



Dormalee Watson

August 29, 1927 - February 28, 2026

Dormalee Watson, of Salem, formerly of St. James, passed away peacefully on Saturday, February 28, 2026, surrounded by her loving family.

Dormalee was born on August 29, 1927, in Cook Station, to the late Russell and Ada (Gearhart) Foster. From an early age, she displayed a strong competitive spirit and natural athleticism. Throughout her school years, she excelled in sports and was especially known as a star softball player during high school.

On May 21, 1949, Miss Dormalee Foster married the love of her life, Cordell Watson. Together they built a beautiful life centered on faith, family, hard work, and community. The couple moved to St. James from St. Louis, where they opened and operated Watson's Shoe Store, becoming well-known and respected members of the community.

At the age of 30, Dormalee took up golf—a decision that would define her athletic legacy. She quickly mastered the sport and held the record for the lowest score, shooting an impressive 35 at the St. James Golf Club. Fiercely competitive, she never “just let you win,” not even her beloved grandsons. She frequently partnered with Beth in tournaments, forming a team that was hard to beat.

Dormalee was deeply involved in the St. James community and, in 2004, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award for her outstanding service and dedication. She was a faithful member of St. James Christian Church for over 50 years and a lifetime member of the Order of the Eastern Star, where she served as Worthy Matron.

Dormalee and Cordell shared a love of travel and adventure. They enjoyed cruises and sightseeing throughout Europe and many other countries. However, when their first grandson was born, their world joyfully shifted. Soon after, they were blessed with a second grandson, and from that moment on, their lives revolved around the boys. They attended every game, event, and milestone, building their lives around supporting and celebrating them.

Dormalee also had a love for cards and gaming. She was an exceptional bridge player—often invited to play among some of the best in St. James—and she could hold her own at the blackjack table, especially during fun-filled trips to Las Vegas with her girlfriends.

Above all, Dormalee's greatest gift was her love for her family. She was a devoted wife, a proud and loving mother and grandmother, and a loyal friend. Her strength, competitive spirit, generosity, and unwavering support for those she loved will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Cordell Watson, her parents, brother Leland Foster, and sister, Dorothy Metzinger.

Dormalee is survived by her son, Dr. Steve Watson of Salem, Missouri; her grandsons, Dr. Matthew Watson and Dr. Michael Watson; and a host of extended family members and dear friends.

Funeral services will be held Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 12:00 PM at the Salem Chapel of James & Gahr Mortuary with Pastor Rick Mosher officiating.

Interment will follow at Cedar Grove Cemetery, where she will be laid to rest beside her beloved Cordell.

A visitation for family and friends will be held at the chapel on Thursday from 10:00 AM until the time of service.

Memorial contributions may be made in lieu of flowers to the LovePack Backpack Program. Cards are available at all James & Gahr locations.

Dormalee's legacy of love, strength, and spirited determination will live on in all who knew and loved her.

Cemetery Details

Cedar Grove Cemetery

Scenic Rivers Blvd
Salem, MO 65560
(573) 729-0205

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 5. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

James & Gahr Mortuary - Salem
103 West Center
Salem, MO 65560
(573) 729-3117
jgsalemmo@hotmail.com
<https://www.jamesgahrmortuary.com/>

Service

MAR 5. 12:00 PM (CT)

James & Gahr Mortuary - Salem
103 West Center
Salem, MO 65560
(573) 729-3117
jgsalemmo@hotmail.com
<https://www.jamesgahrmortuary.com/>

Tribute Wall

DF

“ *Don & Joyce Wolff Family purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Dormalee Watson.*



Don & Joyce Wolff Family - March 04 at 11:42 AM

FF

“ *From The Stricker Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Dormalee Watson.*



From The Stricker Family - March 03 at 12:11 PM