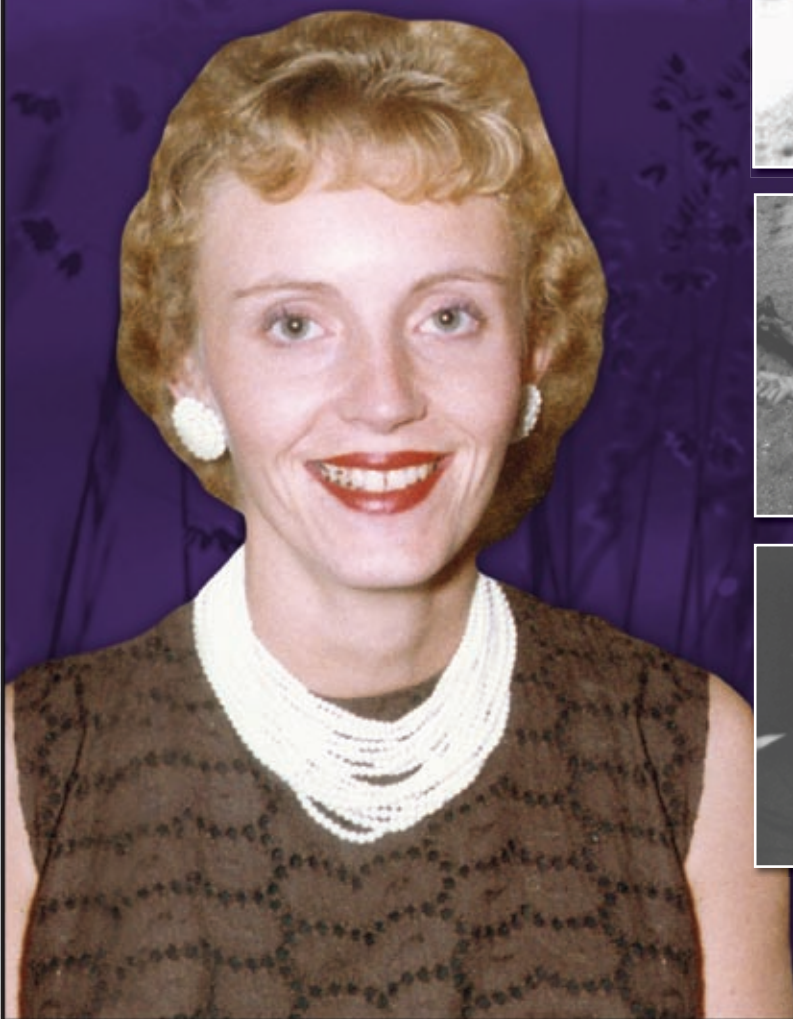


Lura Ryan

July 5, 1934 - June 27, 2011





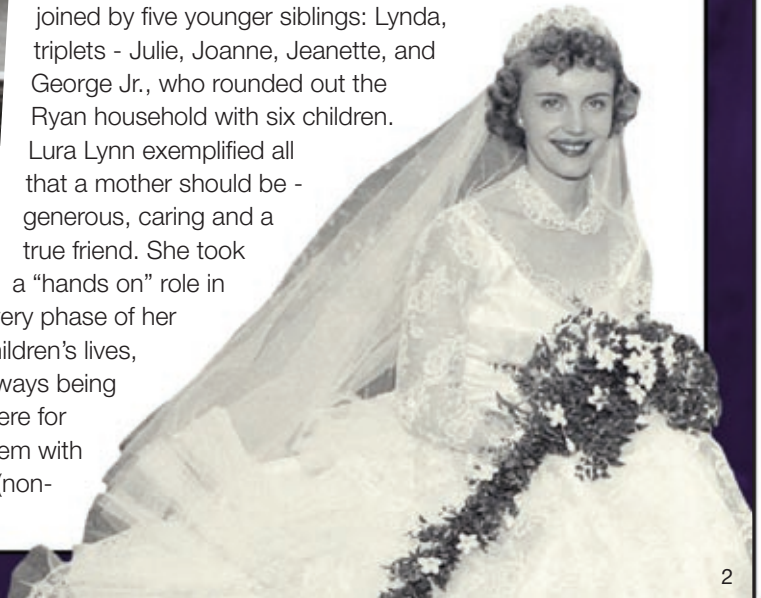
Lura's Life Story

Lura Lynn Ryan was a passionate, caring, determined woman who dedicated her life to helping others. She purposely looked for ways to give to those less fortunate, selflessly giving of her time and talents to enrich the lives of those around her. Lura Lynn faced many challenges in her lifetime, yet enjoyed so many triumphs. Her greatest triumph was found in her beloved family, who carry her unconditional love and selflessness with them today. Her life was lived as a testament to her faith, family and community and serves as an inspiration to us all.

Born on July 5, 1934, Lura Lynn Lowe grew up on the family farm in Aroma Park, Illinois, near Kankakee. Lura Lynn loved her small community in Aroma Park; it was the place she called home, and the place where she created many wonderful memories with family and friends. In later years, the town honored her with a street named after her. She received her education in the area schools, and it was during an English class in her freshman year at Kankakee High School that Lura Lynn met the future governor, George H. Ryan. As fate would have it, they fell in love and were married in 1956 in Kankakee.

Within a year, the couple welcomed the birth of their first child, daughter Nancy. She was later joined by five younger siblings: Lynda, triplets - Julie, Joanne, Jeanette, and George Jr., who rounded out the Ryan household with six children.

Lura Lynn exemplified all that a mother should be - generous, caring and a true friend. She took a "hands on" role in every phase of her children's lives, always being there for them with a (non-





judgmental) listening ear and shoulder to lean on. It wasn't usual that all the neighborhood kids would end up at their house.

Time together as a family was always very important to Lura Lynn. Every Sunday was "family day" and after a wonderful Sunday dinner together, they enjoyed watching some of their favorite programs on TV. Lura Lynn took advantage of every opportunity to keep the family together, which wasn't always an easy task. How Lura Lynn found the time and energy to do what she did is a testament to her commitment to her family.

When her husband, co-owner of Ryan's Pharmacy, won a seat on the Kankakee County Board and began a second career in politics, Lura Lynn successfully balanced the challenges of raising a growing family with the demands of public life. Throughout her life, her graciousness, kindness and lack of formality helped make anyone who met her feel comfortable and respected. Her home and heart were always open to anyone who needed her; no one was ever turned away because of their social status.



As Governor Ryan's political career advanced from local politics to the Illinois General Assembly and the offices of lieutenant governor, secretary of state and governor, Lura Lynn was able

to expand her genuine concern for others into a number of different programs to assist the troubled and less fortunate. For more than 30 years, Lura Lynn was a tireless advocate for alcohol and substance

abuse prevention, leading awareness programs in schools, as well as championing and fundraising for various treatment and assistance initiatives throughout the state. To honor her long





commitment, in the 1980s the largest collection of substance abuse prevention resources in the Midwest was dedicated as The Lura Lynn Ryan Prevention Library, which is housed at the offices of Prevention First in Chicago. Lura Lynn received numerous honors for her work in substance abuse prevention, including the McDermott Humanitarian Award, the TASC Leadership Award and special recognition from the Hopedale Medical Complex and the Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. She served for many years on the Board of Directors for the Ronald McDonald House charities of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana.

As First Lady, Lura Lynn created and led “Futures for Kids,” a multi-faceted initiative designed to bring together for the first time a wide range of experts to create an integrated, statewide program to help children and families succeed on a number of levels. Futures for Kids focused not only on substance abuse prevention, but child safety and juvenile justice; and support and assistance for children and young adults, including preschool, after-school and academic excellence programs.

Lura Lynn was passionate about history and the arts and crafts native to Illinois. She coordinated efforts to preserve the tradition of quilt making in Illinois through the publication of a book, “History from the Heart: Quilt Paths Across Illinois.” She created new interest and markets for arts and crafts through the establishment of the Artisans’ Village at the Illinois State Fair and the first-ever “Made in Illinois” catalogue, a guide to native artisans that combined their talents with descriptions of Illinois’

many historic sites and tourist attractions.

Lura Lynn also coordinated and co-wrote the book “At Home with Illinois’ Governors: A Social History of the Illinois Executive Mansion, 1855-2003.”

In addition, Lura Lynn served as chair of the Board of Directors of Springfield’s Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum during its formative years and helped secure the financing necessary to build a world-class museum dedicated to the nation’s 16th president. With her



love of children, Lura Lynn spearheaded the creation of “Mrs. Lincoln’s attic,” a kid-friendly room at the museum where children can play period games, dress in clothing of the



1800s and learn about life during the Civil War. She also served as a member of the national Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, which was established by Congress to lead the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the president’s birth. A person of deep faith and unbridled optimism, Mrs. Ryan was a member of the United Methodist Church and numerous charitable organizations.



Although Lura Lynn championed many worthy causes, her greatest happiness was found in her beloved family. She may have been known as “mom” to lots of people, yet only a select few affectionately knew her as “Guppy.” A proud and doting grandmother, Lura Lynn



poured so much love and attention into her relationships with her grandchildren as she did with her own kids. With Guppy around, the grandkids could get away with just about anything, and if scolded by their parents, they in turn were comforted by Guppy. Throughout her life, Lura Lynn considered her family to be her greatest gift and blessing, however, there were a few things that Lura Lynn was passionate about, like being a huge Chicago Bulls fan and an admirer of Frank Sinatra (who she actually met once) and Bing Crosby.

Knowing the value of humility, honesty and sincere generosity is the only way to know the person and life of Lura Lynn Ryan. She touched many lives and will be remembered in the hearts of them all.

Lura Lynn Ryan, the former First Lady of Illinois and a champion of children and the disadvantaged, surrendered her spirit to God



on Monday, June 27, 2011, at Riverside Medical Center after a long illness. She was surrounded by her loving family at the time of her death. Lura Lynn Ryan is survived by her loving husband, George; a sister, Patti Lewis (Thom); six children: Nancy Coghlan, (John), Lynda Fairman, (Mike),

Julie Koehl, (Jeff), Joanne Barrow, Jeanette Schneider (Jim), and George, Jr. (Amy); and 17 grandchildren: Michael, Kristin and Kathryn Pignotti; Mackenzie Fairman; John, Ann, Mary Cate, Nora and Elizabeth Coghlan; Lauren, Alex and Molly Koehl; Andrea and Nicholas Barrow; Dominique Ahramovich (Bubba); and Tyler and Elizabeth Davis.

A time to gather and share memories will be held on Friday, July 1, from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at the Kankakee Chapel of the Schreffler Life Story Funeral Home, 1900 W. Court Street, Kankakee, IL (815-932-2421).

The Ryan family requests in lieu of flowers, please make memorial contributions to:

Lura Lynn Ryan Charitable Trust. To leave a special memory, share a special photo and/or view Mrs. Ryan's video tribute, please visit her personal memory page at www.SchrefflerFuneralHome.com.



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