

Sandra Steinwehe

*July 10, 1940 – November 28, 2022*

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Funeral Service  
Minister: Guy

December 17, 2022

**Minister's Introduction:**

Welcome friends. And a warm welcome to Sandra's brother Terry, his wife Bonnie, and their son Patrick, who are with us today.

We have come together to honor the life of our beloved friend, Sandra Steinwehe. We are here to hold Sandra in our hearts for this brief period, and then release her, together transforming our sorrow into presence.

At the death of a friend, we can see their play as a whole. And we can see it—as we cannot yet fully see our own—as a perfect, complete, and realized destiny. Now we more clearly understand the payment and contribution that Sandra made, and we are grateful for her unfailing love and gratitude for her teacher, the school, her family, and her friends, which she expressed in consistent, unpretentious service.

Now let us stand and remember Sandra in silent presence.

*(Silence)*

Thank you.

The physical body is designed to produce presence and being, and then to be laid aside. Walt Whitman said, "The best of me then, when no longer visible, for toward that I have been incessantly striving." Sandra takes with her the presence that she has gained in this lifetime, and her connection with Influence C. Our teacher has said, "That is all we can take with us, but it is more than enough."

**[Reading: “In Cabin’d Ships at Sea” by Walt Whitman]**  
(Reader: Patrick S.)

“In Cabin’d Ships at Sea”  
by Walt Whitman

In cabin’d ships at sea,  
The boundless blue on every side expanding,  
With whistling winds and music of the waves, the large imperious waves,  
Or some lone bark buoy’d on the dense marine,  
Where joyous full of faith, spreading white sails,  
She cleaves the ether mid the sparkle and the foam of day, or under many a  
star at night.  
In full rapport at last...

The sky o’erarches here, we feel the undulating deck beneath our feet,  
The long pulsation, ebb and flow of endless motion,  
The tones of unseen mystery, the vague and vast suggestions of the briny  
world,  
The perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage,  
The boundless vistas and the horizon far and dim are all here...

You too as a lone bark cleaving the ether, purpos’d I know not whither,  
yet ever full of faith,  
Consort to every ship that sails, sail you!  
Spread your white sails my little bark athwart the imperious waves,  
Chant on, sail on, bear o’er the boundless blue from me to every sea,  
This song for mariners and their ships.

**[Music: Handel, “Dank sei dir Herr” (Thanks Be to Thee)]**  
(Musicians: Marla V., mezzo-soprano; Veronique, piano)

**[Eulogy: Margaret J.]**

We gather today to celebrate our friend, Sandra, and to acknowledge our gratitude for sharing a part of her journey.

Sandra's presence here at Apollo brought us many gifts. She moved here in 1984 after joining the school in 1981, and apart from living two years in Greece, Apollo was her home.

Gardens and plants were a passion of hers and she delighted in developing a little garden at her Airstream in the Court of the Caravans and then later a large garden at her cottage. Each summer, Sandra would search in garden centers for a Morning Glory vine. When she found the perfect one, she would plant it near her front door then spend the summer coaxing ever more flowers from it as it grew.

Sandra contributed to the experience of other students by working at Apollo d'Oro where she helped setting tables and sometimes serving. She enjoyed the look of the dining room when it was completed and she looked forward to dining there with friends.

Sandra, for many years, tended the plants and particularly the azaleas in the Galleria, helping keep them fresh and vibrant. She was such a reliable support that it is hard to express all that she contributed to Robert's home. While attending a reception before dining, sometimes your eye might have looked at the gorgeous pink flowers on the coffee tables in the salon – Sandra had helped to make sure that they looked their best for Robert and his guests.

When Robert first introduced ballet to Apollo, Sandra was quick to offer her help. She volunteered with Apollo Arts and had the responsibility for preparing and maintaining the backstage arrangements for the dancers. She was meticulous in ensuring that all was taken care of so the dancers would feel welcomed and comfortable. One season we had five ballets and no sooner was one over than preparations would begin for the next one. Sandra found new ways each time to improve on how the dressing rooms were arranged. Her standards were high.

For those of us who carry Apollo University ID cards, it most likely was Sandra who handed it to you. For students living abroad, she would find travelers to deliver cards to Centers worldwide. She was always very positive with the hundreds of students that she corresponded with, making sure their requests were met. In the thirteen years that she was part of the Apollo University, she attended the meetings of the board of directors as minute secretary, was one of the final proofreaders of a major Apollo University publication, and she assisted at presentations.

Sandra was for many years one of the scribes who record Robert's teaching events. This can be intense during the week when the scribe is responsible for completion of the transcript. She worked hard to meet the deadline and although it is a lone activity she enjoyed being part of the wider scribe team.

Sandra enjoyed the outdoors and often went hiking and walking. In 1927 her grandfather built some cabins in Wisconsin and the family would visit there, sometimes for a month or two. This was an important place for Sandra in her formative years. She cherished going to the cabins, which were in the middle of a huge deciduous forest.

Sandra was a country girl. She grew up in a rural area northwest of Chicago, near the border with Wisconsin. Her parents had a dairy farm there and Sandra, along with her brother, Terry, had chores each weekend to help on the farm. Sandra's favorite was to drive around on the tractor. Sandra was

Terry's big sister and he says, "She watched out for me." As well as helping with the farm, Sandra's mother was a busy nurse and Terry recalls that Sandra was like his second mother, although only four years his senior.

Sandra enjoyed visiting Terry, his wife Bonnie, and their two sons, Patrick and Nicolas. Sometimes she would join them in Chicago and sometimes at the family cabin in Colorado where she could hike and ski cross-country. She was delighted two years ago when she became a great-aunt with the arrival of Theodore, Patrick's son.

When Sandra was in her early twenties, her parents sold the farm. By then Sandra was a secretary in a health clinic and living in the suburbs of Chicago. She was a passionate sailor. She had her own sailboat and on weekends would drive to Lake Geneva in Wisconsin to go sailing or work on the boat. Sandra's last sailing trip was five years ago when she sailed on the Mediterranean Sea with students. She was visiting Italy at the time and when she was invited to join the trip, she reserved her space right away.

Sandra loved traveling. She lived in Mexico for some time when she was younger and travelled alone through countryside towns and villages and became fluent in Spanish. Later she would return to Mexico City when Robert had events there and she travelled on to Palenque with students. For two years, she lived with students in Athens, supporting the Center there. She went on trips to archeological sites and museums, and made excursions to many of the areas around Greece and the islands. She found the traffic in Athens hard to bear but she loved eggplant salad, tzatziki and Greek coffee.

Seven years ago, Sandra traveled to Italy with two friends touring Naples, Rome, Florence and Venice. She later said it was one of the highlights of her life. On that trip, she visited Ravello. She wrote in a letter afterwards, "Ravello was a standout, I will never forget it." While at Ravello with her friends, she felt Homer's presence around them.

Two years later, Sandra was back in Italy and driving with a friend through the rolling hills of Sicily, lost in the back roads, and admiring the farms, the sheep, the goats, and the orchards. They travelled round Sicily and while on the west coast, saw the famous statue of the Dancing Satyr and heard a reading of the poem 'Ithaca.' At the Villa Piazza Armerina, Sandra saw the world's most magnificent collection of Roman mosaics. She sailed to the mainland and visited the Riace Bronzes.

Sandra had an eye for beauty. She loved finding treasures in antique stores and would find wonderful gifts for friends. A shopping trip to the flower market in San Francisco with a friend always resulted in a car full of orchids and usually there would be one that Sandra had chosen as a gift. When there was a ballet performance in San Francisco or Stockton, Folsom or Orange County, Sandra, who was enchanted by ballet, would travel with students to the performances.

Each year, Sandra attended the Thanksgiving dinner to celebrate her anniversary of joining the school. This year she did not feel well enough to attend. However, she had earlier written to Marla Volovna to enquire whether she was to sing at the event and that if so, she always enjoyed when Marla sang Handel's "Thanks Be to Thee." This is the piece that you just listened to which in a magical way was chosen by Sandra.

Recently, Robert said that our life here is like a fairytale. We are honored to thank Sandra for living her fairytale and welcoming us to share it with her.

In the long body of Sandra's role, we can see that what was brought to the school was her essence and with Robert's help she used this to educate her soul.

Driving the tractor on the farm became driving through Sicily with her friend admiring the farms and orchards. Sailing on Lake Geneva became sailing with students in the Mediterranean Sea. Working as a medical or legal secretary became scribing at meetings or taking the minutes at a board meeting. Gardening with her family morphed into caring for the plants in the Galleria. Her love of the arts developed into wholeheartedly supporting the ballet performances here.

Sandra offered her self to us and to the school humbly, quietly, gracefully, and we can see that she evolved and was guided towards uncreated light.

Sandra, dear friend, thank you.

[**Music:** J. S. Bach, Allemande, French Suite No. 4]  
(Musicians: Justin, piano)

[Reading: C. P. Cavafy, “Ithaca”]  
(Reader: Ann N.)

“Ithaca” by C. P. Cavafy

When you set out on your journey to Ithaca,  
Pray that the voyage is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.  
The Lystrygonians and the Cyclops,  
The angry Poseidon – do not fear them:  
You will never find such as these on your path if your thoughts remain lofty,  
If a fine emotion touches your spirit and your body.  
The Lystrygonians and the Cyclops,  
the fierce Poseidon,  
you will never encounter if you do not carry them within your soul,  
If your soul does not set them up in front of you.  
Pray that the voyage is a long one,  
That the summer mornings are many,  
when with such pleasure, with such joy  
you will enter ports seen for the first time;  
Stopping at Phoenician markets to purchase fine merchandise,  
Mother-of-pearl and coral, amber and ebony,  
And sensual perfumes of all kinds,  
As many sensual perfumes as you can;  
And may you visit many Egyptian cities, to learn and learn again from those who know.  
Always keep Ithaca in your mind.  
To arrive there is what you are destined for.  
But do not hurry the voyage at all.  
It is better to let it last for many years;  
And to anchor at the island when you are old,  
rich with all you have gained on the way,  
Not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.  
Ithaca has given you the beautiful journey.  
Without her, you would have never set out on the voyage.  
She has nothing more to give you.  
And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not deceived you.  
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,  
You must already have understood what this Ithaca means.

#### Minister’s Conclusion:

The death of a friend reminds us that we each inhabit a fragile and temporary vessel, from which presence emerges and connects us.

May Sandra’s love and gratitude for her gift of awakening remind us of our own good fortune;  
May her delight in unpretentious, invisible service encourage us in our efforts; and  
May her warmth and openness of heart inspire us to give ourselves more freely.

Dearest Sandra, we thank thee.

**Minister:**

The task of this lifetime has been fulfilled. The role of Sandra is complete. The shell of the body falls away, and the soul that inhabited that body is released to continue its divine journey.

Candle Ceremony

Minister signals urn bearer (Donald R.).

**Minister:** Please stand.

Funeral party leaves.

**At the Cemetery**

**Announcement:**

After the interment, you are all invited to gather and raise a glass to Sandra.

**Minister's Introduction:**

Dear friends, here in this sacred place, we gather to release Sandra to her, and our, true home.

**[Reading: Rainer Maria Rilke, "Go to the Limits of Your Longing"]**  
(Reader: Roger J.)

"Go to the Limits of Your Longing"  
by *Rainer Maria Rilke*

God speaks to each of us as he makes us,  
then walks with us silently out of the night.  
These are the words we dimly hear:  
You, sent out beyond your recall,  
go to the limits of your longing.  
Embody me.  
Flare up like a flame and make big shadows I can move in.  
Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.  
Just keep going. No feeling is final.  
Don't let yourself lose me.  
Nearby is the country they call life.  
You will know it by its seriousness.  
Give me your hand.

**Minister:**

We return Sandra's ashes to the ground: from earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Words fade in the face of a great reality. We, too, arrive at this simplest of moments—our friend, Sandra, showing us the way.

Urn is placed in the grave.

**Minister:**

Rumi wrote, "Uncover in silence your soul's own rose garden." Let these rose petals remind us of the sweetness of our departed friend, and of the rose garden of her soul.

Minister scatters rose petals into the grave.

**Minister's Conclusion:**

The earth returns to the earth, and a divine spark returns to its divine source. The circle of life is complete. Now let us join in raising a glass to Sandra, and then depart, with a renewed and vivid appreciation for the gift of life allotted to each of us.

Participants scatter rose petals, and then gather for the toast.

**[Toast: Graylin]**

From Cicero:

“A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all other virtues.”

Let us toast to Dearest Sandra, whose gratefulness for the divine bounty she received has overflowed into the lives of those whom she loved. May we all be ever grateful!