

## The Life and Times of Leona (Rudnicki) Cruze

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### Mom's immediate family:

1. Mother (Susan Czech)
  - born on 11/Jul/1879
  - died on 15/Aug/1932 (mom was 12 years old)
  - born and raised in Waverly Mn, near a lake with a dock
  - was a mid-wife
2. Father (Jacob)
  - born on 25/Jul/1865
  - died on 26/Jun/1938 (mom was 18 years old)
  - born in Galicia, Austria
  - was a great singer and an actor
  - was a shoemaker by trade
  - his hammer made it to Ripley's Believe it or not.
3. The family agreed to take care of each other after their father died the family did take care of mom's bills for clothes, trunk, travel expenses, and Nursing School tuition
4. Family owned:
  - a shoe store
  - an "On Sale" liquor store
  - an "Off Sale" liquor store
  - an auto dealer and repair shop
5. Brothers and Sisters:
  - Leo J.            born: 6/29/1898  
                   died: 9/11/1968  
                   had a bottling company then ran a wholesale business in Minneapolis
  - Joseph M.      born: 12/15/1899  
                   died: 1/11/11  
                   died as a child from diphtheria
  - Frank            born: 6/12/1901  
   (Francis A.) died: 12/22/1969  
                   civil engineer
  - Marie E.        born: 3/14/1903  
                   died: 2/17/1994  
                   had diphtheria as a child – was rendered almost deaf from then on

- Sylvester J.    born: 12/27/1904  
                   died: 6/14/1965  
                   ran the Standard Oil company in Morris
- Edward        born: 12/15/1906  
                   died: 11/17/1969  
                   Harold Edward was his given name  
                   ran the "On Sale" liquor store
- Raymond M.    born: 12/9/1908  
                   died: 5/27/1967  
                   entered the military
- Josephine J.   born: 6/27/1910  
                   died: 4/20/1992  
                   became an anesthetist nurse
- Anselm M.     born: 4/21/1912  
                   died: 3/25/1958  
                   ran the Rudnicki Motors dealership & taught Physics at St. John's University
- Genevieve A.   born: 1/1/1915  
                   died: 11/21/2012  
                   entered into the convent when she was 16 or 17 years old. The convent sent her to nursing school. When she graduated from nursing school, she became a nun and changed her name to Sr. Mary Alice.
- Angeline A.    born: 10/2/1916  
                   died: 11/2/1995  
                   always dreamed of being married
- Paul T.        born: 8/22/1918  
                   died: 1/27/2005  
                   ran the "Off Sale" liquor store
- Leona M.       born: 6/27/1920  
                   died: 10/16/2015  
                   became a nurse (LPN) for babies (nursery only)
- Charles A      born: 2/19/1924  
                   died: 3/14/1993  
                   was a parts man for a car company

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### Mom's life:

1. Mom was born on June 27, 1920.
2. She was the 13<sup>th</sup> of 14 children.
3. She graduated from high school in May of 1938.
4. She contacted the nursing school in Philadelphia to register.  
All of the classes were full so she had to wait for a year to enter.  
She bought all new clothes, a trunk to ship them to the school, and the family paid for them because she didn't have any money.
5. Carl proposed to mom in the FRONT seat (as mom put it) of a car in Morris. He got down on one knee, in the front seat, and asked her to marry him.
6. She accepted with the stipulation that she first gets her degree in nursing before they get married.
7. She got engaged to Carl before she went to the St. Vincent's Nursing school in Philadelphia.
8. Entered St. Vincent's in September 1939.
9. Graduated from Nursing school in November 1941.  
She got her LPN license in 1941.  
All of her graduate friends got their RN diplomas, but mom got her LPN license because she didn't want to be on the floor as an RN (as an LPN she would be able to stay in the nursery).
10. Married Carl Cruze on the following September 9, 1942
11. Moved into their apartment above the floral shop in September 1942
12. Mom asked dad to buy fire insurance before he started work that day – he forgot.
13. Someone started a fire in a stove in the floral shop but it got out of hand.
14. The resulting fire destroyed everything that they had – including a brand new, unpaid for, stove (everything else was paid for).
15. Moved in with George & Ruth Cruze after the fire (stayed about 2 months).
16. Moved in with her family (Rudnicki's on 3<sup>rd</sup> street) for a few months.
17. Rented a home on 1<sup>st</sup> Street around June/July of 1943.
18. Had her first child in July 1943.
19. Rented another home on 3<sup>rd</sup> street across from the parish rectory (corner house on the Northeast corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and California).
20. Moved into 10 South Street in late Spring of 1945.
21. They paid \$10,000 for the home on South Street.
22. Mom started working as a nurse in 1956. She told them that she only wanted to work the 3 to 11 shift and they hired her.
23. Mom worked as a nurse for just under 10 years.
24. Mom never had any regrets about her decision to go into nursing.
25. Sang in the choir almost every week.
26. Raised 10 children.
27. Moved to Paynesville in 1974.
28. Had a stroke in February of 2005.
29. Was diagnosed with cancer in the summer of 2007.
30. Mom passed away on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2015, at the age of 95.

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### **Children of Leona & Carl Cruze**

10 Children,  
24 grandchildren,  
43 great grandchildren,  
2 great great grandchild \*

**Roger Cruze**, Gloria (wife),

**Dawn Cruze**

**Michelle Engholm**, Erik (husband),

Emily  
Connor

**Michael Cruze**, Jan (wife),

**Brian**, Kathy (wife)

Courtney  
Katelyn

**Lisa Alderink**, Brent (husband)

Alex  
Joseph  
Matthew  
Elizabeth  
Emma  
Anna  
Angela  
Olivia  
Regina

**Paul**, Chera (wife)

Rylenn  
Dailan  
Sophie  
Audriana  
Luke  
Elijah  
Jace

**Diane Calaway**, Bob (husband),

**Paula Lebeuf**, Rob (husband)

Justin

Jessica Minard, Clifton (husband)

\* **Mallory**

\* **Robert**

**Erik Anderson**

**Patrick Cruze**, Kathy (wife),

**Sara Boyer**, Jerry (husband)

Blake

Brooke

Chase

**Shawn**

**Amanda**

**Anthony Cruze**, Sharon (wife),

**Derrick**, Elizabeth (wife)

Adeline

Steven

Caleb

Sadie

**Jacob**, Leah (wife)

Everleigh

Stella Rose

**Kristen Muehlfeld**, Andrew (husband)

**Luke**, Kristen (wife)

Wyatt

Easton

**Casey Argabright**, Ted (husband)

Kaden

Ava

Lincoln

**Svitlana Magnuson**, Brock (husband)

**Arthur Cruze**,

**John Cruze**, (deceased)

**Stefany Gravley**, Dan (husband)

**Samantha Keasling**,

Claire

Julia

**Stacy Cruze**

**Marie Jennings**, Steve (husband)

**Daniel VanderBeek**, Laura (wife)

Reese

Zadyen

**Elizabeth Thielen**,

Alyssa

Michael

Preston

**Gregory Cruze**, Kari (wife),

**Alex**, Robin (wife)

**Andrew**, Tiffany (wife)

**Megan**

**Richard Cruze**,

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### Brief history of mom's early married life.

Mom and dad moved a couple of times after they were married. Their first home was an apartment over the local florist shop. It burned down in a fire. They lived in the apartment for only a short time and lost everything in the fire.

At the time of the fire, mom and dad had paid for everything except for the brand new stove. On the day of the fire, mom asked dad to stop by the bank on his way to work and get some fire insurance – he forgot. Mom was still at home when someone started yelling about a fire. She ran out of the apartment and waited with everyone else for the fire department to come and put the fire out.

However, when the fire department got there, they found that there was something wrong with their equipment. I think it was something with their hose where they couldn't get water through it. The florist shop and mom's apartment burned to the ground.

Mom and dad moved in with dad's parents (George and Ruth Cruze). While they were living with his parents, some neighbors, friends, and acquaintances threw a shower for them. They got new towels, sheets, and such. They knew some of the people, but not all of them. They stayed with his parents only for a while, maybe two months, and then they moved in with the Rudnicki (mom's) family on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. They stayed with them for a few more months.

Shortly before July of 1943, they moved to a small rented home on 1<sup>st</sup> Street. It was just a couple of blocks from the hospital where mom would eventually work as a nurse. The home was on the corner and had a detached garage.

Mom said that there was a small front bedroom and a larger bedroom in the back. Roger had the small bedroom.

The next year, they moved again to a corner lot on 3<sup>rd</sup> street and California Ave. Michael joined us in December.

Then sometime in the Spring of 1945, the family moved to the home at 10 South Street. Mom and dad paid \$10,000 for the home. It was on the South East edge of town. There were only corn fields East of us. We were about a block and a half from the rail line. We often heard the trains as they passed through the town.

The family continued to live on South Street until 1974 when they moved to Paynesville.

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### General memories of our mother:

1. Everything she did was for her husband and her family.
2. Mom loved the smell of Sandalwood incense.
3. She loved babies.
4. Loved to travel.
5. Loved to play cards, especially Texas Hold'em.
6. Loved to play the slot machines
7. She loved to make a dish called "Glorified Rice."
8. Gave us the best of what they could afford.
9. Insisted that we have a private telephone line. (#573)
10. She canned food from our garden for a few years.
11. Made sure all of us got our vitamins.
12. Sent the boys to Mrs. Michel's for a haircut for \$.25.
13. Nurtured a love for our faith in all of us.
14. Insisted that we pray the rosary as a family almost every evening.
15. Made sure all of us made it to Mass on Sunday.
16. Made sure all of us made it to Confession every month.
17. Was happy to have their parish priest visit them each week.
18. Paid for a Catholic education for most of us.
19. Loved the song "Ave Maria" by Schubert
20. Encouraged us to make presents for each other one Christmas.
21. Brought her sister Marie to live with us sometime during the summer of 1958 so mom and dad could take care of her.
22. Painted all of the knotty pine in the dining room and living room.  
One board was pink and the next one green.  
Dad said (to the effect) "The next time I go out of town I'm going to put saran wrap on all of the walls so that all I have to do is to peel the saran wrap off of the walls."
23. Taught us that we have to work for our money.
24. Painted the house on South Street salmon pink.
25. After dad died, her family surrounded her.
26. Was always grateful for all the help she was given.
27. Felt isolated because of a serious hearing loss.
28. Began to have trouble with her short term memory.
29. Had macular degeneration but wasn't told about it because she would have worried about it.
30. Mom worried a lot, especially later in life.
31. She said 3 rosaries every day.
  1. Thanksgiving for everything she has been given
  2. Carl, father, mother, brothers, sisters
  3. All of her children, Shelly, Lisa, and others in need
32. Mom loved the song "**Your bleeding heart will feel no pain**" [a very old song and it's how dad died]
33. She loved to go roller skating, ice skating, and bowling.
34. Mom loved to watch "Everybody loves Raymond."
35. Mom loved to watch Wheel of Fortune

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## Personal memories of mom:

### **Roger**

When I was in second grade, in early Spring, mom decided that my hair would look good in curls. I threw a fit. I told her in no uncertain terms that I didn't want to look like a girl.

One evening when Aunt Jo was visiting her, she made me sit in a high chair in the middle of the living room with a large plastic sheet under me. (If it wasn't plastic, it was something like it). I argued, and probably cried, but it was no use, she put some awful smelling permanent on me anyway. After she put curlers in my hair, I had to sit in the chair for what seemed like an hour. Both mom and Jo went into the kitchen and talked while I sat in the high chair all by myself with the awful smelling stuff in my hair. But that was only the beginning of my problems.

When mom and Jo finished talking, mom came into the living room and said "Now that looks good." She finished doing something to my hair and sent me to bed.

The next day was the worst day of my life, ever! I had to go to school with pretty, curly hair. I remember trying to figure out where I could go so that no one would see me (fat chance). During class, no one was allowed to talk so that was okay. But during recess, I had to hide under the steps between the playground and the school. I didn't want anyone to see me and tease me about my girly hair. I was so embarrassed that I just wanted to go home.

When I got home after school that day, I complained and complained. Mom finally said, "Fine, I'll just take them out." I knew she was mad, but so was I. By that time, I didn't care how she felt as long as the curls came out. I think she just combed them until they didn't look so much like curls. I was happier, but it wasn't nearly enough to make up for my embarrassment.

### **Diane**

Raising our family was no easy task and mom sure had her hands full with our gang, she had to be on her toes at all times because the activity and shenanigans were non-stop. A memory I have of her is one time (note I said only one time) I must have done something wrong and she was going to discipline me (spanking, it was old school for some, but not for mom), She was trying to catch me and spank me, well..... I was born with these ninja

survival skills which told me to run like heck whenever she said, "come here I'm going to spank your bottom". Well the chase was on, I remember she was chasing me and she was closing in fast so I ran around the dining room table, when she would come at me from one side I'd change direction and go around the other way. Well part of those survival skills I learned early on was to make her laugh, that always lighten the intensity of the chase. Well, it worked that time and we ended up giggling, the chase was over, whew! I did not however get away totally unscathed, I was slave labor for a few days but no bruises. I love you mom and will miss you greatly, Diane.

### **Greg**

One night when I was very young (7 or 8 years old), I had a fever on a hot summers night. I was lying in bed, sweating and in a lot of pain. It was the kind of summer night that you kept flipping your pillow to the 'cool' side every few minutes to help cool you down. It was after sunset and mom came into our bedroom, opened a window and sat down on the bed next to me. She then put her hand on my head, and after that, all I remember was falling asleep and waking the next morning good as new. I don't know why but I often think of that night.