



Bernhild Therese Corley

Born: April 18, 1940

Died: November 24, 2014

Bernhild Therese (Gest) Corley held her husband's (Franklin Pierce Corley) hand as he lay dying in a hospital bed, about to go and see his youngest daughter, and his oldest son, again, on November 18, 2014. My mother was now completely brokenhearted. The love of her life, for 55 years, was gone. She wanted to go with him. She finally, reached out her hand to him, and he took it. Her youngest daughter, Daniela Irene, was with Dad to greet her. There is no more pain. She left this life to be with him on 24 November 2014.

Bernhild Therese Corley, was born April 18th, 1940, in Munich, Germany to Hans and Anni (Kroiss) Gest. Bernhild was the apple of her father's eye and there are numerous pictures to show how enamored of her that he was. She was his "Schneckli." From working out in their little garden, to playing on the porch, Hans Gest, a German Luftwaffe pilot, showed his soft spot to his little Bernhild. She was devastated when he was reported missing in late 1943, having been shot down over Kiev, The Ukraine.

Following the War, Bernhild did her best to help her mother, Anni, keep the family together. It molded Bernhild into being a very independent, strong woman. People in Munich were relieved that it was the Americans, and not the Soviets, who had occupied Munich. It helped West Germany, and Munich in particular, recover much more quickly. She would recount how kind the American Soldiers were to the citizens of then-West Germany. In her late teens, she would meet a Soldier, Franklin Pierce Corley, and he would steal her heart, convincing her to come to the States and make a life with him, which she did in 1959, marrying him on November 5, 1959.

From that union came five children: Krimhild, 54, Havre, MT, who survives her and gave Bernhild and Frank six, beautiful grandchildren (Cletus Knowles, III; Athesia Lassel, Pierce Knowles, Daniela Watkins (Adam), Marcus Corley; and Jaren Labbe). Then there is Maximilian, 49 and Anna, a retired lieutenant colonel residing in Texas, now working for the Texas Department of Public Safety. Bernhild suffered through the death of not one, but two children: Franklin Johann, who died in infancy; and Daniela Irene, who died in 1981 after

being struck by a truck, waiting for the school bus. Bernhild took the death of Daniela especially hard, never fully recovering from the incident.

While their family was growing, Bernhild followed Frank around for over 20 years, to most of his duty stations, and tolerated his volunteering for assignments to Vietnam. If anything aged her, it was these assignments overseas where she knew very little of how he was doing. She managed to keep the family together back in the states, instilling in her children independence and a strong will. Bernhild also infused her children with a love of learning and rarely allowed them to stay home from school unless they were truly ill—a mere cough would not suffice as evidence!

Though Bernhild would rarely show it, she had a very soft heart—helping those who needed it. Whether it was dinner during the holidays, or a place to stay for a while, Mom and Dad always opened their hearts and their homes to those in need.

Bernhild enjoyed breaks away from Michigan in the fall (it was the only time she could get Frank away from the restaurant!) when she and Frank went to West Virginia for a well-earned rest. They always made time to visit Daniela's and Frankie's grave, ensuring they were kept trim and neat.

In later years, Bernhild suffered from a debilitating disease that nearly cost her life then (1995). That disease, Poly-meiositis, attacked organs and the immune system and was the instigator for multiple heart attacks. That stubbornness that she is known for, however, kept her going. We think she knew Dad couldn't live without her. The first thing she always checked after getting out of the hospital was the dryer lint trap...on more than one occasion; he had not cleaned it out after doing laundry. She was routinely astounded that Frank hadn't burned the house down.

Through all of the sickness and hospital stays, Bernhild always managed to take care of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In several instances, she took her grandchildren in to raise them. For all of the steel in her back, she had a very soft heart for "her babies."

Mom was a member of the Catholic faith, and credits the faith for helping her through the grief of losing two children.

Bernhild's granddaughter, Daniela Marie, and her husband, Adam, along with their three daughters, Emily, Joscelyn, and Maygen, did a phenomenal job of taking care of Bernhild in the last several months. Mom was very fond of Adam and took him into her confidence often. A special thanks, also goes out to the caring folks at the Sanilac Medical Care Facility. Their warmth in caring for both Frank and Bernhild eases the pain a bit that her children, and grandchildren, are feeling.

So, Bernhild is at St. Peter's desk arguing with Frank. St. Peter is kicked back with a bag of popcorn watching the entertainment. Mom is telling Dad that he WILL NOT put the heat up on their cloud. Dad is tweaking her ire, by calling her "Bernie," and telling her that he will jack it up to 85-degrees! Daniela, Frankie, Hans & Anni are all laughing as well.

It is a very sad day here on earth, but it is a GLORIOUS day in Heaven. Mom & Dad are together again.

Visitation will be on November 29, 2014 from 2-8 at the MacAlpine-Gage Funeral Home in Kinde, MI.

Burial will be in the Hazelwood Cemetery, Beverly WV.