

in memory

OF DC'S FORMER "FIRST LADY"

Ruth Ludwig played an important role as wife and partner to President Emeritus Marvin Ludwig

Ruth Marilyn Bjorkman-Ludwig, wife of Defiance College President Emeritus Marvin J. Ludwig, passed away on Sunday, November 21, 2010, at her home in Kalamazoo, Mich.

She was born in Highland Park, Ill., on August 13, 1929, the daughter of Alex and Alma Bjorkman. In 1951, she married Marvin J. Ludwig. Children are Marshall J. Ludwig (deceased), Robin Lovely and Rhonda Ludwig.

Ruth graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1952, majoring in music. Her work included the YMCA of Marion, Ohio, and the YMCA of Ethiopia. She was active at Defiance College where Marvin served as President for 19 years. She was most proud of her work in developing the food support program under the name of Mena Mahiber Supporting Organization for Ethiopia.

Surviving are her husband, Marvin; John and Robin Lovely; grandsons J.J. and Brendon Lovely; Marshall's wife, Kathy Ludwig; grandsons Ryan and Shawn Ludwig; and Rhonda Ludwig.

A memorial service was held Nov. 27 at the First Presbyterian Church in Kalamazoo. Memorials may be given to the Mena Mahiber Supporting Organization for Ethiopia, checks payable to Mena Mahiber, 2540 Hunter's Bluff, Kalamazoo, Mich. 49048; or the Marvin and Ruth Ludwig Scholarship Endowment (please note on check) at Defiance College, 701 N. Clinton St. Defiance, OH 43512.

Following are excerpts from President Emeritus Ludwig's personal tribute printed in the memorial program and reprinted here with permission:

"Our meeting and dating was as much



by chance as it was planned. We both were enrolled at North Park Junior College (now North Park University), Chicago, a school of the Swedish Covenant Church. ... These were great years for me; this is where I met my future wife. In 1948, Ruth Bjorkman entered my life. Our head coach invited the football team to his home for the evening dinner

party after our last game of the season with Wheaton College. ...I was co-captain of the team, so I had to go and I needed to have a date. Time was running out! I was in trouble. It was 5:00 pm on Friday when we got out of practice and I had no date.

"As I walked across campus, along came this beautiful woman. I had seen her in our Art History class. Time was running out so I asked this young lady if she would join me for a Saturday night dinner party at the coach's home. There was a long pause. I outlined the program, apologized for being late in asking, and Ruth said, "I'm not sure." I said, "I need to have an answer." Then she said, "Give me about a half hour, and we will see." We agreed to meet in the coffee shop across the street from campus. So I waited while Ruth went back to the dorm and did a character check on me with the other girls on campus. Lo and behold, I passed the test! It was great; we were engaged a year later on Christmas Eve 1949. We were married on June 10, 1951, at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Waukegan, Ill. My dad married us. Having Ruth as a partner all these years has been a joy ever since that first date. Little did she know what she was getting into!

"Ruth took up the task of supporting me in my work. She kept me organized and worked diligently to help me be successful. It has been her unfailing love and dedication that helped to sustain my career over these many years. For this I am eternally grateful! Wow! What a patient, loving, articulate woman. I am a lucky guy; I had more than a wife; I had a partner. She has joined me in everything I have ever done.

"Ruth was a very gracious hostess. Our home was the destination for many special events, both in Ethiopia and at The Defiance College. People from all walks of life were welcome ... Ruth was a great cook and was able to whip up some amazing homemade dinners. In Ethiopia, this was not the easiest thing to do as shopping was not as simple as running to a grocery store. Cooking at 9,000 feet elevation was not very easy or predictable. It did not matter who she was preparing a party for. It was always prepared with love and class.

"Ruth had a beautiful soprano voice. ... she taught music in the Marion, Ohio, school system to junior high students. While in Ethiopia, she organized the International Choral Society of Addis Ababa. ...The American Community put on a fundraiser for Ethiopian charities in Addis Ababa, and Ruth performed as one of the soloists for these productions. President Richard Nixon was invited to the American Embassy for dinner on his trip to Ethiopia. His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I was also in attendance. The American Ambassador had invited a few musically talented Americans to perform and sing for these distinguished guests. She felt honored to be a part of this group. Ruth loved music and sang in every church choir, as well as performances at The Defiance College. The kids would always tell her, with big grins on their faces, 'We heard you singing, Mom.'" ♦