

Janet M. Grotjan

May 1, 1932 ~ October 12, 2025 (age 93)



Services

A service summary is not available

Janet Marian (Carlson) Grotjan, 93, of Eagle, Wisconsin passed away October 12th, 2025 at Three Pillars Senior Living Community in Dousman, Wisconsin.

Jan was born in Chicago on May 1, 1932 to Carl I. and Wilhelmina M. (Brandt) Carlson. She married the love of her life, William Verle Grotjan (Botany Bill), on June 4, 1955. They raised five children together on their beloved farm in Eagle.

After graduating from Wausau Senior High School, Jan attended the University of Wisconsin Extension for 1 year and then graduated with a bachelor's degree in Zoology from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. After graduating, she worked as a librarian in Rockford, IL spending half the day cataloging books and checking out patron's materials the second half. A perfect job for her! After marriage, Jan worked at the telephone company in Milwaukee. Her memories included two unhappy events: when she showed her fellow workers her ring they said Bill must not love her very much if he didn't buy her a diamond and the company fired her when they learned she was pregnant!

A lesson learned long ago from Jan's father was that you can do anything if you want it badly enough. Jan put this to test by raising five children on a teacher's salary and saving enough to go on 10 European trips and countless trips in the lower 48 states. Jan loved to travel and did so by first reading about places from books and magazines from the library and listening as fellow travelers would recommend places to visit. As a child, Jan read about the Isle of Skye and Baja California, two places she then visited with her trusted travel companion, Bill and some of her adult children and grandchildren. Jan and Bill celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary by backpacking in the Smoky Mountains. A freshly baked pie accompanied the car travel trips. Jan's bakery was delicious!

Jan learned the art of storytelling from her father and loved to tell stories even if the facts were her own. She loved meeting people and would take 12 yogurt sized containers of cookies on camping trips to share with people as they met them along the way. Occasionally lifelong friends were made on these trips and Jan and Bill would keep in touch with visits and letter writing. Jan was a prolific letter writer.

Owning an old farm kept Jan busy and gave her the opportunity to practice her great problem solving skills, her creative ingenuity and her talent for art. She became a skilled stone mason when foundations needed pointing up and the original stone barn fell to ruins. Jan and Bill worked side by side to repair the barn as well as the milk house. Jan

artistically created stencils for the house walls including little mice at the entrance to the basement. She had a wonderful sense of humor and a contagious and frequently heard laugh.

Jan's flower gardens were a rainbow of colors. Roses were a favorite and a few new ones made their way into the garden yearly. The basement shelves were heavy with canned produce as well as the freezer shelves and root cellar from the productive vegetable garden and orchard. Jan was a very hard worker and a hard player! She loved swimming in the pond that was dug in 1966 and picnicking in the lower yard with lunch time pots of tea made on a wood fire. She always made time for family and friends and served countless meals to anyone who would come to visit.

Jan was preceded in death by her husband and best friend, Bill. She is survived and joyfully remembered by her children, William (Sarah) Grotjan of Neenah, Jessica (Arnold) Chamberlain of Eagle, James (Michele) Grotjan of Eagle, Jill (Anthony) Blaedow of Palmyra, and Jennifer (John) Zach of Stevens Point; her eight grandchildren, Laura (Gideon) Hoekstra, William (Angela) Grotjan, Arnold (Jennifer) Chamberlain, Elizabeth Chamberlain, Julia (Taylor) Dane, Emily (Michaelis) Gabbey, Shane (Melissa Haack) Zach, Rachel (Zack) Schoppen, and five great-grandchildren, Frederick Chamberlain Cooper, William and Grant Grotjan and Jacob and Benjamin Gabbey.

Jan's family is incredibly grateful for the kind, gentle, respectful and loving care given by the staff at Riverside Lodge Memory Care in Dousman and Brighton Hospice.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Wisconsin Public Radio or The Nature Conservancy.

A private celebration of life will be held at a later date.