



Sandra Gayle Newman

February 9, 1949 - November 10, 2025

Sandra Gayle Newman passed on November 10th after a five-month battle with pancreatic cancer. She was born on February 9th, 1949, and lived in and around Oakford during her early life with her parents Donald LeRoy Stroh and Mary “Roberta” Anderson Stroh. She graduated from Oakford Grade School spending time at her parents Phillips 66 station in Oakford and went on to graduate at Porta where she was a class president, Homecoming Queen and Prom Queen. She attended Western Illinois University for one year and finished her degree in Home Economics at the University of Illinois and taught in Champaign for a year.

At her parents’ request she stopped teaching and came home to manage the family Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Petersburg. When Robert Newman lost the lease on his pastures after the owner died, he went to work at New Salem Coca-Cola for two reasons: he wanted to pay his gas bill to Mr. Stroh, and he knew Sandy managed the plant. After two years they had their first date and married at the Rock Creek Church on October 8, 1983. They were lifelong members of Bethlehem Lutheran church in Petersburg where Sandy taught Sunday School for several years and they have recently been attending Zion Lutheran Church in Pleasant Plains as it is closer to their daughter’s home in Ashland. Recently they celebrated 42 years of marriage. During this time, they showed cattle at State and National fairs and Exhibitions and had a production sale. They always worked together from this time forward doing commercial

baling encompassing 4,000 acres, running a 100 head registered Hereford herd, up to 800 outside hogs without confinement, all while working first at the Coke plant and then the gas station in Oakford. When Bob went to work as a gunmaker Sandy prepared meals for the movie stars and law enforcement officers, they trained at the farm and went on trips to Hollywood where they met and became friends with many of the old stars they had enjoyed watching when they were young. A highlight at the farm was when they hosted James Drury's (The Virginian's) 60th birthday at the farm where Sandy's home economics degree shined as she prepared the meals for all the guests attending.

They have a daughter Kimberly Gayle who married Sean Tomasko at the Rock Creek church with a reception at her parents' farm which would inadvertently lead them into opening their barn as a reception center that they still operate after both retired from teaching at the A-C Central school system. Sandy taught at A-C for over thirty years. While earning her master's degree in reading. Kimberly, Bob, and Sandy also helped the Stroh family with their ice cream trailer at county fairs and festivals. They hosted the Illinois Junior Hereford Expo at the Menard County Fairgrounds with Mark Wankel their partner, in several herd bulls. Bob taught at A-C Central for 17 years while driving a bus and earned his master's in American history degree at Western Illinois University and was Illinois history educator of the year in 2005. They both retired from teaching the same year and now their daughter Kimberly teaches in Springfield after earning her master's as a reading specialist and passing the National Boards.

Sandy is survived by her husband Bob, her daughter Kim and her husband Sean as well as their two children Lillian and Levi whom Sandy doted on as her favorite grandchildren, also her niece Stephanie Webster and husband Tony along with their children Anika, Kyra, and Peyton, as well as the numerous cousins that she grew up with.

Knowing time was short Kim had one request of Sandy. When she got to heaven, she wanted her to send her a calico kitten. To simplify a long story the day after Sandy passed the family gathered in the barn for lunch when Sean heard something metallic fall in the barn and he and Kim went together to investigate. They saw nothing until a small calico kitten fell out of the square baler at Kim's feet. We call the kitten Angel.

Sandy's final resting place is at Rock Creek Cemetery where she was buried on November 18, 2025. Pallbearers were family and close friends, many of whom were either at or were part of their wedding, and a few invited guests for a small graveside ceremony followed by a celebration of life at the family reception center The Homestead. Sandy will be missed by so many friends, family, past students, and those she touched throughout her life that she decided to forgo a big funeral and visitation and keep things small like the town she grew up in.

Hurley Funeral Home in Petersburg is assisting Sandy's family with services. Please visit hurleyfh.com for Sandy's online obituary.

Cemetery Details

Rock Creek Cemetery

Tribute Wall

JK

“ Our sympathies to Bob and Kim and the rest of the family. Sandy was a wonderful and kind person. Mike and Joanne Kirchner and family

Joanne Kirchner - November 24, 2025 at 01:56 PM

SS

“ I do not know ANY of this family, but I DO KNOW that GOD certainly does!
I cried when reading about the "Calico Kitten"
God Blessed this Family!

Sharon of Waverly, IL

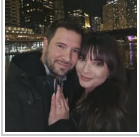
Sharon Stewart - November 20, 2025 at 09:46 AM

LH

“ Larry and Mary Hundt sent a virtual gift in memory of Sandra Newman



Larry and Mary Hundt - November 20, 2025 at 08:22 AM



“ Mrs. Newman was truly one of my favorite teachers. I had the honor of having her in both Kindergarten and 3rd grade, and I’ll never forget how kind she always was. If we were good, we’d get to pick a piece of candy from her golden treasure chest ...something we all looked forward to so much. She was always smiling, always gentle, and always made her classroom feel safe and special.

I was grateful to see her and Mr. Newman last year at a wedding, and it meant so much to catch up with them both. I’ll also never forget Mr. Newman’s history class in high school... he was another one of my favorite teachers. He was colorblind, and we would always ask him who helped choose his outfits each day. He’d laugh and tell us that Sandra picked out his tie and matched his clothes every single morning. I always thought that was the sweetest thing, and such a perfect example of their love for each other.

She will be incredibly missed. I always enjoyed seeing them together, and knowing she is gone is another reminder of how precious these wonderful teachers truly are.

You are so very missed already, Mrs. Newman. Thank you for everything you gave to your students. ❤️

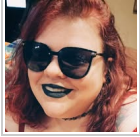
-Samantha Hill

Sam Jo - November 19, 2025 at 11:34 PM

RS

“ I always saw Sandy with her grandkids, as they were in the same activities as my kids. She was so friendly and nice. She obviously loved Lilly and Levi very much. I did not know she was sick, and will miss seeing her around.

Rachel Schulte - November 19, 2025 at 09:52 PM



“ I am devastated. She was my Kindergarten and I think 3rd grade. I would see her a lot all my life at festivals working at the ice cream truck with her wonderful husband Bob. She was one of the kindest, gentlest people I've ever met. She made an impact on me that I will never forget. I love and miss you already Sandy.



Prayers to Bob, Kim and everyone in this tough time.

Whitney Nicole - November 19, 2025 at 09:27 PM

DS

“ I am grateful to have taught with Sandy at A-C. She was a kind soul and all who knew her liked her. I'm sorry to hear of her passing and hope Bob and Kim find comfort in their memories of her and her heavenly gift of the calico cat.

Diane Sieving - November 19, 2025 at 09:24 PM

MJ

“ **BOB, KIM AND FAMILY:** Sandy was a wonderful teacher and both of my kids loved her! Sending our love and prayers.

Marshall and Julie Jokisch - November 19, 2025 at 09:21 PM

CH

“ Mrs. Newman was my first teacher at AC and left the biggest impression. She was the most caring person I ever met and always so sweet and understanding. Made my first year in a new place perfect. RIP Mrs. Newman. My sympathy to her daughter and Mr. Newman as well.

Caitlyn H. - November 19, 2025 at 08:42 PM

MM

“ My son Kris Koehne was a student of Sandy's. Every time I seen Sandy she spoke very highly of him. Sandy was loved throughout AC Central. She will be missed dearly

Maria Martin - November 19, 2025 at 06:03 PM

ME

“ The best teacher! She introduced me to the Chronicles of Narnia and Turkish delights. One of my core memories. RIP, Mrs. Newman

Morgan Eddinger - November 19, 2025 at 03:34 PM

TG

“ Mrs. Newman always had a smile on her face for her students and anyone else who was lucky enough to be around her. She was so kind and caring and loved teaching young minds. I'm so sorry she had to struggle with cancer. Bob and Kim, you have my sincerest sympathy.

Trish Gurnsey - November 19, 2025 at 03:30 PM

JH

“ Sandy was always happy and alot of fun when we were in school. My sincere sympathy to her family. Jackie Rebbe Horn

Jacqueline Rebbe Horn - November 19, 2025 at 01:02 PM

LT

“ Sandy was teaching at AC when I worked there. She was so kind to the children and to me. I was able to have a good visit with her when my cousin’s granddaughter was married at the farm this summer. I held her in high esteem.

*I send sympathy to Bob, Kim and all those family and friends. The world needs more
People like Sandy.*

Lieura Sue Taylor - November 19, 2025 at 11:40 AM

TH

“ TERNI HINRICHS sent a virtual gift in memory of Sandra Newman



TERNI HINRICHS - November 19, 2025 at 11:08 AM