

Brenda Lucille McChesney Maher's Life Story

Dearest family and friends,

As some of you know, I was born in Princeton, Kentucky on January 10, 1950 to Grace (Madden) and Glen McChesney. My parents were farmers at the time of my birth. They had been automobile workers in Detroit when they met. I have two older sisters, Barbara and Glendia. A brother, John Robert, died at birth before Glendia and me.

We moved to Paw Paw, Michigan to help with my Grandmother and Grandfather Madden's farm when I was a baby. My parents always told us the story about how they brought our milk cow up with them for our bottles. Soon after, we bought a farm in Lawton.

I'll never forget that farm because that is where I took Glendia for a little ride down a hill when we were playing on Dad's tractor. Mom saved us, of course. We also had great picnics in the grape vineyards with Mom and Dad.

We moved into town (4th and Hamilton Streets) in the spring before I entered kindergarten in Lawton Community Schools. I loved being a kid and playing with the neighborhood kids, and riding my bike. We had a barn that we used as our playhouse and a swing set that was anchored with cement so that we could swing high under the walnut trees. I have wonderful memories of my childhood and walking to school in all kinds of weather. I will never forget Barb and Betty's boyfriends and later their husbands (I was the flower girl for both.) and their babies. Those "babies" were my first exposure to babysitting and loving little ones.

When I was in sixth grade in 1961, Mom and Dad bought King's Tavern and we moved to the apartment above it, bringing Grandma Madden (Ma) with us. I adjusted as most young children do. At least I did not have to change schools!

On September 30, 1963 my wonderful, loving dad passed away. That time was very difficult for me. After all, I was only thirteen and a "daddy's girl". Ma died in August of 1964 which left another void in my life.

I became involved in Brownies, Girl Scouts and The Order of Rainbow for Girls, learning a lot of leadership skills and serving them appropriately. I took baton lessons and became a majorette for the LHS band. I was also a cheerleader. One of the teachers on the selection committee said that he voted for me because I was the loudest. Can you imagine that? I also served as a class officer every year and acted in the school plays.

Not only did I graduate from Lawton High School in 1969, but I was crowned "Miss Lawton", as well. What an experience that was! I represented Lawton in the Miss Blossom Time Contest where the contestants voted me "Miss Congeniality". That meant a lot to me.

I met Michael my second year at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Believe it or not, he was my biology tutor! Little did I know that I would eventually marry him 25 years later! I graduated with an

Applied Associate's Secretarial Degree. Shakespeare's Automotive in Kalamazoo hired me as a secretary and later as a junior buyer. I stayed there for nine years.

Rick Storteboom came into my life and we were married May 23, 1978. In anticipation of starting a family, I quit Shakespeare's and became a waitress at the Red Brick Inn. Leslie Grant Storteboom was born on May 5, 1987 and arrived at the Storteboom's on July 21, 1987. She has been the light of my life! My one regret is that Leslie never really knew my mom because she died July 8, 1988 after years with Alzheimer's Disease. She was an important part of my life, but I know now that she is in a better place.

Michael came back to me as the love of my life in 1996 and has been my caring and loyal companion and devoted husband since September 21, 2000. We have had some wonderful times at our home on Southgate Drive and on Pine Lake on our pontoon. We have also shared our love of animals which is apparent with our two shelties and three cats. Besides waitressing and being with my family, I have found pleasure in cooking, sewing, gardening, making crafts, and collecting dolls and bears.

Please take the time to write a memory for my family to cherish. I do not want you, my dear friends and family, to mourn for me. Please remember that you have given me love and joy in my short lifetime. Your kindness and consideration have made my life on earth worthwhile. I hope that someday we will meet again where there is no pain or suffering, but only peace and happiness. God bless all of you. I know that God has richly blessed me by allowing me to be acquainted with amazing people that have been a part of my life.

Love always and forever,

Brenda