



Sondra Sommerwill

MAR 13, 1935 - FEB 10, 2023



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Sondra Sommerwill, a loving mother of 4 children, a devoted wife, a talented artist, a teacher and counselor passed away peacefully on Friday, February 10th, 2023, at the age of 87. Born on March 13th, 1935, growing up in North Chicago and showed artistic talents from a very young age and subsequently graduated from the University of New Mexico, where she met her first husband, Paul. Then as a military wife she began building a family while moving several times with Paul's assignments.

Sondra was an incredible mother, always there for her children and encouraging them to pursue all their many interests: swimming, playing musical instruments, the scouts, and much more. Sondra with her creative ways could make normal events extra magical, not only Christmas and Easter - but even just losing a tooth. The children recall moving often but Sondra always made each new place feel like home again. They also have many happy memories of their time together on early vacations, driving cross-country in a VW van, or camping and boating. Sondra often used her artistic talents to improve the normal: painting a face and flowers on that old VW van, turning a cracked window into a spider web, or creating murals on bedroom walls. For several years she also sold her paintings in the Albuquerque Old Town Arts and Crafts fair but then finally took her talent into schools to teach grade school and art.

One of Paul's Phone Company assignments was in pre-revolution Iran where Sondra found herself teaching in Tehran at the International School in the mid-1970's. While living among many expats from many countries there, they became good friends with an English couple – John and his wife. Despite the Iranian Revolution then driving most expats back to their respective homelands, they remained in touch with their English friends. During this time Sondra had realized just how much counseling meant to the growing children. So she went back to school herself and obtained a Master's in Education and consequently spent the rest of her career as a school counselor.

Sadly, in 1993, after 35 years of happy marriage, Paul contracted cancer and died. John and his wife had amicably divorced several years earlier but John had continued to stay in touch and had



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even visited them in New Mexico. That friendship after Paul's death subsequently grew into something much more and they were married late in 1995, setting up home in Orlando.

John became the love of Sondra's life, and they shared many happy memories together subsequently giving Sondra a further 27 years of loving marriage. So, with already 4 very healthy and educated grown up children and 4 grandchildren of her own in the US, she inherited a further 2 children in the UK and subsequently even 2 more grandchildren. Of course, whenever time permitted, Sondra with John needed no excuses to visit the UK and Europe enjoying John's many friends and family, all of whom took to Sondra like ducks to water.

Professionally, Sondra skills were still in high demand, and she continued counseling through into her 70's earning several recognitions, culminating in Counselor of the Year in 2007 for all of Orange County (that included Orlando).

John & Sondra had visited The Villages in 1999 and both agreed immediately that's where they would hope to live in retirement. John only, finally persuaded Sondra to retire ten years later and move there and even then, she still had no idea what she would be doing with her time. Unlike most people who first come to The Villages, indulging herself for the rest of her life was still not a main objective, despite being a good swimmer, horse rider, and skier in her time. However, she immediately found opportunity to enjoy her artwork again: both painting and pottery. But being the first residents in the Hydrangea Villas subdivision of the Village of St. Charles, enabled her to resume her 'mothering' skills acting as unofficial host, frequently introducing herself to any newcomers as soon as they arrived: inventing and inviting ladies to coffee mornings, book club, bridge, ladies golf etc. (not that Sondra was a golfer – but who was, when they first arrived in The Villages). Thus, she created the HV Social Club for the residents of its 70+ homes there. Sondra ran the club for nearly 10 years before Covid19 and then the Parkinson disease finally overwhelmed her. However, right up to the end, she was comforted by friends and family visiting frequently and particularly last year when son Mark and his wife also retired to The Villages.

Sondra will be missed by everyone who had the opportunity to enjoy her calm and pleasant company and wise words of advice, and she'll be remembered for her unwavering love for her family, her artistic talent, and her passion for teaching and counseling and often just as a natural hostess. Her legacy will live on through the memories she created with those she loved. She is survived by her 2 sisters, and all her children, grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren who all will miss her dearly - no more so than husband John.



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In lieu of flowers, Sondra would prefer a donation to her favorite charity:
Doctors without Borders Help save lives.

There will be a Gathering of family and friends from 10:00 am to 11:00 am followed by a
Celebration of Life at 11:00 am on Monday, March 13th (Sondra's birthday) at Banks/Page-Theus
Funeral Home 410 Webster St. Wildwood, FL 35785.



Events


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Gathering of Friends and Family

 **Monday**, March 13, 2023

 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM ET


 **Banks/Page-Theus Chapel**
410 Webster St, Wildwood FL 34785



Celebration of Life Memorial Service

 **Monday**, March 13, 2023

 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM ET

 **Banks/Page-Theus Chapel**
410 Webster St, Wildwood FL 34785





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Sondra by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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