

Eva Henley, who taught Sunday school 82 years, dies in San Angelo

October 3, 2016

Eva Louise Hickerson Aldredge Henley, who taught Sunday school 82 years up—to the last Sunday of her life, died in San Angelo Sept. 24. She was 98.

Eva HenleyShe was born in Tullahoma, Tenn., and grew up in Commerce. She earned a bachelor of science degree from East Texas State University, a master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a master of arts degree in English from Louisiana Tech University.

In 1938, she married Truman Aldredge, who at that time was minister of music at First Baptist Church in Commerce, where her father was pastor.

From 1950 to 1966, they served First Baptist Church in Minden, La. She loved her ministry in Minden and flourished as director of the senior high Sunday school department, in outreach for the church, as a Training Union teacher and as a substitute teacher at Minden High School. Also known for her gracious hospitality and elegant entertaining, she hosted visiting preachers and legendary deacons' parties.

Her husband died in 1966, but her indomitable spirit, faith and love of learning helped her through her grief, and she earned her second master's degree, at Louisiana Tech, while also teaching English composition at the university.

In 1968 she married Taylor Henley, executive director of Baptist Memorials Retirement Center in San Angelo. She used her hospitality gifts to regale

Baptist Memorials board members, and for many years organized a silver tea to raise funds for the Baptist Memorials.

For 25 years, she taught English at Central High School in San Angelo, often dressing up as characters in literature. She coached UIL students, many of whom won awards in English language and literature. She bragged about her students—one placing first in state UIL competition, another earning a Ph.D. at Princeton University, another teaching at Texas A&M.

She was president of the Texas Joint Counsel of Teachers of English and as a board member of the United Way of San Angelo. She was a frequent contributor of witty and inspirational opinion columns in the *San Angelo Standard-Times*.

The Taylors founded Missions Our Mission, leading ministry trips to eight countries. In addition to preaching, she taught English-as-a-second-language classes in Ukraine. Together, they led 35 mission trips to Ukraine. After his death in 2000, she became president/executive director of the organization and led 11 more Ukrainian mission trips and raised money for missions in other countries.

She was a member of First Baptist Church in San Angelo, serving on many church committees, acting in 17 Christmas dramas, and visiting people to invite them to church even after she no longer could drive and had trouble getting to their front doors on her walker. For the 48 years she lived in San Angelo, she taught an adult Sunday school class—up to the Sunday before she died. Since the age of 16, she taught Sunday school in various churches.

Eva was preceded in death by her father, Julius Hickerson; her mother, Anna Mae Coon Hickerson; her brother, Julius Hickerson Jr.; her husbands, Truman Aldredge and Taylor Henley; and her stepson, John Henley.

Eva is survived by two daughters, Anne Morton and her husband, Bill

Funderburk, and Jann Aldredge-Clanton and her husband, David Clanton; her niece, Julianne Hickerson Newton; seven grandchildren, David Herring, DeAnne Herring Kaloski, Chad Clanton, Brett Clanton, Valerie Henley Webre, July Henley Henry and Jennifer Henley Phillips; 17 great-grandchildren, Macey Herring Rose, Chandler Campbell, Anna Campbell, Paige Parker, Colin Parker, Danny Herring, Maren Herring, Dawson Herring, Lyle Clanton, Emmett Clanton, Paul Clanton, Robbie Webre, Morgan Webre, Mary LeBoeuf, Kelly LeBoeuf, Ryan Phillips and Nathan Phillips.

A service of celebration of her life will be held Oct. 8 at 11 a.m., at First Baptist Church in San Angelo.

Memorial donations may be made to Missions Our Mission, Buckner Baptist Benevolences and United Way of San Angelo.