



Sandra Sue Swanson

July 13, 1936 - February 10, 2026

Sandra Sue Swanson Urbandale, Iowa
July 13, 1936 – February 10, 2026

Sandra lived her life with determination, humor, and a wonderfully unmistakable spark.

Raised on a farm in Pella, Iowa, she carried with her the values of hard work, resilience, and independence. Crowned the Pella Tulip Queen in 1956, she embraced life with confidence and grace. She loved basketball, golfing, and often reminisced about her early days as a waitress — a role that reflected her natural warmth and quick wit.

Though she once dreamed of becoming a teacher, Sandra's greatest lessons were taught through the life she lived. As a single mother, she raised her three daughters with fierce devotion, never missing a game, a performance, or a moment that mattered. From school events to beloved "bedroom concerts," her presence was a constant source of love and encouragement.

Sandra created a home filled with traditions both simple and unforgettable. She hung sheets out to dry, made favorite birthday dinners, and turned Friday nights into cherished rituals of popcorn and a shared Pepsi. Her kitchen was the heart of countless memories, and she will be fondly remembered for her homemade chicken and noodles, beef and noodles, and salmon patties — not

everyone's favorite, but deeply loved by her family.

Her friendships were a treasured part of her life. Sandra's circle of girlfriends in Urbandale celebrated their shared July birthdays with margaritas at Chi-Chi's, followed by rounds of bridge at the house and a beer shared among friends. These gatherings were filled with laughter, competition, and lifelong bonds.

Known to many as Sandy, she was spirited, strong-willed, and refreshingly honest. She spoke her mind, stood her ground, and loved deeply — always on her own terms. Her bridge friends admired her exceptional skill and sharp mind. A Sapphire Life Master Bridge player and member of the ACBL. American Contract Bridge League. Sandra was known for her talent at the table and her famously candid commentary — the teacher's heart never truly fading.

In 1983, Sandra married her beloved Jim Swanson, beginning a partnership filled with companionship, laughter, and adventures. Together they traveled to the West Coast and made many memorable trips “out East,” lovingly known as Prairie Meadows.

Sandra's personality was unforgettable. Her famous phrases — “We'll see,” “Well, I can't help it,” and later in life, her simple but telling “It's fair” — became cherished echoes that continue to bring smiles and laughter to those who loved her. Though life may not feel fair without her, her family finds comfort in hearing those words and remembering the humor, strength, and spirit behind them.

Sandra's love extended beyond people to the animals in her life that brought her endless joy. Nothing lit up her face more than time spent with her “grand puppies” and “grand kitties.” Her family lovingly joked that she preferred pets to people — a sentiment she wore proudly.

Sandra is forever cherished by her daughters: Cindy Sullivan (Grimes); Stacy Sullivan (Urbandale) and Stephanie Sullivan (Beaverdale). She was preceded in death by her husband James Swanson (Oskaloosa). She is also survived by her brother, Phillip Cummings (Marilyn) of Waukee; her nieces, Anne Cummings of West Des Moines and Amy Jepsen (Graham) of Waukee.

Sandra's legacy is one of strength, loyalty, humor, tradition, and love — a life lived fully, honestly, and unapologetically.

In lieu of flowers, do a good deed, plant a Tulip or donations in Sandra's memory to your favorite animal shelter.

A celebration of Sandra's life will be held at a later date.

Tribute Wall

JH

“Sandy was the 1st person to ask me to play at the DM bridge club when I moved from AZ. We enjoyed our last game together in January and dinner afterwards. God's timing is always perfect; He took Sandy home one month later. Thank you Sandy for your kindness and friendship, I'll see you later.
Jan Hanna



Jan Hanna - March 29 at 10:47 AM

JH

“Jan Hanna lit a candle in memory of Sandra Sue Swanson



Jan Hanna - March 24 at 04:55 PM

BW

“I like to think that Sandy and Jim are sitting down with Alice and Warren for a friendly—but competitive—game of Bridge. Maybe Sandy and Alice are even enjoying a smoke. I can close my eyes and hear Sandy's laugh. “Oh, you girls.” Sending a big hug to surround you girls.

Beth Wilson - February 20 at 10:28 PM

SS

You were and will always be one of Sandy's favorites! She loved you!

Stephanie Sullivan - February 22 at 11:36 PM

SS

“ *Sharron Schreurs lit a candle in memory of Sandra Sue Swanson*



Sharron Schreurs - February 17 at 01:56 PM

RH

“ *Renae Hutchison lit a candle in memory of Sandra Sue Swanson*



Renae Hutchison - February 16 at 01:19 PM

MS

“ *Marcia Showalter lit a candle in memory of Sandra Sue Swanson*



Marcia Showalter - February 16 at 07:34 AM