



## Dolores J. Hester

August 10, 1939 - July 11, 2025

Dolores Jeannine Hester, age 85 of Highland, IL, died Friday, July 11, 2025, at Saint Louis University Hospital in Saint Louis, MO.

She was born on Thursday, August 10, 1939, in Percy, IL, the daughter of Raymond and Ruby (nee Rathert) Ruebke.

On Saturday, August 31, 1963, she married John Alton Hester at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Campbell Hill, IL, who survives.

She was a member of Evangelical United Church of Christ. She was also a member of HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Auxiliary.

Dolores was born on a farm in 1939 near Steelville, Illinois, her childhood was spent working on the farm with her younger brother Leo. Dolores embodied the values of hard work, resilience, and a deep love of learning from an early age. She went to 1st grade speaking mostly German and carrying only a thermos of coffee. When she returned home from school, after discovering most people only spoke English, she told her parents and grandparents that she would never speak German again and she stuck to it.

Dolores was the first in her family to attend college, defying expectations — especially those of her father, who doubted the value of higher education —

earning a full scholarship to the Jewish Hospital School of Nursing. She went on to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, and later, her Master's in Adult Education from Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville to support her work as Director of Education at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Throughout her career, Dolores dedicated herself to the health and well-being of others. She began as a floor nurse in Charleston, Missouri, and went on to serve as a public health nurse in Benton County, Missouri.

In 1965, she joined St. Joseph's Hospital in Highland, Illinois as a floor nurse. Later she took a position as an instructor at the nursing program in Alton, Illinois. Dolores started the Public Health Program in Greenville, Illinois and later returned to St. Joseph's Hospital in Highland as a nurse and worked her way up to serve as their Director of Education. Dolores was the driving force behind the creation of the Highland Community Health Fair, offering reduced-cost health screenings to the public. After retirement, she continued to serve the hospital as part of the St. Joseph's Hospital Auxiliary.

Dolores's life was enriched by her marriage to John Hester, whom she met through a mutual friend. They were married for almost 62 years. Together they built a life raising two daughters and encouraging them to pursue their ambitions with confidence and purpose. Dolores was a devoted mother, a tireless supporter, and a fierce advocate for her children — one of whom is now the president of an engineering company and the other a professor at a medical school. Dolores was immensely proud of them both.

She had a wide array of interests and embraced life fully — whether traveling across the U.S., visiting Alaska, or exploring Europe and other countries. She enjoyed camping trips with her friends and family and quiet moments with books, knitting, and sewing. Later in life, she found joy and community with

her card club and Silver Sneakers exercise group at the Korte Rec Center.

Dolores will be remembered not only for her professional achievements, but for her love and encouragement, her unwavering belief in education, and her deep love for her family and friends. Her career leaves a legacy of her commitment to learning and care for others. She lived with conviction, compassion, and curiosity, quietly leading by example. She will leave behind a legacy that will continue to inspire all who knew her.

Survivors include:

Husband - John Alton Hester, Highland, IL

Daughter - Cindy J. (Tom) Ebert, Glen Carbon, IL

Daughter - Andi J. (Dan) Reaka, Edwardsville, IL

Grandchild - Ryan T. (Savanah) Ebert, Edwardsville, IL

Grandchild - Claire L. (Riley) Patterson, Edwardsville, IL

Grandchild - Alan J. Ebert, Denver, CO

Grandchild - Cassi J. Reaka, Edwardsville, IL

Grandchild - Cami K. Reaka, Edwardsville, IL

Grandchild - Cadan D. Reaka, Edwardsville, IL

Great Grandchild - Wesley J. Patterson, Edwardsville, IL

Brother - Leo (Nancy) Ruebke, Grand Blanc, MI

She was preceded in death by:

Father - Raymond George Wilhelm Ruebke

Mother - Ruby Ruebke

Arrangements are being handled by Spengel-Boulanger Funeral Home in Highland, IL.

Visitation will be held from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Thursday, July 24, 2025, at

Spengel-Boulanger Funeral Home in Highland, IL and from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM on Friday, July 25, 2025, at Evangelical United Church of Christ in Highland, IL.

Funeral Service will be at 10:00 AM on Friday, July 25, 2025, at Evangelical United Church of Christ in Highland, IL, with Rev. William E. Kapp, Pastor, Evangelical United Church of Christ, officiating.

Interment will be at Highland City Cemetery in Highland, IL.

Memorial contributions may be made to EvUCC or HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Auxiliary.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL **24.** 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Spengel-Boulanger Funeral Home - Highland  
1501 9th Street  
P.O. Box 187  
Highland, IL 62249  
(618) 654-2133  
info@spengel-boulanger.com

## Visitation

JUL **25.** 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Spengel-Boulanger Funeral Home - Highland  
1501 9th Street  
P.O. Box 187  
Highland, IL 62249  
(618) 654-2133  
info@spengel-boulanger.com

## Funeral Service

JUL **25.** 10:00 AM (CT)

Evangelical United Church of Christ  
2520 Poplar Street  
Highland, IL 62249  
(618) 654-7459

# Tribute Wall



“ Was so sorry to hear about Dolores' passing. We worked together at Highland - she in Education & me in Community Relations. Also with the Auxiliary. She was a great nurse, a great educator & a good friend. Always so sad to say goodbye. Deepest condolences to the family.

Mary L. Heeren - July 29, 2025 at 06:20 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Dolores J. Hester.

July 24, 2025 at 03:01 PM



“ Greg, Jill and Kyle Mecey purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Dolores J. Hester.



Greg, Jill and Kyle Mecey - July 23, 2025 at 05:00 PM



“ Greg, Jill and Kyle Mecey planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dolores J. Hester.

Greg, Jill and Kyle Mecey - July 23, 2025 at 05:00 PM



“ *Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dolores J. Hester.*



July 23, 2025 at 12:01 PM



“ *Patricia R. purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Dolores J. Hester.*



Patricia R. - July 22, 2025 at 05:50 PM



“ *Patricia R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dolores J. Hester.*

Patricia R. - July 22, 2025 at 05:50 PM



“ *With love, Angie, Ashley & Sammye purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Dolores J. Hester.*



With love, Angie, Ashley & Sammye - July 22, 2025 at 09:03 AM

WS

“ With love, Angie, Ashley & Sammye planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dolores J. Hester.

With love, Angie, Ashley & Sammye - July 22, 2025 at 09:03 AM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Dolores J. Hester.



July 22, 2025 at 09:00 AM

SP

“ Sherri Patterson purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Dolores J. Hester.



Sherri Patterson - July 22, 2025 at 08:59 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Dolores J. Hester.



July 20, 2025 at 10:04 PM



RH

“ Rick & Lea Hester purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dolores J. Hester.



---

Rick & Lea Hester - July 20, 2025 at 06:56 PM

RH

“ Rick & Lea Hester planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dolores J. Hester.

---

Rick & Lea Hester - July 20, 2025 at 06:56 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dolores J. Hester.



---

July 17, 2025 at 02:35 PM



“ Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray was purchased for the family of Dolores J. Hester.



---

July 17, 2025 at 12:43 PM

PL

“ Our thoughts and prayers for John and family. Dolores was one of the most caring persons and always willing to help and serve others. She always had a friendly word and a beautiful smile for everyone. God Speed our friend you will definitely be missed by your family, church family and community.

---

**Pam & Aimee Lecerf** - July 16, 2025 at 07:41 PM