



## Sandy Robinette

August 28, 1942 - September 28, 2022

The gravestone, if there was one, would read: Sandy Robinette, Born August 28, 1942, Died September 28, 2022, Beloved. Not many words and numbers for 80 years of a life that, like a great point guard, made the lives around it better.

Sandy was born in Santa Monica, California, the only child of parents who divorced early. Her mother Lorraine left her in a series of foster homes while she learned a job as a secretary and eventually earned enough to support the two of them. What Sandy remembered most about that period was not the series of short abandonments, but the fact that her mother always came back for her. After her mother's death in 1980, she remained Sandy's North Star throughout the rest of her own life.

Nothing in her early life suggested what she would become; one of those "good" girls hidden under the canopy of blond cheerleaders and In-crowd cliques so prevalent in high school. So it would have been a shock to get pregnant, married, divorced and raising a child as a single parent much as her mother had done, all before the age of twenty-two. But like her mother she became a secretary, moved up the ladder quickly with her innate intelligence and ability to relate. She married twice more before marriage finally took and she left Los Angeles for Toronto, Lompoc, California and eventually, Seattle. Not only had she left the environs where she had grown up, but the corporate

world of secretaries and bosses.

In Seattle she opened and ran three clothing stores, all of which made money the first year and thereafter. Her latent mathematical talents had begun to show themselves. Put a spreadsheet in front of her and her eyes would glaze over. But the stores made money. Some combination of her genuine connections with her customers and that math. And maybe the dogs. All through her life she had dogs. And one of them, Bouncer, a stray like most of the others, would come with her to the shop in Issaquah, then go to sleep on one of the easy chairs by the dressing rooms. If a customer came in with small children, he would slide quietly out of the chair and slip behind the counter. Small children liked to pull on his ears. Later, in her fifties, she built and managed a kennel. That business followed the pattern of all the others, becoming wildly successful before she sold it.

All of this would be interesting and define a life well-lived. But at the core of her was a little girl who asked “why?” Not the cutesy questions: why does it rain or is the moon really made of green cheese. But the tough ones. The ones that look into the dark corners of a mind where the spiders and snakes hide. The ones we don’t want to answer for ourselves. Why do we do what we do, make the choices we make. Many of her romantic relationships failed, not out of love, but because those questions couldn’t or wouldn’t be answered. What made her compelling was her willingness to make herself open and to hope for the same.

That curiosity was combined with the nature of a caretaker. When her last husband, a biker from one of the east coast biker gangs, was dying of liver cancer, she nursed him, married him a few weeks before his death and gave his life insurance away to his son. After, she became a hospice volunteer for three years, finding solace in helping the dying and their loved ones. Some of this explains her love of dogs. Dogs put no boundaries on their devotion. They

want a bowl of kibble, a ride in the back seat, their head out the open window and if a little slobber dribbles down your neck, it's a small price to pay for unconditional love.

Sandy was a long-time member of the Hemlock Society (now become Final Exit) and believed in the right of self-determination in the manner of one's death should it be necessary. Dementia and complications from Covid-19 took that choice from her. Her heart held her here long after she would have wanted to go. The nurses and staff at Silverado did an incredible job caring for her the last year and their love and affection made the end of her life bearable.

She is survived by her son Dan, daughter-in-law Yvonne, granddaughter Roxanne and her husband Dustin, their children Alyssa and Eli, her partner Toby, and friends scattered around the country who loved her. Per her wishes she will have a green burial: dressed in a cotton dress with red socks and a knit green hat she wore in cold weather, wrapped in a homemade shroud and laid on a bamboo raft. In a year a cedar will be planted somewhere close.

One of my best memories of her: I've driven to see her at the kennel, a warm day in September. I'm in my car in the parking lot and a young couple in a late-model sedan pull in and park. Sandy must have expected them because she comes out of the kennel door, led by two golden retrievers on leashes. She's a woman in her fifties, grown into herself: lean, her forearms tanned and corded from muscling dogs and bags of kibble. She lets the dogs loose and they race across the graveled lot, their leashes trailing, leap in joyous exuberance on their owners just out of the car. After some hugs and kisses, they run back to Sandy, circling and sitting down by her side. In the wondrous language of dogs, they say "We love you, we're happy you've come back for us, but do we have to go? Do we have to?"



# Tribute Wall

RP

“ My very favorite cousin and friend for 50 years—loved her! I met her when I was 19, flying into LA from MN. I stayed with my Aunt Loraine but spent lots of time with Sandy. She made sure it was a whirlwind of a two-week vacation for me. I returned 8 years later for Loraine’s funeral which was extremely sad. Over the years we exchanged many letters and phone calls. Sandy visited MN a few times, my husband and I visited her in Asheville NC and Ferndale WA. She was a fine person, complex, curious, hard-working, caring. I will miss her. I will cherish my memories of her. Love, Robin

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**Robin Pearson** - October 14, 2022 at 12:00 AM

CK

“ So sorry to hear of Sandy’s passing! I met her in an exercise class and we became friends...having lunch or breakfast occasionally. Then covid hit and we lost touch. She was kind, caring and incredibly funny! She will be missed.

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**Casey Keenan** - October 14, 2022 at 12:00 AM