



Jean K. Svoboda

September 19, 1930 - November 27, 2025

Jean was born September 19, 1930 in Plevna, Montana as the youngest child of five to William (Pat) and Gladys Kaiser.

In 1949 following high school, Jean attended the University of Montana in Missoula, where she began her studies in Home Economics. She pledged Delta Gamma and that commitment formed life-long friendships. Jean met Bob Svoboda who was also attending the University following his service in the Navy. In June she accepted Bob's proposal, and they were married in Missoula September 11, 1949. Shortly after, they moved into their first custom-built home designed by Jean.

Bob moved the family to Honolulu, HI in 1962 as he began working for American Factors in developing Kaanapali Beach. Jean was actively serving on the Board of Fashion Group, International, representing Hawaii and the South Pacific. She designed clothing and participated in the annual Fashion Week in Los Angeles. Simultaneously, she was a business owner and operator of a resort clothing shop in Kaanapali, Maui. Often the family had holidays and summer breaks together at Kaanapali.

Bob and Jean moved to Santa Barbara, CA in 1971 with the intention of it being their final move. They had built 6 custom homes throughout the years, and Jean was instrumental in the design and architecture of each home.

Jean's passion for English and Williamsburg styles shaped the design of their last residence in Montecito. After Bob's passing, Jean continued to live on her own in this residence until November 2024.

From the early days of marriage throughout her life, Jean held a heart for volunteering. She was committed to Junior League wherever they resided, and with that, a special interest in volunteering with the blind and support of Guide Dogs of America. In Honolulu, Jean served at Tripler Hospital, assisting wounded service members from the Vietnam era. And, years later in Santa Barbara, Jean's passion for those in need of recovery led her to support and serve on the Board of the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission. She believed in the hope of reconciliation and change.

Together, Bob and Jean were actively involved and financially supportive of Christian ministries, Christian education, and politically conservative organizations.

Travel was a great desire and significant for both Bob and Jean. They traveled yearly to Honolulu, as a break from Montana winters. In 1989 they purchased an apartment on Waikiki Beach. It was a perfect location to see the beauty of the ocean, Diamond Head, and brilliant sunsets. And it was a wonderful means of reconnecting with friends from their years in Hawaii. It was also an ideal place for their three grandchildren to come and visit them.

In 1982 Bob and Jean traveled to London. They toured Country Inns located in England, Scotland & Wales. As a result, for years following, London became the annual base for 6 weeks of travel. Jean deeply enjoyed and appreciated London, the history, the art, and the beauty of the gardens. In 1987 she attended summer school at the Royal College of Art in London. She studied English houses and interiors. It was a rich time of learning, and the results were in the designs she created for their home in Montecito.

Bob and Jean provided a trip in 1976 for the family to travel to Europe which included 13 countries in 7 weeks, west and east of the Iron Curtain. Jean, known for her note taking and details, kept a daily journal which was a wonderful keepsake for years later. It was an impactful trip together as we grew to understand our blessings of freedom living in America, while seeing people existing without privilege of freedom. And in 2000, with their married adult children, Bob and Jean provided a trip with a personal guide on a two-

week teaching journey throughout the Holy Land.

A primary commitment of Bob and Jean, wherever they lived, was to be a part of a church. Jean served in various capacities and as a deaconess. In Santa Barbara, they were members of Trinity Baptist Church for many years and when they moved to Montecito, they became members of El Montecito Presbyterian Church. Jean's legacy of faith comes from a lifetime of commitment to personal Bible study and through Bible Study Fellowship, Home Groups and her cherished weekly Bible study with women rooted in deep faith, committed to Bible studies and sharing their lives together for over three decades.

Jean is preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Robert; her sisters, Kathryn and Ruthie; and her husband of 60 years, Robert Svoboda, who passed away in July 2009.

She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Kathy and Arlin Clester, Monroe, GA, and son and daughter-in-law, Tom and Marlene Svoboda, Hoschton, GA. And blessed by Granddaughters, Katie (Alexis) Lomeli, Santa Maria, CA, Jalene (Nick) Kaylor, Santa Maria, CA and Grandson, Patrick (Brittany) Clester, Monroe, GA and 8 great grandchildren.

Memorial Service will be held on January 9, 2026 at 11:00 at Welch-Ryce, 15 East Sola Street, Santa Barbara. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Santa Barbara Rescue Mission.

Cemetery Details

Santa Barbara Cemetery

901 Channel Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93108

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN 9. 11:00 AM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Downtown
15 E. Sola St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 965-5145
info@wrhsb.com
<https://www.wrhsb.com>