

# Connie Garman

## Life Story

Connie Garman was a woman with an amazing heart. She made her family her life's work, and always acted with their interests in her heart. Connie was resourceful, creative, motivated and loyal – doing the best job she could with whatever task was at hand. Her dedicated work afforded her both a happy place in life, and a family that loved her dearly.

The 1950s were an exciting decade in our nation's history, as America strode confidently from the ashes of World War II into a new age of prosperity. It was in these times of progress that Americans discovered the proximity of the suburbs, the convenience of dishwashers and the swinging sounds of rock and roll. In Kalamazoo, Michigan, Wesley and Doris (Rethman) Smith were sharing in the excitement as they welcomed the birth of their beautiful daughter, Connie Lou, on March 14, 1959, at Bronson Methodist Hospital.

Connie was one of four children with two sisters, Diane and Lynn, and brother, Jason. She enjoyed a typical childhood of the time, growing up in Kalamazoo and attending the area schools. Just as she was starting high school, Connie and her family moved to Paw Paw, and she took her place among the student body at Paw Paw High School, where she was a pom pom girl. After graduating from Paw Paw High in 1977, Connie went to work for a while before deciding to further her education, attending Western Michigan University. A very bright young lady, Connie made the Dean's list several times during her college career and proudly graduated Summa Cum Laude with a BA in Interior Design in 1987.

Connie soon put her talents to good use working at Levine Company in Grand Rapids. Eventually, she settled into a career at Herman Miller in Holland as a workplace strategist. Always looking to better herself, Connie took the certification test to be part of an elite group of professionals, and she took great pride in putting the title "CFM" after her name. Connie truly enjoyed her job and her many co-workers, and she put her heart into making a good name for the company.

As fate would have it, Connie met the love of her life, Curtis Garman. She and Curt were co-workers for a time, and it wasn't long before their friendship blossomed into romance. Hopelessly in love, the two were happily married on November 6, 1987. Curt brought more than just his love into Connie's life. He had two sons, Judson and Nickolas, and Connie welcomed them both into their new family. Connie and Curt soon had children of their own with the birth of their first child, Tony, in 1992. Tragically, he died at 3 months old from SIDS. In the face of their devastating grief, they were overjoyed with the births of two more children: daughter Elizabeth in 1993, and son Travis, on Mother's Day in 1997.

Connie was the definition of motherhood. She exemplified all the wonderful things a mother should be – patient, caring and generous with her time. Connie was very devoted to her children and loved to volunteer at their school and be part of the Plainwell Band Boosters. It was easy to see that Connie considered it pure joy to care for her husband and children. She was active in her children's lives and also created a home that was a place where love was plentiful. Connie and Curtis always worked together as a team for the good of their family. After the tragic loss of their son, Connie and Curtis became involved with Tomorrow's Child/Michigan SIDS, an organization dedicated to prevention, research and support of SIDS. Through this organization, they were able to reach out to other parents who had also suffered the loss of a child. For this great cause, Connie and Curt started a yearly charity walk in

Kalamazoo starting 7 years ago, for which they were founders and co-chairmen for the first 4 years. Undoubtedly, family was the greatest source of happiness in Connie's life. However, when she actually got a moment to herself, Connie could usually be found reading a book, researching her family's genealogy or studying architecture. It was the simple things that meant the most to her.

A few weeks ago, Connie developed a cough that in a short period of time turned into an infection that ravished her body. She sadly passed away on Friday, January 13, 2012, at Borgess Medical Center surrounded by the family she loved dearly.

Although Connie will be deeply missed, her legacy of love and dedication leaves her loved ones with wonderful memories and a strong foundation to look to for comfort.

Cremation has taken place and there will be private services. Connie was preceded in death by her infant son, Tony, and her father, Wesley Smith. Members of her family include her husband, Curt; her children, Elizabeth & Travis Garman; her stepchildren, Judson Garman and Nickolas (Kari) Garman; her mother, Doris Smith; her siblings, Jason Smith, Diane (Dave) Wiersma, Lynn Lyon; her mother & father-in-law, Harold & Mary Beth Garman; her brothers-in-law, Steve (Mary) Garman, Wes (Nancy) Garman, Tim Garman; as well as many nieces & nephews. Please visit Connie's memory page at [www.lifestorynet.com](http://www.lifestorynet.com), where you may share a memory, upload a photo and sign her online guest book. Arrangements by Life Story Funeral Homes, Plainwell; 120 S. Woodhams (685-5881).