



Sandra Blanchard

March 19, 1942 - May 12, 2021

Sandra May Blanchard, 79, of Zeeland, MI, passed away on May 12, 2021 following a sudden stroke. Sandy was born on March 19, 1942 to Paul and Margaret DeCenzo in Detroit. As a child she had a zest for life and a joy of discovery that she encouraged in others throughout her life. In 1958, she met Russell through the church youth group they both attended. They wed in September 1964, going on to have 2 daughters, Holly and Keely. The Blanchards first lived in Ferndale, MI, then moved to Marshall in 1970 and Zeeland in 1982. Sandy's passion for words and service led her to major in journalism at Wayne State University starting her career at the Royal Oak Daily Tribune. She worked for the Marshall Advisor, Holland Sentinel, Birder's World Magazine, Ebenezer Reformed Church in Holland and finally for the RCA Zeeland Classis. She continued to write articles by request for Ottawa County Parks. Countless people far and near have been blessed by Sandy's prolific, thoughtful correspondence. Sandy had many loves in her life, chief among them was Jesus Christ. Sandy knew Christ as her savior and was certain of her hope for life eternal with him. Her life was marked by loving and caring for others, often those who might feel marginalized, trying to be the hands and feet of Jesus to all she knew. This was reflected in her numerous lifelong volunteer activities such as the Friends of the Library and Girl Scouts in Marshall, and Special Ed Ministry in Zeeland. Her positive enthusiasm for Jesus made her certain of his plan for others' lives. Sandy promoted the best in everyone she met, always affirming them and communicating unconditional love. Sandy loved to ride her bike, stopping to visit friends she met along the way. Her interests and passions follow her most in the lives of her children and grandchildren. She flew to spend time with them several times a year and travelled cross country with Russ in their outfitted Sprinter van, going all the way to Alaska and back in 2008. She loved swimming, visiting national, state and county parks, sharing books, playing games and giving. She is survived by her husband Russ Blanchard of Zeeland; her daughters, Holly (John) Willsea of Portland, OR, and Keely (Anthony) Dien of Fountain Valley, CA; her beloved pride and joy: grandchildren, Wesley, Eli, Celeste, Garrett, Annika, and Isaac Willsea, Valerie, Emily, Stephanie, Natalie, Ian, and Elliot Dien; her brother Don DeCenzo.

She left the land of the dying for the land of the living. 2 Corinthians 5:1 "For we know that if our earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal dwelling

in the heavens, not made with hands." Visitation will be 6-8 pm Friday, June 11, 2021 at Yntema Funeral Home, 251 South State Street, Zeeland. A memorial service is planned for 2 pm Saturday, June 12th at Zeeland First Baptist Church, 246 West Main Avenue, Zeeland, MI 49464. The service will be livestreamed at <https://www.fbczeeland.org/memorial>. Interment will be in Zeeland Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be given to Parkview Adult Foster Care Home in Zeeland, or Cranhill Ministries in Rodney, MI.

Tribute Wall

CV

“I will always remember Sandy. I only knew her and Russ for a short time, but will remember them forever. Sandy's warmth and caring will be greatly missed. I am so thankful for her love of Jesus and how she was used by our Lord to spread His love.”

Cindy VanAntwerp - August 05, 2021 at 04:00 PM

JW

“When our daughter was confirmed at Zion Lutheran Church in Marshall in the 1980's, Sandy wrote on the card she sent- Aim high, Dream big, and Let God be your Guide. Sandy and Russ lived this message and conveyed it to Keely and Holly and their 12 grandchildren. When you would read her Christmas letter, you knew how deeply she loved them all! Sandy was a Forever Friend.. God's Peace to all your family, Richard and Janet Walsh, Marshall, MI”

Janet Walsh - August 05, 2021 at 04:00 PM

MW

“The passing of Sandy is a profound loss. She was a kind, beautiful lady that will be greatly missed. Sandy showed her kindness and her caring soul when she would come on several occasions to visit my mother, a long time friend, Carla, in Hospice at a Battle Creek facility. Love to the Blanchard family”

Melinda Wolff - August 05, 2021 at 04:00 PM

CN

“I was so touched seeing Sandy's family members taking part in her memorial service last Saturday. We were out of town when I learned of her passing and I was stunned to say the least. I had just seen her at the pool and also visiting a dear friend of hers at Royal Atrium Inn where I work. Sandy and I worked together years ago at a non-profit and went through some challenging times. I remember having her over for coffee some time after that and apologizing for some circumstances I hadn't understood at the time that had been hurtful to her. We had a beautiful reconciliation and remained in touch, exchanging cards and notes for many years. Sandy touched the lives of many people. I am blessed to have known her and my sympathies and prayers are with her loved ones. Sincerely, Cindy Nyhoff”

Cindy Nyhoff - June 15, 2021 at 12:00 AM

TI

“So very sorry to hear of your sudden loss. My prayers and love to the family during this difficult time.”

Tiffany - June 11, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JL

“My cousin, My friend and My sister. I will miss her dearly. I will miss our text messages, card's and occasional gifts that we would share. I will also remember that she lived in the Love of Jesus! This life is short, but eternity is never-ending! Praise God for that!!! I look forward to the Great Big Family Reunion in Heaven. Please know that the entire family is in my prayers and will continue to be in the days ahead. All my Love, June”

June Lage - June 10, 2021 at 12:00 AM

RC

“A warm-hearted, thoughtful, intelligent and delightful friend for more than 60 years. She is greatly missed.-----Dick and Nancy Noble”

Richard C - June 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MG

“Sorry to hear about Sandy. I enjoyed knowing her through Girl Scouts in Marshall. Prayers for the family”

Marlene Glotfelty - May 29, 2021 at 12:00 AM

KB

“Thoughtful, faith-filled, caring, strong, smart and beloved by friends and her wonderful family.”

Ken and Patti Bing - May 28, 2021 at 12:00 AM

CC

“Sandy was a friend but most of all I admired her in her strength in her faith. My prayers to you Russ and your daughters and grandchildren.”

Christi Broersma Caughey - May 26, 2021 at 12:00 AM

SV

“Russ and family, I have many fond memories of Sandy's smile and the great neighbors you were to my parents. May God comfort you during this time. Sue VanKley”

Sue VanKley - May 24, 2021 at 12:00 AM

CB

“*Dear Russ, children, and grandchildren, We express our deepest sympathy to all of you in the sudden passing of your loved one. I know that Sandy loved each and every one of you. I talked to Sandy several times at the Zeeland pool. She was so glad to be able to see her 3 oldest grandchildren while they lived in Zeeland. What a wonderful way to spend time with grandma the last few years of her life!❤️ So glad she was healthy and able to give in that way. She was so proud of you!! My mom also died quickly from a stroke, but God's timing was perfect. Praying for you in the difficult days ahead. Love and heartfelt sympathy, Craig and Mary Borgman*”

Craig and Mary Borgman - May 23, 2021 at 12:00 AM

CH

“*I have known Russ and Sandy Blanchard since our grade school days in Ferndale, MI. Unfortunately they moved west and we moved east so we only met them a couple of times a year for lunch in Lansing. Sandy was a lovely lady and I was shocked when we heard the news of her stroke. Their children and grandchildren live out west in Oregon and California. Not sure what Russ will do know but we support him.
Clark and Joanne Hartzel.*”

Clark Hartzel - May 23, 2021 at 12:00 AM

LC

“*Deepest sympathy! We will miss see Sandra every May.*”

Lori Curnick - May 20, 2021 at 12:00 AM

GE

“*Saddened by the loss of Sandy. Got to know her when she & Russ spent time at our Park [staying in her brother Don's camper]. She was only in our lives for a relatively short period of time. But it was long enough to realize what a special woman she was to her family & friends. Our condolences & prayers to her family.*”

Gene - May 20, 2021 at 12:00 AM

CH

“*You know how we loved getting together with such long time friends....even though we had to meet half way most of the time! Long time friends, especially for Clark, are treasures! We were stunned by Sandy's untimely passing, and will miss her smiling face. We will be here for you, just ask.*”

Clark and Joanne Hartzel - May 19, 2021 at 12:00 AM

KK

“Wonderful friend....enjoyed having her as part of First Reformed's women's Wednesday night group for several years. She will be missed. Be at peace with Jesus dear friend!”

Kathy Kempema - May 18, 2021 at 12:00 AM

CN

“Sandy opened her heart and her home to our family. We have many fond memories. She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.”

Caroline Nakic - May 18, 2021 at 12:00 AM

CN

“Sandy opened her heart and her home to our family. We have many fond memories over the years. She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.”

Caroline Nakic - May 18, 2021 at 12:00 AM

FB

“Sandy as I knew her was a most giving person in so many ways her time talent and treasure especially her time for others. One of God's people who WAS salt and light to others.”

Fred Bleitz - May 17, 2021 at 12:00 AM

BD

“Sandy will be greatly missed by her church family. Her vibrant additions to ladies' Bible Study are treasured. We grieve with Russ and the family. Our sympathy to all.”

Bob and Bertha Drew - May 17, 2021 at 12:00 AM