



## Bonnie S. Sanders

September 15, 1944 - January 30, 2020

In the early morning hours of January 30, 2020, Bonnie Sue (Nelson) Sanders passed away at St. Mary's Hospital in Centralia after a hard fought battle and surrounded by her children. Bonnie was born on September 15, 1944 in Chicago, Illinois to mother, Alma (Schwartz) Rogers and father, Carl Nelson. She was raised in the city of Chicago among her maternal grandparents and many uncles and aunts. Bonnie's father, Carl, died in an auto accident when Bonnie was 10 years old. At the age of 14, Alma married Curtis Rogers and in 1958, Alma, Bonnie and her younger sister, Mary, moved to Centralia, Illinois. There, she lived on Leafland Street with her mother, sister Mary, step-father, Curtis, and her step-sisters, Cheryl and Kathy. In August of 1966, Bonnie married her high school sweet heart, Jack Sanders, who precedes her in death.

Bonnie is survived by: daughters Ericka Sanders and Jessica (Sanders) VanDyke and son, Tyler Sanders; grandchildren, Frances Sue Sanders Holzer, Bodhi James Sanders Holzer and Addison Jo Sanders; sisters Mary Beth (Nelson) Jones, Kathy (Rogers) Warren, Cheryl (Rogers) Van Sickle; sons-in-law, Robert Van Dyke and Jamie Holzer; brothers-in-law, Lee Jones, Michael Warren, Dale Van Sickle, and Gary Joe Sanders and wife Janet; sister-in-law, Glenda (Sanders) Melzer; and many treasured nieces and nephews. Bonnie was preceded in death by her husband, Jack, her parents, Carl Nelson and Alma and Curtis Rogers, an infant daughter, Whitney, and the

many dogs, cats and horses that she rescued and loved over the years.

Bonnie graduated from Centralia High School in 1962. She was the managing editor of the school newspaper, an Orphanette, a homecoming attendant, the lead in the high school play, an avid reader and an excellent student. As a young woman in the early 1960's, Bonnie worked three jobs to put herself through the University of Illinois at Champaign, even having to take a semester off to live with her grandmother in Chicago and earn money working at Chicago Military. She graduated from the University of Illinois with a major in German education and a minor in history. After marrying her husband, Jack, they moved to Macomb, Illinois where Bonnie earned her masters degree in education in 1971 at Western Illinois University. She and Jack moved back to Centralia to start a family because they wanted their children to be close to their grandparents.

Bonnie began her career as a German teacher and guidance counselor at Centralia High School. In 1975, she became an instructor and guidance counselor at Kaskaskia College and later a professor in psychology and counseling. While at Kaskaskia College, Bonnie was the president of the teacher's union, leading her colleagues during a strike and eventual resolution; vice-president of the Okaw Valley Chapter of the Illinois Guidance and Personal Association; and grant recipient to further develop the "Strong Campbell" interest testing program. Bonnie retired from Kaskaskia College in 2006. Bonnie was also a member of the Centralia Cultural Society Board, a member of the Marion County board, a girl scout leader and room mother.

She was highly intelligent, creative and compassionate, characteristics that she applied in every aspect of her life, from her career to making award winning Halloween costumes. It was not until later in her life that her children ever saw her sit down. She came home every night from a long day of work and prepared a homemade meal. She was known for her cooking, especially

her chicken and dumplings, homemade barbeque sauce, salad dressing, and homemade jellies. She was a seamstress, making many of her children's outfits when they were little, her daughter's high school dance dresses and, as mentioned, her famous Halloween costumes. She never missed a t-ball or baseball game, track meet or basketball game. She and Jack took in and cared for homeless and mistreated dogs. She spoke often of her and Jack's "first children," the Doberman pinchers, ("the dobes"): Copper and Auburn. They traveled the Midwest with Copper (Amel's Picasso of Marks-Tey) who received a champion designation at major dog show events. In addition to the dogs and cats, Bonnie also helped care for the many Standardbred race horses and a few ponies at the family's property south of town. She was a prolific writer, authoring many short stories and poems.

She had a wonderful sense of humor. She loved to make people laugh and feel comfortable and to feed them lots of good food. On a regular basis, people from the community tell her children that they went on to college or pursued a particular career path because Bonnie encouraged them and gave them the confidence to try. She taught her children to be grateful and to recognize that there are less fortunate -- humans and animals -- that they must always strive to help. Her children are grateful, especially to have had a mother like Bonnie. She was the glue that bound and our lives will not be the same without her.

Per Bonnie's wishes, cremation rites will be accorded, and a Visitation will be held Tuesday, February 4, 2020 from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home in Centralia. A Private Family Burial will be held at a later date at Hillcrest Memorial Park in Centralia. Memorial donations may be made to the Centralia Animal Shelter, the Centralia Humane Society, and Home to School Connection at the Centralia City Schools and will be accepted at the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home and Cremation Services at

235 North Sycamore Street Centralia, Illinois 62801, (618)532-3523, who is honored to be of service to the Sanders Family. Online condolences may be made to the family by visiting [www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com](http://www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com) and the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home Facebook Page.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB 4. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM.

Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Bonnie S. Sanders* ”



**Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services** - February 03, 2020 at 10:56 AM

SR

*My thoughts and prayers are with Erica, Jessica and Tyler. 🙏*

**Sharon Reese** - February 03, 2020 at 06:08 PM

GJ

*Sorry to hear this. Thoughts and Prayers are with the family. Knew her from Kaskaskia College.*

**Georgia Jones-Richardson** - February 03, 2020 at 10:09 PM

DO

*Bonnie (Mrs.Sanders) was my German 1-2 teacher. I was a Freshman and it was her first year at Centralia High School. She was very nice and was so cool because she was from Chicago and drove a '69 Camaro. I was enamored. Later in life I would always tell her husband Jack about the crush I had. I think he tired of me telling him but was always nice about it. I will miss you Mrs. Sanders!*

*Doug Owens*

**Doug Owens** - February 04, 2020 at 05:40 PM

DA

“ I am so sorry to hear of the loss of your mother. Bonnie was my guidance counselor when I was a student at Kaskaskia College. Having her encouragement and enthusiasm changed my academic life for the better and literally brought me out of my shell. She had such a warm and caring way of championing my studies and laying the groundwork for my eventual transfer to a four-year university. I came back to see her a year later, and she was just as lovely as ever. Bonnie was just a special person, and I feel so fortunate to have known her. My thoughts and prayers to her entire family and close friends.

Danny Liske, Flinders NSW Australia - February 24, 2021 at 07:19 AM

SD

“ I am so sorry to hear about your moms passing. She was always so kind to me when I would see her at the college. Please know that you are all in my thoughts and prayers. I am so sorr I could not make it to the visitation to give you my condolences.



Stephanie Daniels - February 04, 2020 at 06:02 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bonnie S. Sanders.



February 03, 2020 at 10:41 PM

JM

“ Our thoughts and prayers to Mrs. Sander's family and a special hug to Erica!

Julie & Ed Michael - February 02, 2020 at 04:15 PM

MS

“ My thoughts and prayers go out to your family at the loss of your mother.

Margaret Spears - February 02, 2020 at 11:47 AM



“ Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Bonnie S. Sanders.



February 01, 2020 at 07:01 PM

J(

“ Janelle Wilkerson (Dace) lit a candle in memory of Bonnie S. Sanders



Janelle Wilkerson (Dace) - February 01, 2020 at 06:44 PM

J(

You all will be in my thoughts and prayers I loved both your parents, very good people! I will always remember your mom's big caring smile while walking in the halls at KC and when hanging at your house!

Janelle Wilkerson (Dace) - February 01, 2020 at 06:48 PM

DH

*Your family is in our thoughts and prayers the huelsmann*

**Doris Huelsmann** - February 01, 2020 at 07:56 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Bonnie S. Sanders.*



February 01, 2020 at 05:27 PM

AB

“ *Ann Breuer lit a candle in memory of Bonnie S. Sanders*



**Ann Breuer** - January 31, 2020 at 07:36 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bonnie S. Sanders.*



January 31, 2020 at 02:41 PM