



Sandra Kisler

July 6, 1938 - July 13, 2022

With her beautiful, generous smile, Sandra Elaine Kisler, affectionately known as Sandy, welcomed and embraced students, friends, and family for over eighty-four years. In the early morning hours of July 13, 2022, though heaven's choir of angels must have needed another voice and called Sandy to join them.

Born Sandra Elaine Wanamaker to Anna Marie Rautio and Buford Floyd Wanamaker in Wallace, Idaho, on July 6, 1938, Sandy spent most of her childhood and teen years in Wallace. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, however, Sandy along with her older siblings, Floyd and John, moved with their parents to Portland, Oregon, where they sought work in the war industries. Eventually, the Wanamaker family moved back to Wallace where Sandy and her brothers thrived, all eventually graduating from Wallace High School.

Sandy's belief in the importance of community involvement was established early in life. As a child, she was an active member of Campfire Girls, where she met some of her lifelong best friends. Ever the performer and musician, Sandy played the saxophone in the WHS band and sang in the school's choir. She loved acting and even won the Best Actress Award in 1954 as a member of the Thespians Drama Club. She also joined the pep club and honed her debating skills on the debate team. Outside of school, Sandy was a member

of Rainbow Girls and worked at JC Penney's each summer during her high school as well as college years. In 1956, Sandy demonstrated she was one smart cookie by graduating third in her class from Wallace High School.

Although her father died shortly after her high school graduation, Sandy's mother and older brother Floyd ensured she attended and graduated from the University of Idaho. Just as she had been active in high school, Sandy was equally engaged in university life. She continued playing her saxophone in the Vandal's university band and joined the SPURS, a service organization, where she ushered at concerts, even meeting Fats Domino and Buddy Holly, two musical icons of the day. Sandy always had a good chuckle when she told the story about meeting Mr. Domino backstage when he asked for a good restaurant recommendation in Moscow. Inexperienced in fine dining experiences, Sandy naively suggested the dining hall in the student union building! Sandy was also involved in student government and pledged Alpha Gamma Delta sorority. In 1960, she earned her BS in Elementary Education and was ready to embark upon her remarkable thirty-three-year career as an elementary school teacher.

Shortly after graduating from the U of I, Sandy began her teaching career in Warden, Washington, accepting a third-grade position at Janette Evans Elementary School. While teaching in Warden that first year, she met her soon-to-be husband, Wesley Kisler. Following a short courtship and engagement, the couple were married in Wallace, Sandy's hometown, on August 6, 1961, and then began their married life in Moses Lake. Sandy continued to teach a second year in Warden and gave birth to daughter Kari later that spring. The family of three moved to Moscow, Idaho, in 1963 where Sandy taught fourth grade for a year. After returning to Moses Lake a year later, Sandy and Wes welcomed their first son Dean in the summer of 1964.

Finally, in 1967, Sandy and Wes bought a home in Othello where they would

add their youngest child Bryce to their family, see all three children graduate from OHS and WSU, and live for the remainder of their lives. It was also during this time Sandy became a much beloved fourth grade teacher in Warden and Othello. Emulating one of her own favorite elementary school teachers, Sandy brought her love of music into her classroom, and her students could be seen marching around her room every morning, singing old-time favorites such as “Do Your Ears Hang Low?” and “The Cannibal King.” Over the years, Sandy kept in contact with dozens of former students and up until her final days was still receiving messages from many who told her she remained their favorite teacher. Several even confessed they were still singing those silly songs to their own children and grandchildren. Some students remembered her smile and laughter, while others considered her their “lightbulb,” as she had inspired them to love learning and to look beyond themselves to the wider world. Sandy felt blessed her students fondly remembered her and their time learning (and singing) together. All in all, Sandy taught a total of thirty-three years, thirty-one of those iconic years in Warden.

As busy as she was raising her children and influencing hundreds of eager little fourth graders, Sandy continued to be involved in her broader community. Through the years, she sang in the choir at Othello’s Presbyterian Church and taught Sunday School at the Congregational Church in Moses Lake. She was a member of AAUW, Delta Kappa Gamma, the Children’s Orthopedic Guild, and the Othello Theater Guild. In fact, she was quite the hit portraying one of the murderous old ladies in a production of Arsenic and Old Lace. While her three children were growing up, she was also involved in the local PTA and was both a Campfire Girls and Cub Scouts leader. Despite her busy schedule, Sandy could also always be counted upon to be a room mom and to bake her delicious chocolate chip cookies for her children’s class parties.

Sandy and Wes also fostered a love of history and introduced their children to the joys of travel as they spent many a Sunday driving to one of several historic destinations in the area so their children could tromp around old forts and missions, explore a museum or two, and learn about the awesome power of Washington's dams. The Hawaiian Islands also became a favored destination during Christmas vacations as well as an annual tradition.

In 2001, newly retired Sandy and Wes began splitting their time between their home in Othello and their Coachella Valley condo where they enjoyed golfing, traveling with friends, and eating out... a lot! For her 70th birthday, Sandy treated herself to a two-week trip to Europe with her childhood best friend Karen, fulfilling a dream she had had since her college days.

In her later years, Sandy lovingly cared for Wes, who had been diagnosed with Parkinson's and dementia, until his passing in 2018. During this time, she became involved in the Daughters of the American Revolution and started writing poetry again, even self-publishing a book of her own favorite poems. Last year, she won a DAR national poetry competition which pleased her immensely. Composing poems about what she observed outside of her window and about everyday activities while caring for Wes helped keep her brain sharp, her mind focused temporarily on something other than her husband's steady decline. Sandy also loved doing jigsaw puzzles and could be quite competitive with Wordle and Quordle. Sandy's miniature schnauzer Molly, who continually lathered her with "kisses and loves," brought much joy and amusement to her in her final years.

Sandy was preceded in death by her parents Buford and Anna Marie, her older brothers Floyd and John, and her beloved husband Wes. She is survived by her daughter Kari (Othello), son Dean and daughter-in-law Karen (Bothell), and son Bryce and daughter-in-law Debbie (Everett). Sandy was also extremely proud of her two granddaughters Katherine and Elizabeth

Kisler also of Bothell.

A memorial service for Sandy will be held at the Warden Community Church on Saturday, September 24, 2022, at 11:00 am. Sandy will join her husband Wes at Warden's Sunset Memorial Gardens. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations be made instead to the scholarship fund administered by Warden School District's P.A.W.S. organization.

Tribute Wall

MM

“ So very sorry to hear of Sandy’s passing. She was a wonderful teacher who connected with so many students over the years. Sandy mentored many teachers, answered questions and offered sincere, loving support to the newbies. This lady always had a ready smile. Even as times got more challenging. Surely she lived her life well, influenced many and left her mark in this world. So much love for Sandy.❤️

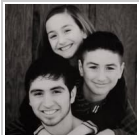
Mo McPartland - July 17, 2022 at 06:50 PM

KH

“ So sorry to hear of Sandi's passing. She was a valued member of Karneetsa Chapter, DAR and we will miss her dearly. We loved her poetry and writings. She always had a smile and was a gracious lady. Condolences and prayers to her family.

Karen Hand

Karen Hand - July 15, 2022 at 06:21 PM



“ So saddened with this news. 😞
I was just messaging with her a few days ago. She was simply the best teacher to all from Warden! She had the biggest heart and loved on us unconditionally. She will be greatly missed! Love you Mrs.Kisler ❤️

Jaime N Maribel Vela - July 15, 2022 at 03:03 PM

LK

“ Sandy has been my sister-in-law for so many years and she was a sweet kind person who will be missed by all her family and friends

Loretta Kisler - July 15, 2022 at 02:00 PM