Cavanaugh lived in the city of Kalamazoo, Michigan, where Russell worked as an insurance agent for John Hancock Life Insurance. Already the proud parents of a son, on March 22, 1925, the couple welcomed the birth of a beautiful daughter they named Marilyn. The family would eventually grow to include three more boys, a set of which were twins.

Marilyn grew up in Kalamazoo, and went on to graduate from Kalamazoo Central High School in 1943. She was on her high school's reunion committee for many years. Marilyn's life took a new direction when she met Russell Ingersoll and they fell in love. The two eloped to Indiana to be married, and settled in Richland, Michigan, where they started a family right away. Sadly, their firstborn, son Billy, accidentally died at the age of seven weeks, but they were blessed with five more children. Marilyn was a consummate stay-at-home mom, though she did various odd jobs to help put food on her family's table. One of these jobs was baking and selling bread out of her home.

Every morning at 4 a.m., she would be in the kitchen baking, and throughout the day people would stop by to buy a fresh loaf for 25 cents. Around the holidays, Marilyn added cookies and other items to be sold. Over the years, Marilyn never took the time to learn to drive, but amazingly, she delivered newspapers for 18 years. When her kids were old enough to drive, they took her around.

Marilyn was a very devoted and loving mother. She made sure her children were always well cared for and even though she didn't drive, she found ways to get to their sports activities, especially baseball games. Marilyn was a wonderful cook, and many of her kids’ friends would come over just to eat. Her generous spirit also overflowed to those other than her
family as she volunteered to teach handicapped children to bowl. She was a big bowler herself and had been to several bowling tournaments. In fact, Marilyn taught her kids to bowl so well they all went to the 1970 state championship. In 1973, Marilyn and Russell’s marriage ended in divorce. To make ends meet, Marilyn went to work at Miller Boerman, a sporting goods store downtown, as a bookkeeper for about six years. During this time she also moved back to her hometown of Kalamazoo in 1976, and later settled in the Heritage Community.

Family was the cornerstone of Marilyn’s life, and she was proud of her Irish heritage, and made sure that their family traditions were carried on. Over the years, Marilyn organized many family reunions and holiday get togethers, particularly when it came to the Christmas holiday. She was in her glory when surrounded by family and friends - in fact “the more the merrier.” Marilyn was always very close with her brothers, and they all doted on their only sister, helping her in any way they could. About a year and a half ago, Marilyn was reunited with her niece, Margaret Burns, who was a retired RN of 25 years. Margaret not only became her loving caregiver, but also an advocate and dear friend.

Marilyn had many hobbies and interests. First and foremost, she was a HUGE Detroit Tigers fan, and had kept the box score of every game for over 40 years. Whenever possible, Marilyn would head to a game, glove in hand and a head set in the other, making sure she heard every detail of the game. At home, she would listen to the game on the radio and have it on TV, and when they scored a big play, she banged on the wall, sharing her excitement with her neighbors. Although she pretty much knew the stats of every player, Marilyn had a few favorites too, like Storming Norman Cash, and more recently Inge, the third baseman. Another favorite activity of Marilyn’s was playing the slots; she would sit for hours pulling on those one-armed bandits. She had been to casinos in Michigan City and Traverse City, but Marilyn much preferred the glitz and glamour of Las Vegas. Although her wallet was in Vegas, her heart...
was further south in Graceland, where her idol “Elvis” came from. Some say Marilyn believed he was still alive. One could say that Marilyn was a true Elvis fanatic, all they had to do was visit her house and see the massive collection of memorabilia she had of him. Every wall was covered with Elvis clocks, figurines, mugs, dollar bills and stamps, which she was the first to buy when they came out in Kalamazoo. Even her bathroom was adorned with Elvis stuff. It was without saying that her favorite music was by Elvis, including his gospel songs. Her home was like Graceland, and many people visited her just to see if it was all true. In her quieter moments, Marilyn enjoyed listening to books on a tape, since she was legally blind for about the last six years. Her favorites were mostly Reader Digests and current events. Before going blind, Marilyn also loved to watch and feed the herd of deer that came near her home. And up until the end, Marilyn was as sharp as a tack and could remember dates and events like it was yesterday.

All who knew and loved Marilyn will treasure her memory.

Marilyn G. Ingersoll died February 24, 2007, in Kalamazoo, MI. Learn more about Marilyn, view her Life Story Film, and visit with her family and friends on Saturday, March 3, from 12:00 Noon until service time at 1:00 p.m. at the Stockbridge Ave. United Methodist Church (1009 East Stockbridge Ave.). Following the service, food and fellowship will be shared at the church hall. Marilyn was preceded in death by a brother, Ron Cavanaugh; and by her nephew, Tom Cavanaugh. Members of her family include her children: Karen (Bill) Tiller of Kalamazoo, Richard (Vickie) Ingersoll of Athens, James (Jane) Ingersoll of Augusta, Gary (Janet) Ingersoll of Kalamazoo, Brian (Dorothy) Ingersoll of Hershey; Sandy and John Brady of Indianapolis, IN; fourteen grandchildren; twenty-three great-grandchildren; three brothers: Robert, Russell (Janet) and Donald Cavanaugh all of Kalamazoo; and many nieces and nephews. Please visit www.lifestorynet.com where you may share a memory or photo of Marilyn or sign her online guest book. Memorial contributions may be made to Hospice Care of South West Michigan. Arrangements by Life Story Funeral Home-Betzler, 6080 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo, MI (375-2900).