



Sandra "Sandi" J. Smith

December 12, 1948 - August 16, 2024

Sandra J. Smith, 75, passed away on Friday, August 16 unexpectedly. Daughter of the late Stanley and Lenore Amster, wife to Gary Gerstner, sister to Steven and the late David, mother of Adam, Carl (Kristin) and Sara (Nico), grandmother of Chloe, Gideon and Eden, aunt to Charlie and Jessie, step-mom to Lauren, Amanda and Rebecca (Zachary) Rahe, friend of Mira, Pat, Tammie, Michelle, Jeanne, Joyce, Karen, Mary Claire and the late Leonard, long-time resident of Warrenville.

Sandi graduated from Fenger High School. She was a popular cheerleader who had a rebellious side, knowing all the tricks in the book to sneak out and break her parent's rules. Sandi went on to both Chicago Teachers College and Western Illinois University where she majored in English. Sandi used this degree to tutor English in more recent years through the DuPage Literacy Project. Sandi met Marc Smith and in 1970 they married. She went on to help Marc create the Uptown Poetry Slam which has become a worldwide poetry movement.

With Sandi's rebellious side it was no surprise that while in South Carolina

teaching “colored” kids, Sandi broke all social norms by drinking from a fountain and sitting on a bench that was labeled Non-Whites Only. Serious threats by members of the KKK would not deter her political passion to stop social injustice. To Sandi all were equal and of value.

In 1973, Sandi gave birth to her first child, Adam who was adored by his mother. Then in 1975 came Carl, who brought Sandi even more joy. In 1977 Sara was born and the family was complete. Sandi enjoyed a house full of love and creativity as her kids would put on a number of performances for their parents.

Eventually, Sandi went out into the professional world and became a secretary, but quickly worked her way up to a high paying position that taught her enough to start her own successful company, Evolve, which was formed with Emory Mead. She took pride in excelling in a male dominated field. With this personal success though came heartbreak, as her marriage ended in divorce.

It was during her time in her own business that she met Gary Gerstner at Health O’ Meter Scale Company. Gary and Sandi spent many happy years together in Warrenville, marrying in 2004. This brought her stepdaughters, Lauren, Amanda and Rebecca into her life. While at first a complicated relationship, through the years they became family. While together, Sandi saw the birth of her first grandson Gideon, and her granddaughters Eden and Chloe. Nothing made her happier than playing with and watching her

grandchildren grow. Sandi had a love for the Chicago Bears that rarely saw her miss watching a game shaking her lucky Troll and even throwing a foam brick when her team let her down. In the last phase of her life, Sandi was a full-time care giver to both her mother and brother- in- law.

Sandi touched the lives of everyone she knew in the community. Everyone was extremely shocked and saddened to hear of her passing and she will be forever missed. Unbeknownst to the world, Sandi's final days were spent in extreme happiness. Sandi and Gary enjoyed the company of Gideon, Eden and Chloe for a sleepover, Sandi passed in peace without suffering the following night.

A private celebration of life will be held at the Fabyan Japanese Garden which was one of Sandi's most loved places as she was avid gardener and flower arranger. Private interment.

Funeral arrangements entrusted to Palacz Funeral Service, Ltd.