Sandra Dawn Lacombe

SEPTEMBER 6, 2021

Sandra Dawn Lacombe (née Kuhn)

September 02, 1968 - September 6, 2021

Age 53

Sandra Dawn Lacombe (née Kuhn) roared into this world, earlier than expected, on Labour Day 1968 in Prince Albert, SK. She exited this world much earlier than expected on Labour Day 2021 in Calgary, AB.

Those may have been the only two times Sandra was ever early for anything.

Sandra was a force of nature. Never afraid to be herself, Sandra marched to the beat of her own drum, usually while forcefully advocating for the downtrodden. When not standing up for others, she loved to laugh, joke, and tease. Her quick wit and radiant smile would light up a room. Her humour was usually self-deprecating as she couldn't bear the thought of hurting someone else.

Her mischief started early in life. Long before baby monitors and apps, Sandra's mom, Christine Kuhn, became keenly attuned to the "giggle of trouble". That giggle meant something would come crashing down on Sandra in the next thirty seconds if Christine did not run to the rescue.

In many ways, that was how she lived her life – fiercely, fully, intensely, and joyously. Unwavering in her values, Sandra was also sweet, funny, kind, loyal to a

fault, and as ethical a human being as you will ever have the good fortune to meet. She was a tireless and fierce defender of women's rights and took every opportunity to advance that cause.

Being on "Team Sandra" meant you had a friend for life, through thick and thin.

Sandra's early life was so full of promise and potential. She was an ace at school. She got into university with almost no effort, such was her intellect. She earned her Royal Conservatory of Music Grade 8 in secret so she could do it her way, without interference.

Sandra always knew that there were two ways to do things - her way and the wrong way. Maddeningly, she was almost always right about that.

One cold Saskatoon winter day in 1990, on the way home from brunch, things literally went the wrong way for Sandra. Her young twenty-two-year-old body bore the brunt of a motor vehicle accident from which she never really recovered. Her perseverance in the ensuing thirty-odd years of pain is a testament to her strength of character.

In spite of near-daily migraines, adrenal insufficiency, a completely dysfunctional endocrine system, concussion, whiplash and fibromyalgia, Sandra forced herself by sheer will through her last semester of a Bachelor of Commerce degree at the University of Saskatchewan.

Her parents instilled in her a strong belief in the power of education and she was not about to give up on hers. It took her the better part of two years to do one semester of school - something she could have done with her eyes closed before the accident.

Through sheer will, grit, determination, and painkillers, Sandra dragged herself through those last few classes to convocate with her BComm in 1997.

Her professional achievements were equally impressive. Her work developing an emergency/evacuation plan for Lutheran Sunset Home in Saskatoon was widely heralded by police, fire and EMS and was used as an example for other facilities and in other jurisdictions beyond Saskatchewan and Canada. Her social conscience and good moral fibre were evidenced by her volunteer work for the Saskatchewan Abilities Council and Child Find Saskatchewan.

Her organizational and speaking skills were at the forefront as she played a key role in organizing the 1990 AIESEC (international economics) conference in Saskatoon.

A very “Sandra” moment occurred at that very conference when she met an executive from her husband Doug’s company in the washroom, informing said executive that “Doug will not be attending your talk as I told him he is coming to mine, but he would like a promotion.”

Mere weeks later, Doug got the promotion.

All this achievement came at a price. The resultant wear and tear on her body meant she would never be able to pursue a full-time career as had been her ambition, but it was plain to see her career was stunted by fate, not choice or inability.

That fate shifted Sandra’s attention to supporting Doug in his career, for their mutual benefit. Sandra’s default position was to champion and support friends and family, so this was not out of character for her. She always wanted everyone around her to thrive and succeed

On a recently-discovered medical questionnaire, Sandra wrote “What pains me is not being able to solve the problems of those I love” and that her greatest fear was “Losing my husband, parents or sisters.”

Sandra and Doug relocated several times, often with Sandra carrying the load of packing, buying and selling homes. After relocating to Calgary, AB in 2001, Sandra was wont to say “One year, two countries, three houses - THAT’S ENOUGH!”

In Calgary, Sandra had a very active decade before her health really declined. She travelled nationally and internationally with Doug and friends, started an antiques and collectibles business, organized numerous high tea outings, read every book Doug would carry home from Calgary Reads, and cared for Doug, their dogs, friends and family with love and dedication.

In the past 10 years or so, the pain got worse, the meds quit working, her body rebelled more and more, and, in 2018, cancer came.

And yet still she persevered.

On Sept 4, 2021, Sandra suffered a stroke. It was the only enemy she was unable to face down.

Fifty-three years from her birth, almost to the hour, Sandra passed peacefully, surrounded by her husband Doug and her immediate family.

Sandra Dawn Lacombe is survived by her husband, Doug Lacombe; her parents, Christine (Christensen) and Melvin Kuhn; her sisters, Karen Kuhn (the eldest) and Coralie Kuhn (the favourite); as well as her fur baby, Hope, the adopted Schnoodle from Mexico. Sandra was predeceased by her grandparents; and two previous fur babies, Riley and Bug.

Rest in peace our dear, sweet warrior. Your pain is finally over.

In lieu of gifts or flowers, the family requests you consider donating to the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Please tell us your own Sandra stories in the comments below - we’d love to hear them.

Messages of Condolence

Sandra was by niece as I was married to her Father's brother Helmond. Unfortunately did not know her well as we lived most of our lives far apart & only saw her when we visited her Grand Parents. Am truly so sorry & sad for what has happened to her & pray that she is in a much better place now & free of pain. God bless you her family & loved ones & help you to come to terms with terrible loss. Have always believed that parents should never have to bury their children. Love to you all now & forever - Sharon & the Kuhn family in Ontario

— Sharon Kuhn

We met Sandra when she and Doug were in Halifax for a conference during our CNW days. They came out to the house, we sat out the deck and enjoyed a backyard fire and conversation. We bonded over antique refinishing. She was so easy to get to know. A real sweet heart. Sooo glad we got the chance to know her a little better beyond all the wonderful things Doug had already told us about his wonderful partner. Take care Bud. We've been thinking of you, Doug.

— Janet and Jerry Gallant

Doug I felt I knew your spouse by reading a beautiful tribute. I knew how much you care/protected her from our days at CNW. I am truly sorry for your loss and may she rest in pease. My deepest condolences.

— Richard Deklerk

What a beautiful, amazing, thoughtful and caring picture of Sandra. It provides an insightful vision of the wonderful and incredible person she was and how much she cared for those she loved and the things that were important to her.
Sadly I didn’t get to know my niece very well but she was in good hands with my nephew Doug. Together they were an incredible and unstoppable team who supported each other without question.
Debbie and I are truly saddened by the loss to our family and send our most heartfelt condolences to Doug, the Kuhn and Lacombe families.

— Neil Lacombe

I have never met Sandra. I’ve only known her through Doug’s stories and I knew that I’d like her if I met her. After all, she put up with Doug, right? My deepest sympathies Doug. I’ll catch up with you soon.

— Robin Parsons

Although I never met Sandra, I knew her parents, Chris (especially) and Mel when they lived near us in Prince Albert.... Deepest condolences to all the family on the loss of a wonderful young lady... May she Rest in Peace and the family be consoled to know that she is no longer in pain and the "giggling" goes on... Sylvia

— Sylvia Tienkamp

Mel, Christine, and family
Our deepest condolences!
We r so sorry to hear about the passing of Sandra!
You are in our thoughts and prayers.
Shorty and Marlene Underwood,
Prince Albert sk.

— Shorty & Marlene Underwood

I can only add to Lisa's words by saying I regret never having met Sandra. She was obviously such an incredibly strong person. Your words pay a suitable tribute to her, and help us imagine what a remarkable person she was, and the light she shon on others.

— Doug Firby

Mel, Christine, and family:
Our sincere condolences it sounds like you had an amazing daughter and sister. May all your wonderful memories bring you peace and comfort at this difficult time.
Sharon and Gale Head

— Sharon Head

Doug and Kuhn Family

I am deeply saddened to hear of Sandra’s passing. Her heart belonged to her family and to you, Doug who she loved so dearly . In my mind lies, cherished high school and university memories. Those memories are of a kind, compassionate person who enjoyed entertaining and trying a new recipe. Sandra was a great friend and played an instrumental role in the life of my daughter, Courtney. Thinking of you all and sending positive thoughts and prayers. Sandra was truly an angel.

— Rachelle Kraus

Dear Mel, Chris and family:

It is with profound sadness that we read of Sandra’s passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with you in these difficult days. We have many wonderful memories of your girls helping you to “look after our son Jeff”! He loved being part of their lives and the attention they gave him. Though Sandra was only 3 years older than Jeff she was a great baby sitter.

We have lost touch over the years and did not know of Sandra’s accident and ongoing health challenges that she dealt with courageously over the past 30 years. We wish you comfort amid the tears, and joy amid the sorrow for a remarkable life that was already in full motion when she was 3 years old. Hugs to all of you.

— Ron and Donna Woodward

Doug, Christine and family, I am so saddened to hear of Sandra's sudden passing. I have been thinking of her over the years and am sorry that we didn't get the chance to reconnect and catch up from back in the PA days. May she rest in peace now and may you also find some peace.

— Paula (Lere) Graham

Doug, I never got to meet Sandra, but I do remember her epic interior design skills and the stories you shared when I was in the office. She was an incredible woman… and I’m sorry I never got to meet her.

— Steph Lake

For Doug and Family, Lorrae and I are so very sorry for your heartbreaking loss. I worked closely with Doug over the past decade, inevitably coming to treasure him as a friend. In that time, although I never met Sandra, it was so clear to me his dedication and deep love for her. It was love story that always and continues to inspires Lorrae and myself. Wishing you peace and comfort. Hope to see you soon, Doug. Lindsey & Lorrae

— Lindsey Galloway

Christine, Mel and Coralie, my friends and my neighbors, my heart breaks for you on the news of your loss. I can only know for certain that your family has a deep love for each other and that, above all, Sandra knew that she was loved. May her love shine back on you and keep you warm in these days of sorrow. Sincerely, Bev

— Bev Chinnery

Dear Christine, Mel, Doug, and family, our hearts ache with sorrow at the loss of your wonderful daughter, wife and friend. Although we did not know Sandra, we know her Mom and Dad and from the beautifully written account of Sandra’s life feel we know more of her great accomplishments despite great pain and difficulty. May the God of peace and comfort cover you with His love and healing at this time of unspeakable sorrow. Our prayers continue for you.

— Richard and Judy Fizzell

Sad to read about Sandra's passing and the fight she waged. Condolences Doug and the Kuhn family.

— Kevin Reichle

Will always remember Sandra dressed as the Church Lady from Saturday Night Live that, halloween many years ago.

— Russell Doell

Hello! Doug, I am very so saddened by Sandra’s departure from this world. I remembered when you and Sandra were the sweetest, most romantic love birds in Sask Hall and Sandra’s terrible and disabling accident . I feel truly privileged to be there in those good old days! You and Sandra always had and will always be in a special special place in my heart. I am saddened but also happy to know she lived a giant, fabulous, accomplished life. I still vividly remember Sandra and her kind voice. She made our world a better place. Sincerely Hank

— Henry (Hank) Lau

Mel, Christine and family, our deepest condolences to all of your family on the loss of Sandra

— Ron and Connie Randall

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