

Janna Ruth Dean, 93, went home to heaven Tuesday, July 8, in Sterling. “Jan” was born December 17, 1931, the daughter of Abram and Ruth (Holtzman) Hey. She loved sports and horseback riding and attended Colorado Women’s College to play basketball after graduating from Sterling High School. On a trip to Texas with college friends, she met the love of her life, Elbert M. (“Al”) Dean, Jr. They were married July 21, 1951, and celebrated 60 wonderful years together before Al passed in 2011.

Jan was privileged to grow up with a strong Christian heritage. Her grandfather, J.L. Holtzman, pastored and preached in German and English, and Grandmother Holtzman was a community leader in charitable and relief efforts locally and overseas. Her father was a co-founder of Hey Bros. Dairy and Ice Cream and a leader in the Evangelical church in Sterling. Her mother was music and choir director in Sterling churches for many years. Jan accepted Christ early in life, and she and Al were founding and lifetime members of Faith Baptist Church, where she taught girls’ Sunday School for almost 60 years.

She was an avid reader all her life, loved history and literature, read the Bible many times over, and knew many Scripture passages by heart. She and her mother Ruth were founders and faculty at Faith Baptist Christian School, where she taught and coached for many years. She was a natural teacher, and continued tutoring students until she was almost 90. She was deeply devoted to her students, like the loving and dedicated mother she was. More than academic excellence and the love of learning, her goal for each one was to be, in the words of Grandmother Holtzman, a “noble citizen” for Christ’s kingdom. When her teaching career finally ended, former students came from around the country for a special day to honor her life and influence.

Jan passed away peacefully among friends and family, looking forward to being with her beloved Savior and to reuniting with Al and family she so loved. Survivors include her sons Stephen (Kathy) Dean, Janesville, WI; Michael (“Brenda”) Dean, Brookfield, WI; Jerry (Vicki) Dean, Janesville, WI; and many nieces and nephews, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by Al and her brother and sister, John Phillip Hey and Sue Cherry.

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”