



## Sandra Ables Kondrick

March 26, 1941 - July 25, 2024

Sandra Jeanette Kondrick (nee Ables), along with her twin sister Susana Jean, was born in Washington DC on March 26, 1941 to parents Martha and James Quentin Ables. Unfortunately, Susana died five weeks later. This was the first pivotal moment of Sandra's life. Thankfully, another sister was born, Anita Marina.

Known as "Sandy," to her friends, she is more widely known by her pen-name, Sandra Benitez, author of four acclaimed novels "A Place Where the Sea Remembers," "Bitter Grounds," "The Weight of All Things," "Night of the Radishes," a memoir, "Bag Lady," as well as many short stories, essays, and poems.

Sandy grew up with her diplomat father and family in Central America, notably El Salvador, in the 40's and 50's. Her parents were both bilingual, and from early on, the family lived between many worlds: the high society of the Salvadoran capitol, the people of El Salvador, and the reality of American citizenship. So, at the age of 14, Sandy and her little sister were sent to rural Lemons, Missouri to live on a cattle ranch with their hardscrabble grandparents to learn to be "American." Sandy would never live with her natural parents again. This was the next pivotal moment in her life. Sandy went on to graduate from high school as lead cheerleader and Homecoming Queen. Anita returned to El Salvador and lives there to this day.

Sandy enrolled at the Teacher's College in Kirksville, Mo., now Truman University, and married Charles Earl Title jr. and had two sons. While raising the children, Sandy would go on to achieve a Master's Degree in Comparative Literature from her alma mater and then she taught for several years.

In 1975, she leaned up against a porch railing at a dinner party and it gave way. She fell 14 feet backwards and broke her spine in three places. She was in a body cast and Stryker frame for over three months. She managed to heal and avoid paralysis but her body was never the same. This was another pivotal moment. She got a divorce and struck out on her own.

Eventually, she met James F. Kondrick, a writer, and not long after, they got married (another pivotal moment). That's when Sandy began her acclaimed literary career. Over the course of the next 20 years, she produced notable Latino fiction, winning coveted grants and fellowships, until eventually winning the Minnesota Book Award, the USA Award, and the Hispanic Heritage Award, incredibly at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC where she was born. These are among many other achievements including an Honorary Doctorate of the Belles Lettres from Concordia University.

A close reader will find threads of Sandy's life in her literary work, but there is more to it. One need only pay attention. An intensely spiritual and empathetic person, she was a balm to all who knew her, especially the innocents, whom she seemed to know intimately.

Sandy died at peace surrounded by friends and family in Edina, MN., on July 25, 2024 after a long illness. She is preceded in death by her husband James Kondrick and survived by her sister and brother-in-law Anita and Dr. Carlos Emilio Alvarez, her sons Christopher and Jonothan Title, step-children Christopher, Laura, and Denise Kondrick, and many nieces, nephews, and

grandchildren.

Plans for a memorial service/celebration of life will come at a later time. The family is grateful for all kind thoughts and prayers and would like everyone to know that up until the end, Sandy was planning to write a book about an African Grey parrot named Socrates.

[www.Washburn-McReavy.com](http://www.Washburn-McReavy.com)

Edina Chapel 952-920-3996

# Tribute Wall



“ *The WWWs purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Sandra Ables Kondrick.*



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**The WWWs** - October 26, 2024 at 10:11 AM



“ *The WWWs planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sandra Ables Kondrick.*

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**The WWWs** - October 26, 2024 at 10:11 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sandra Ables Kondrick.*



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October 25, 2024 at 08:11 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sandra Ables Kondrick.*

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October 25, 2024 at 08:11 AM

EF

“ Eric Grunewald & Family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Sandra Ables Kondrick.



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**Eric Grunewald & Family** - October 23, 2024 at 10:06 PM

JA

“ Oh Sandy, this evening your signed book called my name and it got me thinking it has been so long since we last met and I have found you passed 😞. My heart is sad for you and your family. I will cherish the many conversations we had together for eternity. Thank you so much for letting me know you had passed and in such a Sandra and Janet way. It was an honor to walk through the shadows with you for a season. I'm sure Mother Mary and Jesus are beyond our comprehension and the dazzle of it all, oh my. Please visit in my dreams if you'd like. I can only imagine the magnificence of all you are experiencing and my door is always open for any of your family. I trust they will find their way to me if it is God's will. Miss you, my dear. May God's love and light be with us all. May we remember the sunshine on our faces and the laughter of your voice. What a gem you were to the world. - Janet Anderson



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**Janet Anderson** - August 11, 2024 at 12:08 AM

FJ

“ Dear Family and Friends, Sandy and I met almost 3 years ago. I started out as a Caregiver making home visits and we became Dear Friends❤️ It has been a profound privilege and honor to have been a part of this beautiful woman’s life and legacy. Also, to have met her children ,sister and all the other loving family /friends ❤️My deepest Condolences go to y’all.❤️ Lovingly, Francie Christine Johnson



Francie Johnson - August 03, 2024 at 10:33 AM

DW

“ I remember meeting Sandy's, as a friend of Denise. I remember her as a very lovely & interesting person. I express my deepest condolences to the entire Kondrick family, & to her son, Jonothan. Sincerely, Diane Brown Wilder



Diane Wilder - July 28, 2024 at 03:51 PM

LK

“ Sandy taught me the proper way to tie my shoelaces so they wouldn't come undone. She always called me "sweetie." We went together on a memorable trip to visit her grandparents at their farm in Lemons. We slept in the bunkhouse together during our visit and had to use a privy. It was so special to share her memories on this trip. I will miss her.

Laura Kondrick - July 28, 2024 at 12:51 PM