



## Mary Frances Lechman

December 15, 1937 - October 24, 2009

Mary Frances "Mefty" Lechman passed away, October 24th, with her children at her side, after a long illness. Mefty was born to parents Mildred and Francis Palmer, and was raised in West Toledo. She was the oldest of six siblings and cherished her memories of growing up with annual family trips to Oklahoma, summertime adventures around Devil's Lake, and learning to drive her 1940 Plymouth in the parking lot at Blessed Sacrament Church. She loved the laughter and fun that she shared with her siblings and friends from the Palmer family's neighborhood growing up in the 1940s and 1950s. She attended Central Catholic High School and The University of Toledo, and was a member of the Alpha Chi Omega sorority. Mefty fell in love while at UT and decided to marry and to be a full-time Mom until her children were all in school. She made many friends over the years, and kept those friends once made. She stayed close with her childhood and high school friends, who always remained in each other's lives. She played piano in her younger years and later discovered a love for writing, especially poetry. A natural leader, Mefty enjoyed people and they were often drawn to her, inspired to help her with her endeavors and be involved in her life. She enjoyed her children and her grandchildren above all else, and included them in all that she did. Mefty was always thankful for the opportunity to work in fundraising and development, first at The Toledo Hospital, and then at the former Medical College of Ohio. Mefty was the Regional Director of Children's Miracle Network in Northwest Ohio for 17 years, retiring in December 2002. During that time she worked tirelessly to raise money and awareness for pediatric services at the Medical College of Ohio, and in later years, Mercy Children's Hospital. She developed many fund raising events including: the Fifth Third Bank Brighten a Child's Life campaign, The Great Maumee River Duck Race, Chip in For Kids Golf Tournament, and Dance Marathons at BGSU and UT, helping grow the BGSU Dance Marathon to the third largest in the United States. Mefty also produced the annual Children's Miracle Network Broadcast. In her career, Mefty raised more than 8 million dollars to fund pediatric services in Northwest Ohio. Rather than simply raising funds, Mefty was an inspirational influence on the patients, families, sponsors, doctors, and nurses she came in contact with due to her caring nature, generosity of spirit, and her genuine love for the children that she met along the way. In the time she spent with patients and their families, often on evenings and weekends, she forged very close bonds

with them, sharing pain and joy, miracles and grief. Mefty gave support and hope to many parents as they experienced the burden of a sick or injured child. These families drew strength from Mefty and in turn gave of themselves to assist in her fundraising campaigns. The involvement of these families brought true meaning to her and her donors, and helped develop long lasting relationships in the community. Everyone who witnessed the bond between Mefty and the families that benefited from her efforts was compelled to help, and compelled to share in the joy, sorrow, tears and miracles that the families experienced. Mefty was an involved member of the community and a model to professional women. She was a past president of Downtown Toledo Kiwanis, chartered in 1916. She served on the Lucas County Board of Mental Retardation, The Josina Lott Residence and Community Services board of directors, and was a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. She was a member of the board and helped develop the 101.5fm RiverTrust. Mefty received the Zonta International 2002 "Woman of Achievement" award for her enhancement of the image of women in society. In 2003, Mefty was honored as a "Women of Toledo" by the St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center Auxilliary, and inducted into the Order of the Celtic Cross by her dear alma mater, Central Catholic High School. Throughout her career, and her life, Mefty exhibited compassion, excellence, a belief in human dignity, justice, sacredness of life, and service. She was a true friend, a beloved mother and a doting grandmother. Mefty was preceded in death by her parents, and sister Therese M. Palmer. She is survived by her children, Ann C. Lechman, Marypat (James) Page and John D. Lechman; her grandchildren, Jaime and TJ Smith, great-granddaughter Lexi; sisters Peg (James) O'Hearn and Kathy Genzman and brothers Mike (Karen) Palmer and Pat (Terri) Palmer; and many nieces and nephews. She is also survived by countless friends, hundreds of "miracle" families, thousands of college students whom she inspired to find a richer experience of life through generosity of the heart, and anyone who ever joined her in her fight to brighten the lives of sick and injured children in Northwest Ohio. Family and friends are invited to visit from 2-8 p.m. Wednesday and 2-8 p.m. Thursday, in the Ansberg-West Funeral Home, 3000 Sylvania Avenue, where the rosary will be recited at 7 p.m. Thursday. Prayers will begin at 10:30 a.m. Friday, from the funeral home, followed by the Mass of Christian Burial at 11 a.m., in Blessed Sacrament Church. Father P. Martin Donnelly will officiate. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations, in Mefty's memory, be made to the Mefty Lechman Miracle Fund, which will be used to establish a foundation to continue her mission. The family would like to thank Kingston Care Center of Sylvania and Heartland Hospice for the compassionate care that she received.

# Comments

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“ Mefty, You will always be remembered for the compassion and caring heart that touched so many of us. The numerous CMN children events each year, leading up to the telethon, are still wonderful memories for me. Much Love!! John, Our sincere thoughts and prayers go out to you and your family. Your mom was a wonderful fun-loving person...I truly enjoyed working with her for all those years...She will certainly be missed. My Very Best...Ken

Ken & Julie Reiner - kreiner@newporttv.com kreiner@newporttv.com - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ Dear Palmer and Lechman Family, my deepest sympathies are with you over the loss of your wonderful Mefty. I was amazed to read of all she accomplished with her efforts and talents, truly wonderful! How lucky you all were to have had her in your lives... Warm regards, Marlene T. Dantzer

Marlene Dantzer - mdantzerdesign@aol.com mdantzerdesign@aol.com - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ Mefty was an insiration to many students, faculty and staff at BGSU. Her tireless efforts "for the kids" resulted in the phenomenal growth of BGSU Dance Marathon and the impact it has on the campus and the NW Ohio community. Mefty truly made a difference in the lives of everyone that she worked with. I am honored to have known her and experienced her passion for her work and service. She was an inspiration to many and the Mefty Lechman Miracle Fund will allow her service to continue.

Ute Lowery - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ God Bless you, Mefty! You truly left an impact on this Earth and in our lives. BGSU Dance Marathon would not be if it weren't for you and your passion for life. I am comforted in knowing that you are with Christ!!

David Humphrey - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ Kathy, Pat, Terri and the whole family- I am so sorry to read of the loss of your sister Mefty. I grew up hearing about her and what fun she was from my mother Barbara. I had the pleasure of meeting her at Art on the Mall a while back and had a lovely conversation with her. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

**Jennifer Sahley Conrad** - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ I'll remember many wonderful college days with Mefty. Nobody else could laugh the way she could-her laughter was priceless! My sincere condolences to the entire family.

**Barbara Haddad Sahley** - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ It is with sadness that I learn of Mifty's death but also with a sense of joy as I recall the wonderful times when she and I worked together at Toledo Hospital in the Development Office. Mefty was one of the most creative women I have known and was instrumental in making the first major fundraiser - The Event - a success for the hospital and it's auxiliary. I extend my condolences to the family. Alice Weber

**Alice H. Weber** - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ Good bye, Old Friend.. You were one of a kind and will be badly missed by all of your friends and those whom you helped in your lifetime. Pat

**Pat Mallory** - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ John, I am so sorry to hear of the loss that your family has suffered. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time.

**Michelle Isaacs - Michelle\_Isaacs@mhsnr.org Michelle\_Isaacs@mhsnr.org** - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ To John and your family, Mefty was dear to my heart - she worked closely with me to start our Agency Newsletter at Josina Lott which was many many years ago. The newsletter still exists today so when you look at it, you can be proud, that this was just one of many accomplishments that your mom gave to the community. My sincere sympathy to you and your family, she will be remembered for many years to come. Patty Schlosser, Associate Director, Josina Lott Residential and Community Services.

**Patty Schlosser** - [pschlosser@josinalott.org](mailto:pschlosser@josinalott.org) [pschlosser@josinalott.org](mailto:pschlosser@josinalott.org) - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ Ann, Marypat, and John: I'm so glad I had the chance to get to know your mom and spend time with her. I will miss her, but I know that she will live on in each of you. With love, sympathy, & prayers,

**Karen Colombo** - February 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM