



Sandy J. Richards

December 29, 1938 - February 4, 2022

RICHARDS, Sandra J., neé Finkel, age 83, passed away February 4, 2022, beloved wife of Ronald P. Richards, devoted mother of Pam (Sonny) Saeks and Doug (Kelly) Richards of San Diego, CA, dear sister of Marsha (Rabbi Seth) Bernstein of Montgomery County, MD, loving grandmother of Karly and Kevin (Sarah) Saeks and Ryan and Regan Richards. Services Tuesday, February 8th at 1:00 pm at Weil Kahn Funeral Home, 8350 Cornell Road, Cincinnati, OH 45249. Visitation will begin at 12:00 pm. Masks are required. The service will also be livestreamed on the Weil Kahn website at https://webcast.funeralvue.com/events/embed_viewer/68795. Shiva will be observed Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening at 6:00 pm at the home of Pam and Sonny Saeks, 11032 Woodlands Way in Blue Ash. Information to livestream and participate in Shiva remotely will be available at <https://nhs-cba.org/connect/connection-information-sandy-richards/>. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions to the Ron and Sandy Richards Social Action and Engagement Fund at Northern Hills Synagogue (<https://nhs-cba.org/funds/>) would be appreciated.

Eulogy for Sandra Richards

Submitted by Pamela Richards Saeks

Dear friends and loved ones,

Below are the eulogies that were delivered at my mother's funeral. I believe these paints the best picture of who she was and all that she did to make the

world a better place.

I absolutely hate going to funerals.

It makes me think way too much about my own mortality... about those I love and those I've lost. It conjures up fear and heartbreak and the undeniable fact that no one can escape the inevitable.

I always dread walking through those doors, signing my name in the book, standing in line to pay my respects, trying to think of the right thing to say, scanning the room for friends and acquaintances as I walk into the sanctuary, saying how I wish we could be seeing each other "under better circumstances", hoping for the service to start so it can end.

But then a funny thing happens... every single time.

You see, even though I didn't want to go. I am always glad I went.

In fact, there's never been a time that I didn't walk out a way better person than I was when I walked in.

Because here's the thing... although I go to funerals because someone died, every time I leave one of them, I have an even better blueprint for how to live. Through the eulogies given by friends and loved ones, the part about life that really matters makes itself abundantly clear.

...It's not about how much you paid for your house, it's about how you made it a home...

...It's not about all the fancy vacations you took, it's about the paths you forged...

...it's not about all the little stuff that gets in the way, like petty disagreements, and politics...

...it's about the lessons you learned and the wisdom you instilled...

...the respect that you earned and the hurdles you overcame...

...the love you gave and the examples you set...

So, for what it's worth, here's my takeaway: Even though we can't keep what we get in this life, no one can take away what we gave.

So, what did we give... to our loved ones, to our community, to the world? For me, it's always a reminder in real time that I have a lot of work to do before I

leave this earth.

How can I inspire and lead and love in a way that will leave the best part of me behind? That's what funerals can do for us, and today, even if you didn't want to be here.

I hope you'll leave feeling glad you were... realizing that whether you knew her well, or just in passing, Sandy Richards left you with a gift that you can continue to pay forward by living your best life just like she did.

So here goes...

Picture this -

A close-knit family gathers for Passover. The Self-Appointed Family Photographer suggests a group photo. It's what she always does, and as always, everyone squeezes together, sporting goofy grins and ear-to-ear smiles as they sling their arms haphazardly over each other's shoulders. Meanwhile, said Family Photographer's husband helps organize the unruly gang into some semblance of order. He lines up the shot and carefully moves her into position. Handing her the camera, he pivots seamlessly into the mix as she prepares to snap the picture.

"Say cheese," she says as she clicks the button. And just like that a perfect moment in time has been preserved for posterity, a moment that would have been lost be it not for her persistence in making sure to capture this, and so many other little slices of life that will forever be looked back on with fondness and warmth.

So what's the big deal? Don't most families have that relative who always takes the pictures? Of course they do.

But it just so happens that the Self-appointed Family Photographer in this particular case was my mom, Sandy Richards, and she was completely blind...

And just because she had a progressive eye disease that caused her to lose her vision later in life, my incredible, unstoppable mother refused to let that get in her way. In fact, she didn't let ANYTHING keep her down! She wasn't very

big, but she was mighty!

Don't you dare try to tell her she couldn't do something, because she'd prove you wrong every time!

While she was the most capable, strong, and sometimes stubborn person I've ever known, even she wasn't able to do all she did without the support of the most loving, devoted and selfless person on the planet, her husband, my dad, Ron Richards.

Let's face it... he could have just taken those pictures himself. It would have been a lot quicker and easier... and to be honest, they might not have been quiet as out of focus or out of frame as they were when she did.

But by setting up the shot, guiding her into range and letting her continue to do what she loved to do, be it take a photo, make her favorite recipe, serve on a synagogue committee, tend to the garden or volunteer on a weekly basis, he made it possible for her to live a life filled with dignity and purpose.

So even though she could no longer see, she never had to live in total darkness as long as he was by her side.

His immense love and devotion to her, combined with her fierce determination and incredible courage, made it possible for her to not just see the light in every situation, but to be a beacon of hope and inspiration to all those who knew her.

Together their light shined bright enough to illuminate her way.

And today, I know my mom's light is shining down on all of us.

My mom turned 83 years old just a month before she died, and even though she had recently undergone triple bypass surgery, was managing Crohn's disease, arthritis and several other aches and pains that come with aging, she tried not to let anyone know just how difficult, challenging and often painful things were for her. She complained more about not being able to eat garlic than not being able to see. She just wanted to feel and be normal. There was nothing frail about her.

I mean, seriously... she still walked over a mile on the treadmill every day.

She still wore cute outfits and never stepped out of the house looking anything

but beautiful and put together. It was always important to her to look her best, to be at her best, to push through any pain or sadness or fear she might be experiencing to show the world she wasn't gonna let anything keep her down. Her nails were always done, her hair always stylish and in fact, it was just two weeks ago that we went shopping for new eyeshadow together. That was the last time I saw her before she went into the hospital.

Even though she couldn't see, she somehow managed to apply her makeup pretty darn well, and even when she didn't get it quite right, my dad, God love him, learned how to fill in her eyebrows, fix her lipstick and even flat iron her hair.

A lot of women don't even go to that kind of trouble for themselves. But he took the time to learn how because he cared so much. He learned to cook, shop for bras and style hair. It melted my heart to see my dad so lovingly brush her hair off her cheek or fix a lipstick smudge.

My sister-in-law Jenny Schoenfeld sums it up best, "everyone should have a Ron by their side!"

But there was nothing he wouldn't do for her and nothing she wouldn't do for him, or us.

I am the luckiest person alive because I was loved and adored by my mother from the day I was born. She was one of the most affectionate people I've ever known. Sometimes, for no particular reason, she would come up and just wrap her arms around for a hug or put her hand in mine. She and my dad never ever missed anything Doug and I did, from choir concerts, school plays and BBYO installations to attending all of our baseball and softball games. More importantly, she taught me how to live my life, one "Sandy-ism" at a time. Here are a few:

- "You can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool your mother!" With the exception of the surprise party I got her to throw for me without her realizing I was completely behind it, truer words were never spoken.
- You must practice walking in high heels by balancing books on your head

and promenading around the living room until you can carry yourself like the runway model you were clearly born to be!!

- Even if you accidentally cut off an entire limb, DO NOT BLEED ON THE CARPET.
- You must always sit like a lady and must never forget to cross your legs when seated on the bimah
- You don't have to love your mother, but you must respect her.
- Never ever go out of the house without looking your best and always wear lipstick – you never know if you'll run into the Queen of England at Kroger. I'm not supposed to be wearing makeup today or even look in a mirror but my mom would hate that, after all she'd say, "you're going to be seeing so many people!" So I did my best to look my best, not for the people here today, of which there are many, not for them... or for me... only for you.
- You must keep a record of the menu you served to each of your dinner guests in a card file so when you invite them back, even if it's 20 years later, you won't risk serving them the same thing again... God forbid!
- If you don't like the actual date of your birthday, change it. Make people start celebrating it four months earlier. My mom hated her original birthday because it was on the same day as her parents' anniversary, which meant she had to stay home and babysit while they went out. She always said, if you don't like the way something is, don't bitch about it... do something about it -- in spite of those who think you're nuts.

- You can and should send your two-year-old toddler outside to play while you're preparing dinner. Just put little bells on their shoes and open the kitchen window. As long as you continue to hear the bells, everything is fine. If the bells stop ringing you should probably go check on your kid. Just an FYI, when Doug and I were toddlers, there was a railroad track 25 feet from our back door. No surprise she thought I was too overprotective of my kids because I carried their baby monitor with me wherever I went in the house.

- When you're talking to your daughter on the phone and your son clicks in, tell her you'll call her back. But when you're talking to your son, and your daughter clicks in, also tell her you'll call her back. Clearly, she is chopped liver.
- You should always stand up for yourself and never let anyone push you around, bully you or try to keep you down.
- Be brave. Be the one to stand up and speak up when no one else will.
- You should always go after your dreams because you can achieve them if you believe in yourself. After all, your mother believes in you so why shouldn't everyone else?
- Make sure you value yourself because there will always be people who can't see your worth. Don't let one of them be you.
- Don't be afraid to ask for what you want. If things aren't right, change them, make them better.
- Always vote for yourself. When I was seven I followed that advice and won the competition by one vote! Go mom!
- And most important of all... be the best wife, mother and grandmother in the world. Show those you love that they matter. Stay in touch with them even if they don't respond every time, start thinking about their birthdays three months in advance and try hard to find gifts they'll love, take them places, teach them things, get on the floor and play with them, praise their accomplishments, applaud their performances, tell them they're capable and loved, give them confidence and make them feel like the most special and important people on the planet and try hard to overlook the little stuff because nothing's more important than having each other in your lives.

Which leads me to her bashert, Ron. Theirs was a love story like no other. Ironically, both my parents were born in 1938 in Omaha, Nebraska. Their fathers, Sam and Dave found their way there via Ellis Island and while they were members of the very first chapter of Sam Beber AZA, a high school club for Jewish boys, now known as BBYO International, their future offspring, Sandy and Ron, didn't meet until they were students at Indiana University. As

you can see from her engagement photo, Sandy Finkel was a total knock out. Some would say she looked like a movie star.

My mom says she decided to go to school far away so she could break ties with all her suitors back home and play the field in a new arena. That lasted only about a month thanks to a fresh-faced Sammy (Sigma Alpha Mu) boy named Ron who fell in love with her at first sight. He was 20, she was 19 when they stood under the Chupah to begin their life together.

Together they built several businesses and worked side by side most of their lives. They were part of the first group of people who helped turn a tiny yellow brick building in Finneytown into a thriving congregation.

Northern Hills Synagogue has been an important center of my parents' lives for five decades. From the second they walked through its doors back in 1968, it became their home, and its members their family!

Sandy was the past NHS Board Treasurer, Co-President of the Sisterhood, Co-Chair of the Interior Design committee for the current facility, Chair of the congregation's 40th Anniversary Gala. She was Vice President of B'nai B'rith Women, a board member of National Council of Jewish Women, and a member of the steering committee of the Federation's Woman's Professional Division. She was instrumental in starting the Gift Shop at NHS when it moved to its current location on Fields Ertel Road, and started the NHS Rummikub Group and Book Club, both of which have been going strong for forty years. She and my dad also served on the board of the Cincinnati Film Commission and were the Chairs of the Cincinnati International Folk Festival at Convention Center. My mother is a proud Life Member of Hadassah and volunteered for many years at Cedar Village and the Inclusion Network, and even though she couldn't see, she still managed to find ways to give back to her community through her work distributing produce at the Jewish Family Service Food

Pantry, and most recently helping to prepare items to be shipped to those in need overseas through Mathew 25 Ministries.

As you can see, her life was filled with purpose, and she brought meaning to all the lives she touched. Mine more than almost anyone.

My mother and I had a very special bond, a connection that I can't even explain. I told her everything. She was my confidant, my sounding board, my best friend... my everything. She taught me to be a wife, a mother, a human being. She exemplified what it meant to be caring and gracious and giving. She showed me how to face everything life throws at you with optimism, strength and courage.

She never told me to "get over it" when I was in pain and let me bitch about anyone and everything until I was blue in the face knowing I could trust her to never tell.

She was just as proud of me for publishing my one little book as she was of Doug for publishing dozens. She was so happy for my success in my career and she and my dad attended almost every Shalom Family event I put on. My favorite memory was watching them pass out hamantaschen to all the kids at the Purim Parties each year. She applauded my creativity and appointed me her official decorator from the time I was 12. She encouraged me to keep reaching higher and was my biggest cheerleader and fan.

She was firm but fair, smart, intuitive and devoted to her community and the people she loved. Most of all, she saw all my flaws and loved me in spite of them.

She couldn't stand that in recent years she wasn't able to help me more with entertaining for holidays and hosting celebrations, but what she never realized was, it was my greatest pleasure to do for her and serve her and be there for her. She deserved that. And it was my honor.

She did so much and gave so selflessly to all of us her whole life.

I get that's hard for someone who likes to be in control. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree that's for sure. But in the end, as much as she was losing

more and more of her ability to control her world, she never ever gave in. She was in charge until the day she died.

And while we can drive ourselves crazy with all the “what if’s”, we all know that Sandy Richards did what she wanted to do and no one was going to tell her otherwise. She left this world on her own terms, living her life to its fullest, making the most of every day she was here, not giving in or giving up and always looking at the bright side, because after all...

As we already know, she was blessed with the world’s most wonderful husband, and she had a daughter who loved her more than words can say. Who learned at her knee how to host Jewish holidays and make a Jewish home. My favorite memories involve setting the table for Passover with her beautiful china and getting to make the matzo ball soup because she insisted no one made it better than me.

And thanks to her, I got to sneak back to the synagogue kitchen to help the sisterhood ladies every Shabbat as they prepared the kiddush for a bar or bat mitzvah, absorbing everything I could about how to prepare beautiful dessert trays, sculpt tuna fish salad into a lifelike fish with an olive for an eye, make melon balls and julienned carrots and whip up a kiddush luncheon for hundreds.

I learned from the best, the NHS Sisterhood, some of whom have prepared the lunch my family will eat today. What could be more fitting? They are more than a Sisterhood, they are amazing unsung superstars who helped shape my life in so many ways and who gave my mother a sense of belonging from the minute she moved to town.

And she had a son in law. She was a second mother to Sonny. After one month of dating him I brought him home to meet my parents. They treated him like a son from the second he walked through the door. And as such, one of the first items of business for my mom was cutting Sonny’s very unfortunate Jewfro that was at least three inches high.

She loved Sonny so much. He got better gifts for his birthday than I did! She even cut the carrots in his salad a special way and always took a genuine

interest in him and his work, even if Chemical Engineering and Corporate Finance wasn't in her wheelhouse.

Most of all, he knew how proud she was of him and his accomplishments, even if some of them included his involvement with the Democratic party! I told her the day I married Sonny that I chose him because I knew that we would have the kind of true love and devotion to each other that my own parents shared. And I was right! Which is extra great because with Ron and Sandy as your role models for what a happy married life is supposed to be, the bar was very high. She was always so grateful for Sonny and for the love and respect he had for me and for them.

And you were a devoted and loving grandmother to Karly and Kevin. You knew the heartache we experienced before they came into our lives. You hated to see me suffer... as I cried on your shoulder day after day longing to be a mother, struggling to get through each day, each treatment, feeling so heartbroken. And you were there for me the whole time, loving me, assuring me, hurting for me.

I knew you were sad too, of course you wanted to be a grandmother, but you did finally become one... and a great one I might add. You and dad rushed up to Chicago both times the kids were born. And from the moment you held them, they became part of you, and you them.

You took them on outings, had overnights and played games. To watch you giving my kids the same hugs and snuggles you gave to me, to see you and Dad at every baseball and basketball game Kevin ever played, going with Karly to your weekly lunch and volunteer outings at Mathew 25 Ministries, helping us create a desert oasis for Kevin's bar mitzvah luncheon with a 20 foot Bedouin tent, and walking down the aisle with a smile that lit the entire room at his wedding this past May, as you officially welcomed Sarah, your fifth grandchild into the fold. From the day you met her, you treated her as if she were just as much yours as the other four.

And finally, knowing the pride you felt when Kevin brought things full circle

when he became the Assistant City Director of Cincinnati BBYO, the organization your father Sam and Grandpa Dave helped found back in Omaha in the 1920's, and one that has been an important and life changing organization for many of our family members through the generations, including Sonny, Doug, Kevin and me and the whole Goldhoff gang. Your connection with my kids was truly special and they loved you with all their hearts. Karly has lovingly called you Chip Chop since she was a little girl because you always clapped your hands and said that when you needed her to hurry it along.

She called you Chip Chop every day until the day you died. She was your girl, and she knows how very much you loved her and were so proud of her independence, her work ethic and the way she so lovingly doted on you. The memories and moments they all shared with you will be with them for a lifetime.

My mom had a loving son who made her proud. To her, it wasn't as much that he became a New York Times Best-Selling author, it was that he had a goal and he worked hard, believed in himself and never, never, never gave up until he achieved his lifelong dream.

When the notice came out in Variety announcing that one of his books was going to be made into a movie, Mom called to ask me to help her pick out a dress for the premiere. Just two weeks ago, Dad was in the middle of reading Doug's most recent book, Unidentified, which they prominently displayed, along with his many other books in a place of honor. Even though he lives far away, she still had a strong connection with Kelly and the kids and made a point of staying in touch with all of them, even when lives got busy.

There's your beloved baby sister Marsha who came into the world when you were 11 years old. She had a head full of fire engine red curls. You always said she was more like your first child, and her children were your first grandchildren. You loved Seth and were so proud to have a Rabbi in the family. While you were far apart in age and even farther apart in miles, you

and Marsha talked on the phone every single Friday and stayed part of each other's lives.

It was fitting that the last time Marsha called was last Friday, and even though you couldn't speak with her, you heard her say that she will continue to talk to you every Friday from here on out. You were so pleased that Marsha and I have such a close connection and were devoted to her amazing kids, Jana and Jeremy and Michael and Daphna and their kids, all of whom had special places in their hearts for you.

And there's your sister-in-law, Bobbye and her husband, the first Sonny in the family and their kids Randi and Lou, Staci and her husband Matt, may his memory be for a blessing, Jamie and Jeremy and their whole happy crew of kids. As Dad's devoted sister, know that Bobbye will be there for him and for us and promises to call him to hear his airport stories, of which we can never get enough...

And let's not forget Sandy's incredible Machatonim (in laws), Sonny's family, the entire Saeks, Goldhoff/Schoenfeld clan who took us all in and made us an even bigger and happier family.

My mom was especially grateful for her close relationship with my second Mom, my mother-in-law, Beverly Saeks, another example of kindness and generosity at its finest. She was a huge part of my mom's life, taking her to lunch once a week, enabling her to get out and enjoy the simple pleasures of life. She was her friend and a true blessing to her and to all of us

Mom used to love to talk about the massive seders when all the kids would put on the Passover Play and the time they chose my dad to play the role of Pharoah.

Then there was her newest extended family, the Kuhns, Sarah's family who she adored and was so pleased to have been able to get to know. She was thrilled that she and my dad were included with Sarah's family in the next generation of traditions Kevin and Sarah are starting together.

And there were so many other friends who gave her rides, called on the phone, made sure she was able to attend Red Hat events and helped keep

her from feeling isolated. There are too many to name but she talked often about how grateful she was to have them in her life.

And lastly, there are the 16 extra special people I must mention. Some of whom are in this room. And they are here on this earth today for one reason and one reason only. Sandy Richards. It's said that if you're responsible for making a shiddach, a love match, you earn your place in heaven.

In addition to making it possible for Doug and me to come into the world, and subsequently, our kids to be here, my mother helped bring together three amazing couples; my sister-in-law and brother in law Carrie and Ken Goldhoff, my Cousins Randi and Lou Stricker and our dear family friends, Michal and Andy Ganor. Between these three couples, they have 7 children, two grandchildren and two more on the way... and counting.

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin says that it's not enough to have good intentions, you must follow through with them to cause good to happen. Because you followed through, because you made the calls, because you took responsibility for bringing these lives together there are many more beautiful lives in this world who might never have been.

Today, we pay tribute to my mother and a life well lived, where love and light from within always led the way. I miss you more than words can say and there will never be a day that I don't think of you, speak to you and thank God for you. I am better for knowing and loving you. I know you are looking down on us from that special place in heaven. You earned your place there a million times over.

As for everyone here today. Thank you for indulging me. I know I had a lot to say but I hope you found your own little takeaway in these words about my mom. I hope, like me, you're going to walk out of here and instead of being sad, you'll think about how you want to be remembered... about what you want to leave behind. And if like me, you realize you still have some work to do, then I hope you'll get on it.

It would make my mom happy to know that something about the way she lived her life inspired you to live your best life too. For me, if I can exit this world

having given half as much as my mom did, I will have accomplished something miraculous.

Thank you, Mom for giving so much of yourself so I could shine, for working so hard to ensure that I could thrive, for loving me so much that I should know this kind of sadness and despair for losing you.

I choose to believe you can finally see again. Because I want you to be able to look down and watch over us and be at peace knowing we're going to be okay. Dad's going to be okay, we're all going to be okay. You taught us how to weather any storm.

May your memory be for a blessing and as we leave here today, may your light illuminate our way. I love you.

Eulogy for Sandra Richards

Submitted by Douglas E. Richards

We live on in the memories of others, and few have left as many indelible memories as my mother, or have touched such a wide array of people. She possessed a force of will and personality that was truly remarkable, and she had such a profound impact on so many lives, in so many ways, that I won't even attempt to recount them all here.

I realize more every year just how lucky I am that she was my mother.

Parenting is hard, and everyone makes mistakes, but in my book the key is making sure your kids know that they have your undying love and that you have their best interests at heart--and then showing up, being there, for softball games and skinned knees and PTA meetings.

My mom checked each of these boxes in a big way--every single day of my life.

A remarkable mother, made even more remarkable by the fact that she was a mother at 21, and a mother of two at 23. She raised two children as my dad was just beginning his career, at an age, and on a salary, at which the current

generation would cry hardship if asked to raise a cat. She lived for her husband and children when she was barely an adult herself.

I can only imagine the financial and psychological struggle it must have been, but my parents got all the important things right. We always knew we were loved, and they showed up for everything we did—and I mean everything—with bells on. They moved us to a neighborhood nearby, solely to ensure we were in a good school district, and outfitted us with braces and community pool memberships.

They made sure we could go to summer camp, and travel, domestically and internationally—even if we didn't stay at the Four Seasons.

In retrospect, I wouldn't go back and change any of it, not for all the Four Seasons in the world.

While raising two kids at a very young age, my parents' generosity was astonishing. Yes, this included giving money to charities when they had nothing left over for themselves, but more than that, they generously gave of their time and effort, working for so many causes, volunteering their talents and energy to such an impossibly long list of organizations, that when the list is recited it seems it can't be real, that there must have been five clones of each of them. They also displayed a boundless generosity of spirit, helping others whenever they could and opening their home without question, be it for Pam's friends and mine, or Israeli students whom they housed and fed for much of two summers, and who became cherished friends.

And when my mom wasn't parenting, or volunteering, she was working with my dad, for many years full time, and for many years behind the scenes at home, working tirelessly on the company books or in other capacities.

Never has there been a husband-and-wife team that could hold a candle to Ron and Sandy Richards.

As a kid, I took all of this for granted, not realizing that not everyone's parents were inexhaustible dynamos, living every moment of every day to the fullest with passion and purpose. I've had some success in my life, but my work ethic and energy pale in comparison to theirs, and I've come to admire—to be in

awe of—the indomitable will they both share, which I can't come close to matching.

And while this is about my mom, my parents were as inseparable as any couple has ever been, and much of their essences are inextricably linked in my mind and heart. And she'd be glad that I was expressing my admiration for my father here while he is still able to appreciate it.

My children lived 3,000 miles away from Cincinnati for most of their lives, and we didn't make it easy for my mom to forge a strong bond with them. But my mother persisted like only she could, with the energy and force of will she put into everything else. I'm grateful for her inexhaustible efforts to maintain such a warm, loving relationship with Ryan and Regan, making their Cincinnati grandparents a truly vital and unforgettable part of their lives.

But of all the remarkable aspects of my mom's indomitable will and personality, the most remarkable was how she handled blindness so late in life.

Like a lion.

We all have our crosses to bear, but being plunged into permanent darkness, complete with occasional hallucinations, inability to read, loss of independence and so much more is unimaginably horrific to me. I once tried to close my eyes and go about my day to better understand what she was going through, but I only managed a few minutes before I couldn't take it any longer. But instead of a few minutes, this had become my mother's new reality, day after day, year after year.

Yet she handled it with more bravery, courage, and strength than I could have ever imagined. She didn't let it stop her or quench her unconquerable spirit. She complained about her plight far less in a year than I would have complained in a day. She showed a strength of spirit that I honestly couldn't believe, and she found a way to have a life for herself, and to continue to touch the lives of so many others.

But if going blind was the worst hand she had ever been dealt, it served as a potent reminder of the best—finding a man as extraordinary as my father to

share her life with. No man has ever been more loving and devoted for even a year, let alone for over six decades.

While her strength and spirit allowed her to find a way through the darkness, she couldn't have done it without his unfailing patience, love, support, and heart—a heart roughly the size of Texas, despite being buried just under the surface of a sometimes gruff exterior.

Because they had a relationship for the ages, it's clear that she would want my father to eventually find a way to take life by the horns once again. And because of this very same relationship, doing so will be infinitely harder for him than anything else he's ever done.

But I have faith that he will get there. Eventually. That his strength, energy, exuberance, zest for life, and can-do attitude will allow him to accomplish even this.

That is my hope, as I'm sure it would be hers.

I'll end by sharing the words of Helen Keller, which I find to be unspeakably heartbreaking and unspeakably hopeful, both, and which couldn't reflect my own hopes and wishes for my mother any better:

“Death is no more than passing from one room into another. But there's a difference for me, you know.

“Because in that other room I shall be able to see.”

Eulogy for Sandra Richards

Submitted by Sonny Saeks

In last week's torah portion read around the world, parasht Terumah the Israelites built the mobile Tabernacle in the Desert. I am descended from the Levites who took care of their brethren the Kohanim, serviced the Mishkan, the mobile tabernacle that contained the Ark of Covenant, and transported the Misckan. One of my greatest involvements of my life was being part of the leadership committee to move Northern Hills Synagogue from Fleming Road to where it is today on Fields Ertel Road on the very border of Warren County.

Just like G-d told the Israelites how to decorate his mobile Tabernacle as a focus, but not the exclusive place he could dwell among his people, the former slaves, now desert travelling Israelites, both Sandy and Ron Richards played huge roles in fulfilling the building of their new home on Fields Ertel Road. Sandy the wife of a Kohan, took to decorating this new home with vigor. But this was only one of several homes for Sandy.

- She was present in many lives and many places.
 - She was home building a family in Finneytown.
 - She was home decorating her dwellings for Chanukah and playing Dreidel.
 - She was at home cutting her soon to be son's hair like a professional.
 - She was at home planning a wedding for her 22-year-old daughter, a veritable spinster in age compared to Sandy's nuptial age, that would welcome her new son and his rather large extended family into her own.
 - She was home at Pesach Seder telling us how her father from Belarus would eat a potato in the salt water that some ate hardboiled egg because at Pesach time in Belarus that was what was available to poorer Jewish people preparing for Pesach. The echos of Sam Finkel, of blessed memory her father, ring in my ears when I hear "Avadim hayinu l'faroh b'mitzrayim" "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt".
 - She was at home and the Balabusta . The organizer, entertainer, comforter, guidance counselor, shoulder to cry on.
 - She was at home at Pam and my dwellings in New Jersey, Hyde Park, IL, Highland Park, IL. She was there when our children were born and came home to us.
 - She arranged and hosted Karly's baby naming with our niece Kyle Goldhoff held at Northern Hills Synagogue on Fleming Road in Finneytown even before we lived in Cincinnati.
 - She celebrated with us in Highland Park for Kevin's bris.
- She welcomed us with no small enthusiasm when we moved to Cincinnati in 1998.

Who knew just how much we would be blessed with so many wonderful years

and memories of togetherness? I am blessed with these memories as is my family. These will never be forgotten.

Our Jewish faith permeated the many things she did, taught and made us realize were important. She was and is a model to us all how to live a Jewish life at home and in our community.

Her memory will always be a blessing to me. When I want to see her all I must do is enter a Shul, like Northern Hills where she is present or open my eyes into any living dwelling where her soul sufficed the space with how to live a meaningful life a Jewish life.

To my father [in law], a better role model for a loving successful fruitful marital relationship who can find? Watching you and Mom through these years has been a Master Class in having a close, meaningful, fulfilling martial relationship. While exhibiting different interests and goals you were always one. You showed us how to fight with love, celebrate with love, argue with love, reason with love, come together with love and leave with love. Recently we learned even how to leave this life with love from you and Mom.

Though married these last 39 years, I am so lucky that I might not ever learn personally what an In-Law is. I never knew from Sandy or Ron that I was anything but her son and their son. I will always miss her physical presence, but in my memories, thoughts and deeds will always be blessed by her spiritual presence and what she taught me and all of us.

Cemetery Details

United Jewish Cemetery - Montgomery

7885 Ivygate Lane
Montgomery, OH 45242

Previous Events

Visitation Before Service

FEB 8. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Weil Kahn Funeral Home
8350 Cornell Rd
Cincinnati, OH 45249

Funeral Service

FEB 8. 1:00 PM (ET)

Weil Kahn Funeral Home
8350 Cornell Rd
Cincinnati, OH 45249

Shiva on Tue 2/8, Wed 2/9, & Thur 2/10

FEB 8. 6:00 PM (ET)

Pam & Sonny Saeks Residence
11032 Woodlands Way
Cincinnati, OH 45241

Tribute Wall



“ Weil Kahn Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Sandy J. Richards



Weil Kahn Funeral Home - February 06, 2022 at 05:41 PM

SW

“ Ron, Doug and Pam,

I am so sorry to hear of Sandy's passing. Growing up, she was like a second mom. I did watch the video of the funeral and I was very moved, especially Pam's eulogy. I learned much more about Sandy and the rich life she lived. I feel inspired to live a better life myself. Thank you for that, Pam. I am sure that this will be difficult for all of you, but it is comforting to know that you have such a strong support system. I hope you all realize just how lucky a family you are to have had Sandy and each other. God bless.

Steve Wacksman

Stephen Wacksman - February 26, 2022 at 04:12 PM

BS

“ Just learned the sad news. We remember how devoted she was to her family .Northern Hills Synagogue and the community. Sandy always had a smile on her face and a pleasant distribution .She was truly a woman of valor with a good soul. May her memory always be for a blessing.

sending much love,

bob and alberta schneider

bob and albert schneider - February 18, 2022 at 04:58 PM

KS

“ *I miss you grandma (chip chop)! Love you!*

Karly Saeks - February 13, 2022 at 04:47 AM

WY

“ *Ron, Pam and Doug, so very, very sorry to hear of this news. Sandy was so wonderful to many and especially to me, my parents and my family! Baruch Dayan Ha-Emet and may her name and memory be for a blessing upon you and all forever! Sending virtual hugs and prayers with love. Wally and Dee Yosafat*

Walter Yosafat - February 07, 2022 at 11:37 AM

BM

“ Pam, and Ron and Doug, Joan and I were so sorry to hear the news of your Sandy's passing. I trust that you are beginning to be comforted by so many memories of her.

Joan and I shared wo many wonderful moments together with your you and your family over all the years since first we met around 50 years ago through Marsha and Seth. So much laughter, so many discussions, so many family gatherings, births, brises, bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs, weddings too. We have truly been privileged to share with you, the whole family. We are only sorry that we cannot be with you now to embrace you all and be there for comfort and strength.

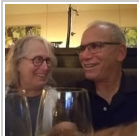
Please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. We send you our love.

I recall at Sam's bar mitzvah that your Sandy and I had a long talk together, about how she approached life, how she handled the challenges, and how she responded to highs and lows that she experienced. It was a precious conversation and I will always recall it with a special fondness.

Again, our love to you all.

Joan and Bennett

Bennett Miller - February 06, 2022 at 10:03 PM



“ Sandy's smile and caring are already being missed ...
“Baruch dayan emet,” Blessed be the one true Judge.

Barry Wolfson-cincy - February 06, 2022 at 02:40 PM

AY

“ Dear Ron,

Memories of Sandy will always remain in my mind and sweet thoughts of you two together will bring us together in spirit.

My deepest sympathy is going out to you, Ron, and to your entire family. Our whole family is mourning the passing of Sandy.

May her memory be for a blessing.

Annie Yosafat



Anneliese Yosafat - February 06, 2022 at 01:29 PM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Sandy J. Richards.



February 06, 2022 at 01:18 PM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Sandy J. Richards.



February 06, 2022 at 01:06 PM

BM

“ Dear Ron & Family,

My deepest sympathy to all of you at this time on Sandy's passing.

May you find comfort in knowing that others care.

May Sandy's memory be a blessing to all of you.

She was a sweet, caring and thoughtful person loved by all who had the pleasure to know her.

G-d Bless.

Barb Mandell

Barb Mandell - February 06, 2022 at 10:44 AM

SS

“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Sumner Saeks - February 06, 2022 at 10:03 AM