Beaufort West Morkels
Part 5. Margaret Lodewyk neé Morkel
Her Life and Times

By Margaret Thebus and Carol Ackerman

Margaret Morkel 15.10.1924 – 12.6.2012 married William Lodewyk 8.10.1916 – 8.10 1994.

Margaret, mum, this reflection is about her, her childhood in Beaufort West, her family, career, life in Cape Town and the move to Australia, and as many of the nephews and nieces will tell you, and there were many of them, their favourite aunt.

Her two daughters: Carol and Margaret.

Margaret Lodewyk, nee Morkel was born on 15 October 1924, the 9th of 10 children, 6 sons and 4 daughters, to Samuel and Dolphina Morkel. As a child she was called Griet, and that later changed to Rita in Cape Town. She was the only child amongst her brothers and sisters who had red hair and she hated it. She endured endless teasing and name calling both at home and at school. She disliked the red hair so much that she always tinted it dark brown. She was feisty and a rebel. When disagreements arose at school her sisters and younger brother Hendrik (Henny) always called on her to fight their fights after school.

Her childhood and growing up in Beaufort West was always fun, interesting and an adventure. There were horses and donkeys to ride, fruit trees to climb and swimming in the dam. Her grandfather was the local undertaker and made his own coffins…. another source of fun because the coffins offered good hiding places when playing games or to hide away from getting punished for some mischief they had gotten into. As well as making good stories to scare the local children with.

Besides the immediate family, her parents always had students who boarded with them. They came from outlying country farms and small towns to attend school. Dinner time was chaotic and serving dinner was a ritual, starting from the eldest to the youngest That didn't suit her. As her father's favorite she tried to sit next to him to get some of the tasty bits reserved for the head of the house. The table could seat 25 or more and to this day that table still stands in the kitchen of the home of her brother, the late Isaac David

Her childhood was short-lived. She left school at 15, in 1939 and as the war years had started work was scarce. The family was placed under house arrest as Samuel refused to send his sons to war, and this was interpreted as the family being German/Hitler sympathisers. Two of her brothers, Hercules and Gerald had been sent to Cape Town to avoid being conscripted into the army and she was sent to them in Cape Town. Hercules found employment for her at Messaris, a potato chip and nut factory. Mum always said Mrs Messaris treated her like a daughter and was very protective of her particularly as many war ships, English and Australian were in Cape Town and there were many unscrupulous sailors around looking to get into mischief. One of her brothers would take her to work and pick her up afterwards. Her employment there did not last very long. Her brother Hercules had married Isabel Robertson and they had two sons, Gerald, who as an adult, became mayor of Cape Town and Premier of the Western Cape, and his brother Clifford. Isabel contracted tuberculosis when the boys were very young and passed away and Mum gave up her job and went to live with Mrs Robertson (Hercules' mother in Law) and looked after the boys. Was this when her lifelong dedication to caring for others started?

Enter William Charles Peters (known as Lodewyk). William was a friend of Hercules and he introduced Dad to Mum. Within months Dad had gone to Beaufort West with mum and her brother to ask Samuel's permission to marry his daughter. They were married on 12 June 1943, Margaret was 19years old.

For the first few years of their marriage they lived in Grassmere Street Crawford, a short walk from her brother ID's home and this was where her children were born. By the time we girls were due to start school mum and dad had purchased a house in the suburb of Retreat. Following in the example of her parents, mum took in nieces who came to Cape Town to study as boarders. Once again she had the familiar busy, bustling family life. Her sister Elise and her husband Harold also moved from Beaufort West with their two children, Carl and Gretchen, and stayed with us for a year. Their youngest son Harold was born there. Money was always in short supply but Mum always made it stretch and I can never remember a time when

as children we felt poor, but then as children, if you are happy, nothing else matters. My cousin Gretchen recently told me an amusing story. We all knew Mum always had a special relationship with the younger generation and children. So as a treat one day Mum decided to take all the kids the movies, but to do that she said she had to sell one of her chickens……..yes, she had an abundance chickens which supplemented our food supplies. But her sister said, no, if you have to sell one of your chickens, the kids aren't going anywhere ... we won't take bets on who won that argument!

Margaret Lodewyk neé Morkel. Early 1960s

When I as youngest daughter, (co-author Margaret) started school, mum returned to work. She found a position at the Windsor Hotel in Fish Hoek in the housekeeping department. Travel to work was by bicycle for 2 miles to the railway station, then a train to work. By the way, she never allowed her daughters to learn to ride a bicycle…..she said it was too dangerous, and when we complained she said, well do you see any scars from injuries on you bodies? End of that argument. Carol learnt to ride a bike when she moved to Canada. I never learnt and preferred something with 4 wheels for transport.

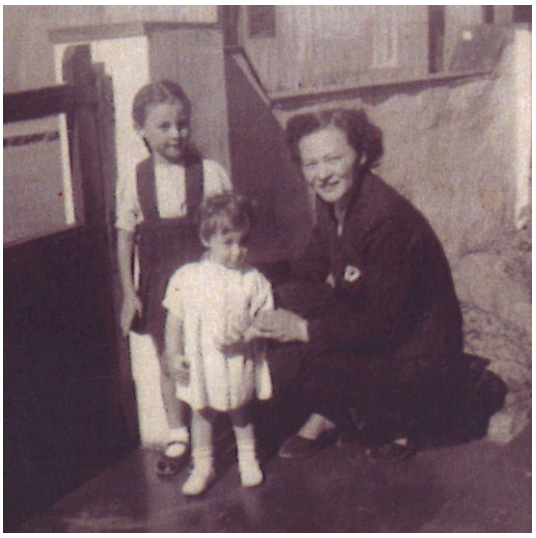
William , daughter Margaret, Margaret Lodewyk.
1983

She was vibrant, energetic, had a great sense of humour and was the champion of the Morkel family's younger generation. She kept their secrets and hid their little misbehaviours from their parents, and she found ways during tough financial times to entertain then, even if it meant selling a few chickens to take the kids to the movies. Many of the parents of the older generation would tell their kids to go outside and pick a *lat* (stick) from a tree so that the parent could give them a few supposedly well-deserved smacks. Margaret did not chastise the nephews and nieces who sought her counsel, instead she would say *nou pluk jy a lat vir jou stert*. In other words, think about what you are doing…….

Having a brother who was a minister placed some restrictions on the entertainment "the young people" wanted to participate in. He didn't approve of going to the movies, dancing, smoking and drinking and young ladies definitely didn't wear slacks because it showed the shape of their body. So to the rescue comes mum. "You can wear slacks but if Uncle Boetie comes to visit you have to put on a skirt or dress". She held dance parties for all of us, any reason the get the young to enjoy themselves. By 1960 there were 27 nieces and nephews so that made for one big get together. I am sure ID must have wondered why everyone always wanted to go to aunty Rita.

Sundays were special. By that time her parents had moved to Cape Town from Beaufort West and Sunday afternoons were set aside for all the uncles and aunts to converge on Crawford to visit the grandparents. When her father became ill prior to his death in 1957 Margaret moved her family to Crawford for a week to allow her to look after him. Because we were so young, mum said it was okay for us to miss school. We certainly didn't complain.

Her lifestyle changed again in 1962 when the family moved to Lansdowne. This was probably the defining change in her life. Mum finished working at the hotel and secured a position as a nursing assistant at Harewood Nursing Home in Kenilworth. She was a fast learner and made quite an impression on the Matron of the Nursing Home who suggested she undertake her nurses training, which she did. Many of the residents at the Nursing Home had very interesting backgrounds and many were WWII veterans so mum always came home with interesting stories. Her preference was always to work the night shifts, to be at home during the day when we came home from school and also because it paid more. It always amazed us where she got her energy from, she just never seemed to get tired and nothing was ever too much for her to do. Continuing her nursing career, she worked in a number of public and private hospitals, including the Volks Hospital in Cape Town in the Surgical Ward and St Augustines Hospital, Durban, and also started doing nursing in the private homes of people who wanted individual attention and nursing in their private residences. This again allowed her to continue to care for her family during the day because she mainly did night work, which was arranged through a Nursing Agency.



Margaret Lodewyk with her daughters

Carol and Margaret. Ca 1952

Life was never dull with Margaret around. As young children and teenagers we were very protected. Being two daughters meant protecting us from the dangers "out there". Growing up in Cape Town was probably no safer or dangerous than anywhere else but our activities outside the home were strictly monitored. Church activities and involvement in everything associated with it was an integral part of growing up. Services on Sunday, either at the Calvinist Church with Mum or the Baptist Church with Dad, Sunday school, prayer meetings, youth group was the norm. Friends, when we were allowed to have them, were carefully screened and we were often told, no, that's not your company. So our social life revolved almost entirely around family. Maybe that is the reason we have such clear memories of family and events. Family life was the centre of our universe and hearing the adults talk about life in Beaufort West was often cause for envy, oh if only we could do as well.

An important event occurred in the mid 60's. Margaret's eldest daughter Carol followed in her footsteps and married young and her first grandchild (Curt) was born. He was followed two years later by another grandson (Bevan) and a third in 1970 (Raye). About this time her son in law, Cecil secured an engineering

position in Durban and he moved his family there. Their daughter Liann Dolphina (named after her great grandmother who she shared a birthday with) was born there on 25 December 1970 .

About the same time Margaret's sister (Mary) whose husband was a teacher was posted to a position in the country and as she didn't want to live on her own she asked mum if I, Margaret, could come and stay with her for a few months. She agreed to this arrangement because she and Dad had decided to go to Durban for a few months as well.

The big change……moving to Australia

I, Margaret (co-author), had been restless for some time. I didn't like the racial discrimination and felt out of place in the country of my birth. Discrimination was becoming more acute and I made the decision to leave South Africa and applied for immigration to Australia. My application was approved within about two months and I left SA. By 1971 I had married and was expecting our first child, so mum decided to come to Australia for a holiday and to help with the new baby. She stayed in Australia for 3 months and during that time developed a fondness for the country. This insight into another life appealed and excited her and when she returned to Cape Town, she decided Australia was the place to be and applied to emigrate. She was always ready for a new adventure. Life in South Africa was at best a challenge. This was a time when racial discrimination, deprivation of basic human rights and physical and mental abuse was evident everywhere. For many leaving South Africa, it was an opportunity to have a better life. Some family members had already migrated to Canada and others soon followed.

Their visa application took a while longer because of their age and Dad wanted to continue working until he reached retirement age. They finally arrived in Sydney, mum in December1973 and Dad in January 1974. With her nursing background she had no difficulty securing employment and continued to work for another 10 or 12 years. They were happy years. She was doing what she enjoyed and was away from what had become a country consumed by political and racial unrest. Her eldest daughter, Carol and her family had emigrated to Canada so for the next twenty years Margaret made numerous trips overseas to Canada and also to South Africa. Dad visited Canada twice but never returned to South Africa.

Margaret Thebus, Margaret Lodewyk and great grandson, Laird. Feb 2010.

Margaret was always busy and disliked being idle. Besides working and looking after her home she took on additional work in the community. She sponsored her first child in Asia, a girl called Mei, and later a second one, Jacob, a boy in Africa. She registered at the local council and at the church to look after the elderly, adolescents and children who were in need of assistance. She was almost in an "adopt a grandmother" role. She walked children to school, picked them up afterwards, supervised homework and at times fed and bathed them before they were picked up by their parents. There was also a lot of playing time indoors and outdoors. She was an ace at board games and in later years, as adults many of the kids would remember Aunty Lodewyk's games. Her daughter Margaret's children were also her charges before and after school and Dad would sometimes pick them up from school in the afternoon. Her work in the church and the community was tireless, visiting sick parishioners, baking and sewing for fetes.

Retirement from working full time came with new challenges. The years of nursing had taken its toll on her body but she had too much energy to stay home and do nothing so she focused on working in and for the

community. In the late 80's she started working with various charities. She worked to collect donated food and clothes, and sometimes took on the role of caregiver for children and teenagers in need. In later years when walking around her neighborhood became difficult, she would pay someone to drive her to do her annual collection for the Red Shield Appeal and other errands.

Margaret was meticulous in organizing her life. She kept a diary of what had to be done, when, with and for whom. When she started sending hampers to the outback the timing was always important to ensure packaged food was fresh and clothing supplies coincided with the seasons. At Christmas she always included some toys for the children.

In November 1989 her husband William suffered a severe stroke and continued to have more minor ones until his death in 1994. His disabilities meant he could not be looked after at home so he was moved to a Nursing Home, which could provide 24 hours a day care. Margaret was not happy about this as she wanted to nurse him herself. It took a lot of convincing to get her to accept that it was not physically possible for her to look after him on her own. Eventually she relented, although she went to see him every day and in that way she got what she wanted … she could still look after him. There were patients who had few visitors so she did what she does best and made their days brighter and happier.

Her numerous trips over the years to Canada and South Africa were always great adventures. In 1976 she was in Canada when the Montreal Olympics were on and she also had a stopover in Los Angeles in 1984 when the Olympics were on there. She loved to travel and came home with some great stories. One I remember well was a stopover in Hawaii. The plane was taxiing on the runway for takeoff when a passenger opened the emergency exit door and the escape chute activated causing major problems on the runway and the takeoff was naturally aborted. The highlight for her…….they had to exit the plane via a chute (not the same one). In another incident the aircraft lost one of its wheels while descending for landing so that was a bumpy touchdown as well. These incidents never fazed her, with her indomitable spirit and sense of humour she always saw the funny side and as she said throughout her life. God will provide and look after me.

Margaret Lodewyk. July 2010.

Carol her eldest daughter lived in Canada as well as her sister Elise and brother Henny and their families. While her sister was alive those visits were special for the three siblings. Time spent remembering the good old days in Beaufort West, family gatherings, and sharing emotions of the sad times when parents and siblings passed away.

One trip to South Africa she desperately wanted to take was in 1983 when her brother, rev. ID was ill. She wanted to see him one last time to say goodbye but the South African government refused to issue her an entry visa at short notice on compassionate grounds. In contrast QANTAS kept her reservation open until the last minute before takeoff and were prepared to transport her without a visa but the risk of being refused entry in Johannesburg was just not worth taking. QANTAS refunded the full price of her airfare without any penalties. Thank you QANTAS for caring.

Her last visit to Canada was in 1999 for the wedding of her granddaughter Liann. While the world held it's breath waiting for any potential disaster the Y2K might cause, Margaret flew home between 31st December and 1st January 2000, crossing that very significant date line 36,000 feet above earth and quite unconcerned about any catastrophe that could eventuate. Exiting the terminal she was smiling from ear to ear.

The Autumn of her life.
The early years of the new millennium saw Margaret slowing down. She had broken her leg in March 1997 and this was starting to affect her mobility forcing her to use a walking stick, which she hated …. walking sticks were for old people she would say. She was diagnosed with advanced osteoarthritis, suffered debilitating migraines caused by the bones in her neck fragmenting and developed Meniers disease. She had slowed down but her work in the community didn't stop, it was still her passion and she was committed to doing it. She said people don't stop being hungry or sick just because I am getting old. Besides her ongoing commitment to society, she had weddings and significant birthdays to celebrate and attend, and new great grandchildren to welcome into the world so a few aches and pains were not going to stop her.

Margaret's last trip on a plane was in 2008. Her daughter Carol had wanted her to come to Canada but as the long trip was not advisable, Carol decided to come to Australia instead. As a treat we decided a holiday in the Whitsundays in Queensland would be perfect, so the three of us, Margaret and her daughters set off on our adventure. For all of us, that trip was significant. We all knew that it would probably be the last time the three of us would be together. It is difficult for me (co-author Margaret) to write this because the memories are so special and when Carol left Australia to go back home to Canada the sadness was palpable.

Margaret's physical decline continued but through the grace of God her mind and memory was not affected and in the last 18 months of her life she made a significant contribution to the documentation of the Beaufort West Morkel Family Line, as in Parts 1 and 2. It is a wonderfully worthy legacy and a tribute to her love of family. On the 16th April 2012 Margaret tripped and fell while on her own at home and was hospitalized for treatment of extensive bruising and a suspected skull fracture. Subsequent scans and x-rays cleared her of any fractures or breaks but a possible kidney or bladder infection was diagnosed. On the 7 May Margaret was diagnosed with an inoperable bladder carcinoma.

She passed away peacefully six weeks later on 12 June 2012. Margaret always feared her frailty would result in her living in assisted care and said the loss of her independence would be very difficult for her. She prayed for strength every day and through the grace of God the winter of her life was not restricted by confinement and mercifully God did not allow her to suffer for too long. She was finally at peace.

Margaret was always of slim build. It must have been all the energy she had. She was the original "energiser bunny" In many ways her daughter, Carol is like her, kind, compassionate, giving and certainly the "energiser bunny No2"

Margaret had a long and rich life, but not in a material sense. She always said material possessions were worldly goods and as long as she had enough to live she was happy. She found her wealth in family, and she had a very large family spread around the world. We shall always be grateful for the life lessons she taught us all, the advice she gave, her wisdom, and during the last two years of her life her knowledge of family and events which allowed us to document some of the missing links in our family tree. She and Dad loved their life in Australia and if anything, they regretted not making the decision to migrate years earlier when they were younger.

We are including her eulogy as it gives an overview of the life she led, the activities she was involved in and her family in Australia

Carol Ackerman

Margaret Thebus

Margaret's Eulogy

Read by Elise Isaacs

Margaret Lodewyk (nee Morkel). Born 15 October 1924, the 9th of 10 children born to Samuel and Dolphina Morkel in Beaufort West South Africa and is survived by her youngest brother Henry in Canada
She grew up in an environment where your family was your wealth and your happiness. Being one of the youngest, the death of each of her siblings was very difficult for her particularly because she was in Australia and they were in SA. She mourned each one's loss deeply and privately, particularly her eldest brother The Reverend Dr I.D. Morkel, Moderator and founder of the Calvin Protestant Church of South Africa. Her youngest brother, Henry, was also a minister in the church until he migrated to Canada in the mid 60's.

Those values and feelings never changed and she transferred the same love and dedication to her own children and extended family.
Margaret or Rita as she was called married William Charles Lodewyk on 12 June 1943. Together they had 3 children, Maryann, Carol and Margaret. Maryann, her firstborn, died a few days after birth and she seldom spoke of her and many never knew about her. Maryann was the silent pain a mother who has lost a child bears.

Family was the most important thing she had. She loved them all with a passion. Her two remaining children, Carol and Margaret, her two "sons" Cecil and Brian. She was Grandmother to Curt, Bevan, Raye, Liann, Garrett, Jacqueline, Stephanie and Steven, 17 Great Grandchildren, and 2 Great, Great Grandchildren. Carol and Margaret married Cecil Ackerman and Brian Thebus respectively, Mum always said she had two daughters and two sons. Cec and Brian, she had a great love for both of you.

Mum was very proud of her family and her ancestry and her line will continue through her children,
Her extended family in Australia includes Elise and Rodney Isaacs and their family, Lynette and Gaby Alexander and their family, Marie Morkel, great nieces and nephews.

She leaves behind much loved sisters in law Vivienne (Cape Town) and Elizabeth (Canada) and many nephews and nieces around the world who have all shared many heartwarming stories with me about her indomitable spirit, her caring, nurturing, and her smile. I know you are all mourning her loss but we rejoice in the privilege of having had a unique person in our lives who made everyone feel special
Mum said her strength was her faith in a God she prayed to every day. And every day she asked him for health, strength and the means to get through the day. She named in her prayers each of her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great, great grandchildren and asked God to keep them safe, none more so than Garrett who had chosen a profession she respected, but one she also feared would cause him harm. There's Elise, Rodney and their family, Lynette, Gaby and their family and Marie. They were also her "children" and she prayed for all of them as well. I thank each one of you for taking care of her and loving her.

My Mum was my best friend. I could tell her anything, I trusted her. If I or anyone else needed to discuss something personal, she kept it confidential. When I faltered, she picked me up, told me she raised me to be strong and to believe in myself, and if I did the right thing, I would always be able to hold my head high.

There's a saying, "If you don't tell someone, it never happened" Well there was a lot more to Margaret Lodewyk than many knew. And she never told anyone what she did. She said, if you talk about the good you do, you pat yourself on the back. Nobody needs to know when you do something from the heart. So I guess it's up to me to fill in the gaps.

Mum never had material wealth, but somehow she managed to do many things with the little she had.
She supported many charities and sent money, clothes and food on a regular basis. Among the many she supported were The Red Cross, Surf Life Savers, the Sydney Children's Hospital, Father Riley's Youth off the streets, The Salvation Army to name a few, and she had sponsored two children, one each from Asia and Africa. All year she would buy clothes and non-perishable food and she took out Chrisco Hampers and paid them monthly to supplement her food hampers and twice yearly she would send hampers to outback Australia because she said city people had more than them. She never took from anyone. If she needed transport to go somewhere or someone to run an errand she insisted on paying the person, she said cars need petrol to run

She cared and looked after many. People who had no direction and no one to care about them or show them the right way. She encouraged them to seek help to kick their habits. Sometimes, it worked and they came back to thank her, other times it didn't. Mum worked as a nurse in SA for many years before migrating to

Australia in 1973 where she continued her nursing career. After she retired her work didn't stop. She nursed family, friends and neighbours who were ill, and gave to those less fortunate than herself.
Mum tried to help and give them hope. She cooked extra food and fed them. If she fed them and then herself had a sandwich for dinner, she'd say "no problem, God will provide, I have a roof over my head, food on my table and by the grace of God the strength to do what I need to do to get me through the day. Mum was an intelligent woman and could hold her own in any debate. She could discuss current local and world events, politics, sports, and was knowledgeable on many levels of healthcare. She was passionate about her sport and followed cricket, tennis, the footy and was a lifelong supporter of the Sydney Roosters.

Mum was young and vibrant once too, but too many of us feel old people are a nuisance, we have no patience with them and sometimes we laugh at them and the silly things they say and do and we judge them by their age. Only through the grace of God may we also reach our 3 score and 10. She reached that and more.

To my children Garrett, Jacqueline, Stephanie and Steven, I say a special heartfelt Thank You for the love and support you gave me and your Nana during her lifetime and through her final illness. I know you loved her dearly and will miss her. To all the family and friends, too many to name individually, who unselfishly supported me and my family, made numerous hospital visits and phone calls both locally and overseas to keep our large network of family and friends updated on Mum's condition, I sincerely thank you.
It would be remiss of me not to mention Carol and Cec in these tributes. The last few weeks have been very difficult for them. They are far away and not able to share this day with us. My dear sister and brother from the bottom of my heart I thank you for everything, your help and support, your love and concern for those of us who looked after Mum. These words are not an adequate tribute to you both, but I love you dearly and some things just can't be verbalised.

I would like to thank all the staff at the Prince of Wales Hospital and Alloa Aged Care for caring for Mum and treating a proud lady with respect and dignity during her final illness. Chris Anson and the staff at Simplicity Funerals for their professionalism and compassion and Paul Venticinque for his spiritual council and his message of hope and helping us to farewell our much loved Matriarch. Wade Lawrence for providing some of the catering refreshment and also accommodating our requests

The flowers placed on the coffin by the children symbolically represent all Mum's children around the world, because they are our future and neither wealth nor possessions can replace family values and love for each other. And the little black cap, well, what can I say, she never went anywhere without it, so it was appropriate for her to have it on her final journey.

We love you Mum, Rest easy in God's care, your work on earth is done.

Tribute by Elise Isaacs on behalf of her family
Our dearly beloved Aunty Rita-my godmother, my surrogate mother, confidante and friend. The matriarch of the family with a generosity that knew no limits. A woman with high moral values with strong views on many issues and a wonderful sense of humour. We will forever be grateful for the role she played in assisting us migrate to Australia. Her achievements as a nurse was highly respected from which we all benefited. Aunty unselfishly came to live with us for 3 months while I was have chemo and radiation-helping wherever she could and taking care of the family. I was taught by her to make konfyt, a good pot of soup and a bit of sewing just to name a few. Without her pickled fish on Boxing Day, picnics at Nielsens Park will never be the same again.

Aunty Rita had the attributes of the wife of noble character referred to in Proverbs 31 ……..
She is worth far more than rubies. Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.
Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Margaret and family, now that you mourn the loss of your mum/nana, be comforted to know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. You went over and beyond your call of duty to take care of all her needs, and to ensure that she lived and died in dignity. Aunty Rita you fought the fight, you've run the race and kept the faith. Last Tuesday your heavenly Father called you home to collect your prize.

You have left us with a wonderful legacy, you were our hero. Your memory will live on forever in our hearts.

After the service family and friends are invited to partake in some refreshment at the Eastern Suburbs Memorial Centre in the grounds of the crematorium.


WILLIAM CHARLES
LODEWYK
8. 10. 1916 – 8. 10. 1994
BELOVED HUSBAND,
FATHER & GRANDFATHER
IN GOD'S CARE
REST IN PEACE
7226D136


MARGARET LODEWYK
nee MORKEL
15/10/1924 – 12/06/2012
OUR MUCH LOVED
MATRIARCH,
MOTHER, GRAND, GREAT &
GREAT, GREAT GRANDMOTHER
IN GOD'S CARE - RIP
7226D431