

Sylvia Marcella Barnhard
December 8, 1933 - April 9, 2026



Sylvia Marcella Barnhard, a longtime resident of Fruitport, Michigan, went home to be with her Lord and Savior on Thursday, April 9, 2026. Sylvia was born December 8, 1933, in Edwardsville, Illinois, to Ernest and Hattie (Grissom) Hackney.

Sylvia is survived by her children, Shelly (Dwight) Tobaison, Norman "Scott" (Cheryl) Barnhard, Mary (Dave) Vaught, Dori (Dennis) Shimer, Kathy (Scott) Gould, and Valerie Barnhard; daughter-in-law, Wanda Barnhard; bonus daughter, Robbie Stokes; 117 grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren; sister, Dorothy (Eric) Wiggin; and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ernest and Hattie Hackney; husband, Norman Barnhard; son, Doug Barnhard; her brothers and their spouses, Ernest (Jo) Hackney and Charles (Pat) Hackney.

Sylvia moved to Fruitport at the age of four, as her dad found work there during the Great Depression. Her first home in Fruitport was in a train car, in modern day Pomona Park. From there her family moved to the home she spent the rest of her childhood in; a coal shack her parents converted into a home, on 5th Avenue.

Sylvia graduated from Muskegon Heights High School. She met the love of her life, Norman Barnhard, in Fruitport. They were married on October 18, 1952. Sylvia worked as an operator for GTE. She also spent many years as the laundromat attendant in Cloverville. During the time she worked at the laundromat, she enjoyed writing articles for the Fruitport Area News. There were summers where you could find Sylvia working at the Whippi Dip (on Pontaluna Road) with many of her family members. Later in life, she could be found in the kitchen at North Ottawa Care Center, working as a cook.



Sylvia and Norm raised seven children in Fruitport on the corner of Beech Street and 6th Avenue: across from the high school. (Today, this space is the high school parking lot.) They also spent many years at their home on Farr Road. Sylvia was a playground monitor for the elementary school in Fruitport, where her children attended. It was normal to find her supporting her kids on many different athletic fields, athletic courts and watching her children perform music on the stage and in the marching band. Music was a large part of who Sylvia was, as she loved all types of music. It was a passion for her. She passed that love of music on to her children and grandchildren.

In addition to her own children, Sylvia was a bonus mom to many children that came into her life. She welcomed them into her home and treated them like one of her own. She was there for them when they needed her and loved each one of them, making them feel included and loved. It didn't matter how full her home was, there was always room for one more. One of the special bonus children, who still calls her mom, remembers moving to Michigan (across the street from Sylvia) at the age of 14. She had never had a birthday party before, and her new bonus mom and dad changed that. They threw her first birthday party and gifted her an alarm clock as a

present. The imprint she made on the people she loved has shown to be everlasting.

Sylvia loved the outdoors and was an adventurer. She loved roller skating, ice skating (especially on Spring Lake), bird watching, scenic drives to Lake Michigan, swimming (she loved the old swimming hole), rock hunting, thunderstorms and the deer woods. She hunted with her family during bow and rifle season. She spent many summers as the pool monitor at Apple Carr Trailer Park. She loved being in the sunshine! Above all these things, she loved sharing Jesus Christ with others. She attended Bethel Baptist Church in Fruitport. In her last days on earth, she would lift her hands in worship as her family sat near and sang to her.

It gave Sylvia great joy to spend time with her 117 grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. She had a special way of making each one feel like her favorite. She had the uncanny ability to make an ordinary day into an adventure; even if it left her covered in mud or knocked down by a big wave in the lake.

Sylvia leaves behind a legacy full of love for her children and grandchildren. Spending time with her left you with a heart full of love, laughter, and a belly full of food. She had a servant's heart that will be treasured. Most importantly, the legacy she leaves is the way she loved her Lord and Savior. She will be remembered for her heart for Jesus, the way she shared the gospel with others, and how she left this earth worshipping the Lord until her last breath.

Neighborhood News
from Wash King Laundermat

Hts. Ravenna Rd.

by Sylvia Barnhard circa 1983

June, the month for weddings, brings several anniversaries to our attention. Mr. and Mrs. George Royce celebrated their anniversary on June 28. Congratulations on your 54th year together! We also send best wishes to Juanita and Dan Nulf on their anniversary which was June, 27th. Another celebration was on June 29th, with the 20th anniversary of Don and Sally LaFave. Congratulations to all of you June brides, past and present!

A big "thank you" is being sent out to Mr. and Mrs. Maycroft, from all the members and their families, of the Maycroft Square Tappers, for the opportunity to attend the National Convention in Kentucky. One of our younger friends here at the laundromat, Shawn LaFave, and her mom, Sally, were very impressed with the convention and said they had a great time. There were 100 participants from the Muskegon area performing, along with many other groups from around the country. They were well received by the audience, receiving two standing ovations. The convention was held June 23-25 in Louisville, Kentucky. The Tappers were treated with a big pool side party at the Holiday Inn the night before they left. The Tappers received the honor of being invited back next year so it appears they did a great job. Congratulations to all of you.

We have another gram here, Grandma Rudisil brings news about her latest little grandchild. Joyce and Don Marrow, formerly of the Cloverville area, now residing in Texas, are parents of a little girl, Cindy Marie, born May 7, 1983. Gram is passing the pictures around and keeping us informed on all the details. Could be she's kind of proud of that little gal, maybe??

Grandma Hackney (Hattie) is celebrating her 75th birthday, July 2. She will be attending Bill Knapps for her birthday cake along with her great-granddaughter, 2-year-old Erin Elizabeth Tobaison, who will also be celebrating her birthday, July 2. Happy Birthday, Mom and Erin!

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Editor Comment:

The Baxters are serving in a dangerous part of the world, at their own expense. A financial donation to them of any amount would be encouraging and appreciated.

Sub Sale

Taking Orders
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Under-Roof Yard Sale

May 29 - 30

First Congregational Church

3212 Pontaluna Road ~ Fruitport
 (just across from Edgewood Elementary School)

Questions? Directions?
 Please call (231) 288-9873