



Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III

April 4, 1958 - April 20, 2026

It is with heavy hearts that we bring you the first ever Suitable for Framing Sandahl Family Obituary.

If you don't understand that reference, then you were not on the mailing list for the Suitable for Framing Sandahl Family Christmas Letter-something our dad, Sandy Sandahl, wrote each... well, most years.

This year, Calli and Beth are stepping in to reprise the role. We will do our best, but expectations should be managed.

If you are not in the mood for at least a small smile, you may be reading the wrong obituary.

Let's get the formalities out of the way.

Harold Severin Sandahl III-known to friends and family as Sandy, Dad, Daddy, Papa, and occasionally "that old man over there"-passed away peacefully at home on April 20, 2026, after a short, yet arduous battle with cancer.

Now, it turns out writing an obituary is harder than it looks. Especially one that isn't exactly like all the others. And if we're being honest, we don't quite have it in us to produce a beautifully polished summary of Sandy's life.

So, like he would have done, we'll stick to the highlights.

Sandy was born on Good Friday, April 4, 1958, in Des Moines, Iowa, where he grew up with his parents and older sister, Sheri.

At 17, Sandy welcomed Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, and from that point on, he didn't waver. Years later, when discussing retirement, his wife, Sherry, asked what he planned to do with all his free time, noting (correctly) that he didn't really have hobbies. Sandy's response: "I'll volunteer for Valley Church and spread His love." And he meant it.

Before that, his hobbies included biking, sailing, and swimming. The sailboat was eventually sold to buy an engagement ring, which, in his opinion, was a good trade. The bike stuck around and became a central part of time spent with his kids. Golf, fixing cars, and most organized sports never really made the list; his kids were his passion.

He also played bongos in a band once. And yes, he would want it clearly stated: it was one time.

Sandy met his wife, Sherry, in the summer of 1983 after SENIOM SED days at Gringo's (which is now no longer Gringo's). He claimed he fell in love with her immediately, though he did take the time to go home, shower, and change shirts before tracking her down later that night at Gambit's (also no longer Gambit's). A strong start to what would become more than 40 years together.

Together they raised four children:

Sweet Pea (Bethanie Marie-Beth, Beth Anna, B, his best birthday gift ever), Tiger (Harold IV-Chip, Chipper, The Heir),

Princess (McKayla Margaret-Calli, Mags),
and Pumpkin (Samatha Emmalee- Samantha, Sami).
And then came one of his greatest roles-being Papa.
His granddaughter Hailey, known to him as "Lily-Pop," had him completely
wrapped around her finger. Whether it was visits, phone calls, or just hearing
about what she was up to, she was a bright spot in his life and one of the few
people who could consistently out-negotiate him.

Author's note: those nicknames are reserved exclusively for Sandy. You may
proceed with Beth, Chip, Calli, Sami, and Hailey. This is not a suggestion.

Somewhere along the way, Sandy served on the Des Moines School Board
(1995-2000), including a term as president, which meant he spent a lot of time
in meetings. But he would make it home for dinner and tuck his kids in with a
book, a prayer, and kiss.

Professionally, Sandy worked in refrigeration. And, ever the humble man, we
don't really know much beyond that. We do know he would often drag his
family to the grocery store on vacations-not because we needed groceries,
but so he could inspect the freezer aisles for secrets. We are also learning
that he was very well respected in his field and will be missed by many in the
industry.

Sandy didn't know what he wanted to do after graduating from Hoover High
School in 1976, so his Dad said Monday morning march yourself down and
sign up at the Pipefitters Union. After 4 years and becoming a journeyman he
then decided to go to college-first at Iowa State, then North Dakota State-to
earn his degree in engineering.. After graduation he went on to work for Taylor
Industries back when Hy-Vee was still figuring itself out, and around 2000
decided it was time for a change, and moved the entire family from Des

Moines to Savage, Minnesota for an opportunity to establish the refrigeration engineering department with Target Corporate. Reviews of this decision were mixed at the time.

Somewhere along the way he also earned his MBA from Augsburg College in Minneapolis. He didn't make a big deal about it, so we won't either.

He left Target and went on to Amazon in Seattle, and later H-E-B in San Antonio. Notably, he only relocated Sherry for the Seattle and Texas chapters, which she handled with the patience you would expect.

In between all of that, there were countless trips, visits, phone calls, projects, and moments that don't fit neatly into an obituary but somehow feel like the main story.

We're not entirely sure how to end this. He was usually better at that part. So we'll keep it simple.

If there is anything to take from Sandy's life, it's this: show up for your people, keep your faith, say what needs to be said (even if it's slightly inappropriate), and don't wait too long to send the letter.

Thank you for loving him, and for loving us. Now for more traditional stuff.

Sandy was preceded in death by his parents, Harold Severin Sandahl Jr. and Clara Jean Sandahl; and two of the best dogs ever, Dakota and Bella. He is survived by his beloved wife, Sherry; his four children, Beth, Chip (Erica Miranda), Calli (Dan Gill), and Sami (Dylan Conner); his granddaughter, Hailey; his sister, Sheri Mahnke; Eleanor the puppy, numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, extended relatives; and several non-biological children he proudly claimed as his own (looking at you, Morgan).

A short funeral service will be held at Valley Church, 4343 Fuller Rd, West Des Moines, IA 50265, at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, April 29. Following the service, all are invited to Christopher's, 2816 Beaver Ave, Des Moines, IA 50310 for a reception from 3:30-6:30 pm, which is where the real fun will be. Attendees are encouraged to wear bright colors or Hawaiian shirts to the reception. Wear what you want to the service.

In lieu of flowers, condolences may be sent in the form of DoorDash credits, Amazon gift cards, or cash to Sherry Sandahl. That is a joke. In actuality, use your money to spend time with your family. It's what Sandy would have wanted.

Thanks. Bye.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

APR **29**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Valley Church
4343 Fuller Road
West Des Moines, IA 50265

Reception

APR **29**. 3:30 PM - 6:30 PM (CT)

Christopher's
2816 Beaver Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50310

Tribute Wall

MJ

“*Sad to hear of Sandy's passing. I worked next to Sandy in Target Engineering and had many insightful conversations of his time on the school board. He was a good manager and well respected within the team.*

Mark Janssen

mark Janssen - June 23 at 05:42 PM

JG

“*Sandy was my first manager at Target, and I have nothing but respect for him. He was kind, warm-hearted, and deeply respected by everyone who worked with him. I'm especially grateful I had the chance to reconnect with him at a conference late last year—catching up with him was the highlight of that experience. He will be truly missed.*

Jeff Grant - April 29 at 02:34 PM

WH

“*With sympathy, Sean & Jean Hamer purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.*



With sympathy, Sean & Jean Hamer - April 28 at 10:07 PM

DH

“*Sandy was my best pal for 46 years. I knew he was different, good different, from the first time I met him when I was RA and he was a freshman.*

David Hanson - April 28 at 07:53 PM

JW

“ Jeanette W. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.

Jeanette W. - April 28 at 01:53 PM

NM

“ Sandy was one of the kindest and most caring of people I've ever had the privilege of knowing. For his family my most sincere and heartfelt condolences in the days ahead and know that he will be always missed.

Neil Monson - April 28 at 09:37 AM

FF

“ From the Olson family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.

From the Olson family - April 27 at 11:28 PM

FF

“ From the Olson family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.



From the Olson family - April 27 at 11:28 PM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.



April 27 at 02:04 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.

April 27 at 02:04 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.



April 27 at 01:47 PM



“ Lydia D. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.

Lydia D. - April 27 at 11:00 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.*



April 27 at 09:26 AM



“ *The Sheri Mahnke family purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.*



The Sheri Mahnke family - April 26 at 01:57 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.*

April 25 at 06:46 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.*



April 25 at 06:46 PM

RG

“ My condolences to the Sandahl family. Sandy and I were co-workers in the Engineering Department at Target. May his memory be for a blessing!



Ray Getsug - April 25 at 04:23 AM

RG

“ Ray G. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.

Ray G. - April 25 at 04:19 AM

JG

“ Jim, Barb, Emily, and Dan Gill purchased the Vivid Recollections for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.



Jim, Barb, Emily, and Dan Gill - April 24 at 02:59 PM

JG

“ Jim, Barb, Emily, and Dan Gill planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.

Jim, Barb, Emily, and Dan Gill - April 24 at 02:59 PM



“ *Fiery Lily and Rose was purchased for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.*



April 24 at 02:42 PM



“ *Libby, Emma, Jess, Kelsey & Allie purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.*



Libby, Emma, Jess, Kelsey & Allie - April 24 at 02:13 PM



“ *I am very saddened to hear of Sandy's illness and passing. I knew him through his work as a vendor for Target and later HEB. I always appreciated the professionalism he brought to every interaction. While I did not have the opportunity to know him closely on a personal level, I respected him greatly and always enjoyed our conversations. He impressed me as a true servant leader — someone who led with integrity, candor, and a genuine commitment to others. My heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.*

Kevin Kenney - April 24 at 10:06 AM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Harold "Sandy" Severin Sandahl, III.*



April 23 at 07:20 PM



“ *As you know too well, how hard it is to write when your eyes are puddles. From sadness, heartbreak and from laughing. Funniest most spot-on obit ever! Sandy and Al are up there laughing and so proud.*

Karen Koch Palm - April 23 at 04:30 PM



*that is a beautiful obituary
i wish that i could be their but this time i can't i am very sorry you are all
in my thoughts and prayers sheri you have an amazing family to help
with the loss of your beloved husband you are smart witty, and super
intelligent stay strong and if you ever need to talk or even wanna come
and visit Pennsylvania, I'm here for you. You're in my thoughts and
prayers. All of you are. May God bless and keep you all your cousin
Dawn.*

Dawn Thompson Harvey Rogers - April 23 at 06:26 PM



*I knew Sandy professionally, just know he carried himself well and
earned respect from most everyone. I love the obituary. Enjoy the
celebration .. I wont be able to join but I will hang my flowered shirt out
in his honor! God bless*

Stephen E Borer - April 24 at 11:41 AM

LI

Such sad news. Sandy was wonderful to work with. I am sending lots of prayers and love to his son, who I also work with, and entire family during this difficult time. My deepest condolences. Lizzy

Lizzy - April 29 at 05:58 PM

JY

Sandy was genuine and wonderful to work with. I had the pleasure of knowing Sandy professionally, but our conversations always felt like catching up with a friend. I will always remember our job site visits and conversations. It feels like just yesterday we were discussing his well-earned retirement. I am so grateful for the time I spent with him. Rest in peace, Sandy

Jun Yang - April 29 at 06:20 PM

LJ

Sandy's obituary (which is as lovely as he was!) suggested we remember him by spending time with our families. That's exactly what I did today. My church is my family, and so are the people served by the church's food pantry. At our weekly Bible study, the pastor noted that a record number of households were served by the food pantry, which offers supplemental food to people who live on the north side of Madison, Wisconsin. In Sandy's memory, I donated to the food pantry, knowing that his faith would have compelled him to heed what Christ said in Matthew 25: As you do to others, you do to Christ. God bless the memory of a treasured classmate.

Lyn (Hanson) Jerde - April 29 at 08:03 PM