



# 2010

## Lorna (McDonald) Ameel



Lorna Ameel was a visionary who clearly understood the plight of Catholic schools in the 1960s and 1970s. She was among the stalwart leaders who stood shoulder to shoulder, unwilling to acquiesce in the demise of the 100 year tradition of Catholic education in the Grand Traverse community.

Lorna graduated from Dominican High School in Detroit in 1945 and attended college at St. Mary of Notre Dame. In 1949, Lorna and J. Paul Ameel began a marriage of lifelong devotion. They moved to Traverse City in 1956 and with great ethics grew a small business into the successful Ameel Distributing Company.

With a growing family, the Ameels worked hard to provide a broad experience for every child in the Catholic schools. They promoted band, music, art, and drama. They were volunteers for track, football, and athletic boosters. Lorna was a PTA officer and a forty-two year volunteer with Father Fred and his foundation.

In 1964, the Detroit Free Press named Paul, Lorna, and their ten children "The Skiing Family of Michigan." They had organized, furnished the equipment, and helped coach the St. Francis expanded ski program. Their efforts and hours of dedication helped achieve the school's first state ski championship in 1968.

In November 1966, Lorna was elected to the first Immaculate Conception board of education. Unshaken in her faith in the schools, she used her exceptional energy, talents, and down-to-earth reasoning in advocating for the consolidation of the parish schools. After years of study and debate, members of the two school boards prayed together at a private Mass in the Holy Angels Convent. Lorna has always believed that it was then that the Holy Spirit intervened and directed them to make the decision to unite under one school system.

On April 15, 1969 the Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools consolidated. She was elected to the GTACS Board of Education from 1969-1975. As vice-president and president, she led the board in extraordinary efforts to keep the Catholic schools viable against all odds. Lorna decried mediocrity and insisted the schools achieve nothing less than excellence. She later represented GTACS on the Diocesan board of education.

Throughout her life and especially on her way to meetings, Lorna always prayed, "O God, by the light of Your Holy Spirit may we be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation."