



# Goffsgram



Mojave Desert Heritage & Cultural Association  
Goffs Schoolhouse

July 8, 2026 | Goffsgram Editor: Laura Misajet



## **DONNA JO HANLEY ANDRESS** **Dec. 16, 1925 - June 17, 2026**

Donna Jo Hanley Andress, a lifelong Nevada resident, historian, educator, community leader, devoted wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend passed away at the age of 100.

She was born on December 16, 1925 in Los Angeles, because of her mother's complicated pregnancy but she was raised in Searchlight, Nevada. Donna grew up in the formative years of Southern Nevada and remained deeply connected to its people, places, and history throughout her life.

Donna was a native of Las Vegas and a member of one of the city's earliest families. At a time when Las Vegas was still a small desert town with mostly dirt streets. Her family was among the first to own an automobile-a 1936 Ford, which Donna learned to drive at just nine years old, navigating the Wild, open roads of Southern Nevada. These experiences helped shape her lifelong appreciation for Nevada's pioneering spirit.

Education was central in Donna's life. A value instilled by her mother, Clarabelle Douglas Hanley Decker, who was a respected educator who taught in Nelson, Searchlight and later at the Fifth Street Grammar School, Rancho High School and Vegas High School in Las Vegas. In recognition of her mother's legacy, the Clarabelle H. Decker Elementary School was named in her honor in 1977.

After graduating from Las Vegas High School, Donna attended the University of Nevada Reno, where she was a member of the of the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. She carried her commitment to education and civic responsibility into decades of public service and volunteer leadership.

On July 9, 1944, Donna married the love of her life, Gail Andress. Together they shared 77 years of love, family and enduring partnership. They lived a life of fun, hard work, and adventures traveling the world, square dancing, camping and countless special occasions with family and friends.

A respected Nevada historian, Donna wrote a definitive multi-part history of Las Vegas High School for the Las Vegas Sun and she authored the well researched book, "Eldorado Canyon and Nelson", published in 1997. The book chronicled the mining history of Eldorado Canyon and the town of Nelson, where Donna and her husband lived for 35 years.

Her own family roots were deeply tied to mining, including her grandmother, who served as the cook at the Techatticup Mine, Southern Nevada's oldest and richest mine, located in Eldorado Canyon.

Donna's dedication to public service was extensive. She served on the City of Las Vegas Welfare Council and was appointed to the Nevada State Welfare Board in 1967, later serving as its chairwoman from 1974-1976. She was the President of the Service League of Las Vegas, a member of the Junior League of Las Vegas and held numerous leadership roles supporting education and community welfare. She was a charter member and past chairwoman of the UNLV Natural Science Scholarship Association, a past member of the Clark County School District's New Math Committee and past president of Bishop Gorman Mother's Club.

In recognition of her lifelong contributions to the state, Donna was awarded The Distinguished Nevadan Award on May 10, 1997.

Donna loved her family above all. She was preceded in death by her husband, Clyde Gail Andress; her grandchildren, Michael Andress and Melanie Andress Tobiasson. She is survived by her son, Don Andress and his wife Madeleine; her daughter Gaynell Andress; her granddaughter Jennifer Marshall and her great-grandchildren Stephanie, Cindy, Ashlyn, Michaelyn, Sarah, Seth and Luke.

Known for her sharp intellect and curiosity, Donna was an avid Jeopardy fan and read three newspapers every day until her last. Her wisdom and dedication to Nevada's history

and its people will be cherished forever. The vibrant way she lived her life will serve as an inspiration to all who knew her.

Services and burial will be private.

**Visit MDHCA:** [37198 Lanfair Rd., Goffs, California](#) (At the intersection of Lanfair and Goffs Roads)

[Google Map](#)

**Get in touch:** 760-733-4482 (voice and text) | [info@themojaveroad.org](mailto:info@themojaveroad.org)

Mailing Address: [37198 Lanfair Rd. G-15, Essex, California 92332](#)

MDHCA Website: <https://themojaveroad.org>

MDHCA Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MDHCA>

MDHCA Instagram: <https://instagram.com/themojaveroad>

East Mojave Heritage Trail Facebook: <https://facebook.com/groups/559278615161496>

[Unsubscribe](#)