

Lucille M. Ramstad ^{GHR}
7-20-2020

Lucille M. Ramstad, formerly of Grinnell, died Wednesday, July 15, at her home in the Willows memory care wing of Vernon Terrace senior apartments in Edina, Minn.

She was 91 and died of causes related to progressive dementia, which affected her for nine years. Even as the illness robbed her of short-term memory, her essential character remained - willfully independent, quick to smile and attentive to others. In the last three years in memory care, Lucy became a ringleader among fellow residents, assessing who needed more coffee or dessert at meals, supplies during a group activity or an ear to bend in a moment of distress.



A bookkeeper and secretary professionally, Lucy is best remembered in Grinnell for many years of work in the 1970s and 1980s as office manager and coordinator for optometrist Dr. Duane Ly Town. She also worked in sales jobs at the Ross' fashion store and Forbes Office Supply.

Her husband, the Rev. Philip J. Ramstad, was pastor of United Church of Christ - Congregational, now known as Grinnell UCC, from 1974 to 1988. The couple met and married in Pittsburgh in 1962 and lived in Hartford, Conn., and Akron, Ohio, before moving to Grinnell. They left Grinnell in 1988 for Phil's final pastorate at a church in East Lansing, Mich. They retired to the Twin Cities in 1994. Phil died in May 2017 at age 87.

Lucy was born in Dell Rapids, S.D., daughter of Ernest and Clara Mortvedt, and grew up on the family farm. She was the oldest of seven children and, for several years in elementary school, attended a one-room country school. She graduated from Dell Rapids High School in 1946 and enrolled in what was then South Dakota State College, aiming to become a teacher. There, she earned an associate degree in home economics and met and married Joseph E. Baker. The couple moved to Pittsburgh and had three sons, Jeff, David and Greg, before they divorced in 1955. After she met and married Phil, they had a son, Evan, and a daughter, Kari.

Throughout her career, Lucy volunteered for, or was recruited to, numerous church, healthcare and other service organizations. In Grinnell, she was a volunteer at Grinnell General Hospital, member of PEO and served on several boards of the Iowa conference of the United Church of Christ. Along with their friend Mary Lou Clotfelter, Lucy and Phil were the organizing founders of Grinnell Regional Hospice. In retirement, she volunteered at Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, Minn., and was a deacon and moderator of Chapel Hills UCC in Edina.

And everywhere she went, Lucy filled her address book and calendar with the birthdays, anniversaries and other important days of relatives, friends, parishioners and acquaintances. She wrote and sent cards and notes that arrived precisely in time to celebrate birthdays and other events. People frequently asked Phil and their children how she kept on top of it all.

She is survived by her sisters Audrey (Duane) Mortensen of Topeka, Kan., Marilyn Terwilliger of Eden Prairie, Minn., and Jeanne Steinharter of Fort Worth, Texas, brother Bob (Becky) Mortvedt of Buffalo, Minn., and brother-in-law Elmer Petersen, Galesville, Wis.; sons Jeff (Sheryle) Baker of Lutz, Fla., David (Joy) Baker of Foley, Ala., and Greg Baker of Dunedin, Fla., Evan Ramstad of St. Louis Park, Minn., and daughter Kari (Jerry) Sweeney of Eden Prairie, Minn., and six grandchildren. A virtual memorial service is planned for Aug. 1. Memorial gifts in her honor may be made to Grinnell UCC or the charity of your choice.