Clara Denny

A memorial service for Clara Denny, 91, of Grinnell, who died Nov. 21, 2002, was held Friday afternoon, Jan. 3, 2003, at the Grinnell United Church of Christ-Congregational with the Rev. Bob Molsberry, pastor, officiating. Music was by the church's choir under the direction of John Rommereim and by a string quartet composed of musicians from the Des Moines Symphony who played the Larghetto from String Quartet in D Major by Cesar Franck. Memorials may be made to the United Church of Christ-Congregational or to Mayflower.

She was born Oct. 5, 1911, in Montezuma, Ga., to John B. and Ophelia Augusta Smith Guerry. She was raised in Montezuma and received the bachelor of arts degree in music and biology from Shorter Baptist College, Rome, Ga. She later graduated from Oberlin College in 1934 with a bachelor of music degree and did postgraduate study in piano at Juilliard School in New York.

She was married to Wayne Denny June 17, 1939, in Richmond, Va., and they lived in Atlanta, Ga., and Oberlin, Ohio, before moving to Grinnell in 1948.

For almost half a century she taught piano and voice in Grinnell, sending students on to successful careers in music. She performed as a vocal soloist and accompanist with Grinnell College student and faculty performers, and sang in or directed the choir of the United Church of Christ-Congregational for many years. She was a member of Entre Nous and P.E.O. and served several roles with the United Church of Christ-Congregational.

Over the years, she also lived with her family during extended sabbatical leaves of absence in Turkey, India and the Philippines and had traveled around the world five times, including a trip in the Trans-Siberian Express and a bus trip from Nepal to London during an India-Pakistan war. She and her husband moved to Mayflower in May, 1996.

She is survived by her husband of 63 years, Wayne; by two sons, Walter of Amherst, Mass., and John of Afton, Minn.; one sister Nanita Gottman; one brother John Guerry; five grandchildren and one great granddaughter.