

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

# *Patricia Ann Sanders*

APRIL 27, 1931 - AUGUST 26, 2020



REMARKS WRITTEN BY HER DAUGHTER,

## **LINDA SANDERS GARY**

When I went to Camp Pin Oak for the first time I was excited and a little scared and worried that I might be homesick for the 2 week camp session. My mom encouraged me and kept reminding me of all the fun activities I would do and new friends I would make. Thinking of her words helped me get through the first few days. She was right, of course, and I spent many summers at camp after that. When I

was an adult she told me that she had cried on the way home from dropping me at camp- knowing it would be a good experience but still a little worried about me. She continued to be a source of support and encouragement for all my life, no matter what crazy things I might want to do and even if she was a little worried about them. She was always there with love and a smile and a hand to hold.

My mom loved nature and especially loved walking the beach when she was near the ocean or a lake. We walked beaches in Florida and the Bahamas and along Lake Michigan and always seemed to go farther than planned because there were so many interesting shells or rocks or pieces of driftwood to look at and collect. She told me a story of a time when she was in Florida for a conference and walked the beach collecting

shells. She put them on her small hotel deck that evening and in the morning all the shells were walking around on her deck looking for the beach! The shells weren't empty after all! She had to run around collecting them and take them back to the ocean. She was a lot more careful about which shells she took home after that! Her joy at all the wonder and diversity in nature has been passed on and I can't look at a flower or shell or butterfly without thinking of her.

Some of my best memories are with my mom at our Lake Michigan cottage. She was with us when we bought it 30 years ago and came up every year to walk the beach, watch the sunset, and eat cherry strudel and Whippy Dip ice cream. Her grandchildren remember painting rocks and sticks with her, building sand castles, climbing the sand dunes and swinging on the rope swing. It is a special place for our family and she will forever be a part of those memories.

Thanks, Mom, for all your love, wisdom shared, and the great memories. That love continues to grow through Jeff, Laura and I and all your grandchildren and great grandchildren.



REMARKS WRITTEN BY HER SON,

## JEFFREY SANDERS

The obituary says most of it, but not all. I'm sure they never do for anyone.

One thing I remember about my mom was how she hated to exercise, which was her misfortune since she lived in an active family. She tried to be a good sport about it. Camping? She agreed to go but only if she could sleep in the car. Skiing? Very reluctantly. Tennis? Hated it. Ice skating? I recall coming home from school and finding her lying on the couch with a concussion after a fall on

the ice. She took golf lessons- just one, though. She told me that she said to the pro "I'm not a golfer." He replied, "No, you're not."

My sister reminded us of how Mom always said she wanted to raise her children and grandchildren, especially the girls, to be "fierce." She did that, and she was pretty fierce herself. She was in her 80's when she decided to get her first tattoo. Her grandson, Shane, went to the parlor with her and got an identical one for himself—an image of Mom's cat who had recently died.

She told me a story of when she first moved into the care facility and was sitting at the dinner table with some other residents who were making remarks about one of the staff who had a tattoo sleeve. It was obvious

they didn't approve, but my mom just listened for awhile until, eventually, she said, "Well, I just moved in but, when we know each other better, maybe I'll show you my tattoo." She was met with silence.

She could be tough, but I will remember the kindness that was at her core. One Sunday afternoon at Mom's house we were talking when the door bell rang. She went to answer it and there stood two Jehovah's Witnesses. She stayed there talking for the longest time, which I thought was odd. I knew Mom didn't connect with the theology she was hearing and never would. She didn't adhere to any formal religious tradition, certainly not theirs. I knew what I would do in that situation, the same as what most people do-politely (or sometimes not so politely) end the conversation and send them on their way. But Mom stood there for the longest time. She listened patiently, received their materials graciously, and thanked them for stopping by.

We didn't always see things the same way, but there were times I wished we did. One morning we were sitting outside of Three Story Coffee in the Millbottom and watched a freight train pass by.

Mom said, "I really like all those paintings they have on the sides of the freight cars. I wonder who paints them?"

I said, "That's graffiti. Some would consider it vandalism."

Mom, "That one looks like a colorful mountain range."

Me, "That's the guys name, Mom."

I love my mother very much and, as time goes by, will miss her even more than I do now, which is a lot. When we talked about dying she told me, "Don't be sad that it's over, be glad that it happened." Sorry, Mom, but I'm feeling pretty sad right now.

We will not be having a service anytime soon. Mom wanted to keep things as simple as possible and neither







Our relationship was a real one. There were times we both had to work hard for it and, over the past few months, as she continued to fade away, we spent a lot more time together. I can't say that we held hands for every step, but I at least I feel like I walked my mother safely home.

REMARKS WRITTEN BY HER DAUGHTER,

## LAURA SANDERS ARNDT

When we were filling out Mom's death certificate, we had to list her occupation. Linda, Jeff, and I sat in silence looking at each other. We were all thinking the same thing--naming just one job sounded hollow. What word would encapsulate Mom's life occupation? Then someone said it. "Educator!" Yes. Though Mom was never a formal classroom teacher, her essence was absolutely that of a Master Teacher. In every moment of her life she was either teaching others through her actions and words, or enthusiastically learning about... anything... and sharing her new insights with others. Here are lessons she taught me.

### *1. Treasure family and friend relationships above all else.*

This was the heartbeat of Mom. She walked beside every member of her family and her dear friends on each of our life journeys. She was always the listener, cheerleader, advisor, and giver of love and acceptance for each person's unique path. She would make us feel special by choosing to be with us in some way. If she couldn't be physically present, she was with each of us through cards, letters, emails, and talks on the phone. Though my family lived in Colorado, she made frequent trips to visit. She wanted to melt into our worlds-- sit with us to listen to our thoughts and stories, encourage us create new ones, meet our friends, see the places we love, attend our events, walk the paths we walked and experience what we experienced. She said by doing that she could visualize the experiences we would tell her on the phone and in letters between her visits. What she did for one, she did for each of her kids and grandkids!



weddings nor funerals are simple these days.

In one of our recent conversations she told me that she was not afraid of being dead, but worried about the process of dying. I hope she thinks that the dying part wasn't too bad. It seemed like it wasn't, but how could I know for sure?

She will be cremated and one of these days we will gather at my sister's cottage to place her ashes in Lake Michigan. She wants everyone there for the occasion. "That will be fun," she said. That way, she told me, "In the future, when family is at the cottage, the children will feel the wind, or hear the birds, or watch the sunset and say, 'There's Grandma!'"



### *2. Be an advocate for people of all cultures, races, and walks of life.*

Mom was an advocate and activist, inspiring and empowering all she knew and even more she would never know. She learned it from a young age growing up in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Louisi-

ana, Missouri, in the 1930s and 40s. Her mother took little Pat with her to prisons and homes for the mentally ill to sit and talk with the people. They would cross segregation lines to attend services at black churches. Her uncle, who hired WWII German prisoners to work in the fields of his Stark Brothers Nursery, would take little Pat up to the barb-wired fence to meet them and shake their hands. "We'd never met anyone from another country before." She modeled this advocacy in her adult life, and instilled it in her family. Whatever cause her children

or grandchildren took on, she was the first to say "I'm in. What can I do to help!" She sponsored children in Rwanda and Nepal, and offered scholarships for schools and struggling youth. She supported refugees in the Congo and immigrants from Iraq and Somalia. She sent books and financial support to orphanages and schools in Guatemala, and across Asia, Africa and the US. The list of her gifts and impacts is endless.



### *3. Be a collector (in a bigger sense).*

"I am a collector of words." She gathered stories, knowledge and experiences. She collected moments and wonders while walking in the woods and on beaches. And, yes, she did treasure her favorite rocks, shells, flowers, and driftwood because of the memories they held within.

### *4. Be in Nature.*

Nature was her comfort, her joy, her daily passion, her connection to Spirit. She taught us the wonders of watching hummingbirds and butterflies drinking nectar from flowers, of waiting for and celebrating the one day of the year her favorite day lilies would bloom, of digging in the dirt to add just one more flower-friend to the garden, of listening to the breeze and feeling the sun on our faces. Some of her favorite things were sunsets, walks on the beach looking for shells, listening to ocean waves, the smell of roses and sweet peas. She loved all flowers. When Jeff asked, "Which are your favorites?" She replied, "None are my unfavorites." Her obvious answer. She taught us to touch strong trees and watch for hawks floating on the air currents overhead.



As she left us for the next part of her Soul journey, her favorite whale songs were playing in the background and she had rose perfume wafting up from her pillow. The outside door was opened so she could feel the fresh air moving across her face and smell the freshly cut grass. She lived a life rich with experiences and positive impacts. Of moments. She was our Master Teacher who changed the world for the better, and planted seeds in the hearts and minds of family, friends, and countless others in Jefferson City and around the world. We will nurture those seeds, Mom, and help them grow and multiply. We will feel you with us when we see the hawk, hummingbird, and monarch, when we hug the tree, and of course when we smell and see the flowers. We will carry your light forward. Thank you for your love, and for believing in us. We love you so.