



## Sandra "Sandy" Lyn Bates

February 14, 1940 - August 1, 2019

Sandy Bates, who inspired three generations of Catoosa kindergarten students and was beloved by all who knew her, died peacefully at home on August 1, 2019, surrounded by her family. She was 79.

Sandra Lyn Rhea was born on Valentine's Day, 1940, in Los Angeles, to Norma Fern (Crider) Rhea and Marvin Clyde Rhea, Jr. Sandy attended Dewey, Oklahoma, public schools, Class of 1958. Sandy sang in the chorus and girls' quartet and worked as a soda jerk at Popkess Pharmacy.

Sandy met her future husband, Wayne David Bates from Nowata, at Falls Creek Baptist Assembly when they were 14. They were married in Dewey on January 22, 1961, and the couple had two children, Michael and Kay.

Sandy earned a bachelor's in elementary education at Northeastern State, where she would later return to earn a master's degree. Before moving to Tulsa, Sandy taught in Lawrence, Kansas, and Bartlesville.

From 1970 to 1998, Sandy Bates provided hundreds of Catoosa kindergarteners with a cheerful, loving start to their school years. Many students recount meeting her years later, and she would remember them and tell them how proud she was of them. Sandy was honored as Catoosa Teacher of the Year for 1983-4. One colleague wrote that "year after year, she would dip into her endless well of enthusiasm" and "took each child into her heart." As founder of the Association of Catoosa Classroom Teachers and leader of the bargaining team, "she was fearless, relentless in her pursuit of justice.... She spoke her mind when so many of us were too timid to do so." Another colleague wrote, "She was always encouraging to me.... Sandy looked for ways to keep her students excited about learning."

After retiring, Sandy continued an active life of service, while enjoying more time with her growing extended family. For Sandy's grandchildren, Grandma's house was a comforting, relaxing place. At Catoosa Library, she presented a weekly "Story Time with Miss Sandy." She and David made appearances around Tulsa each Christmas season as Santa and Mrs. Claus and volunteered at the St. Francis Children's Hospital gift shop.

Through First Baptist Church downtown, Sandy taught English as a Second Language and helped Spanish-speaking newcomers to Tulsa, making many friends who treated her

like family, and she used her Spanish skills on mission trips to Peru and Mexico. She volunteered at the church's Caring Center and served as director of the Facilitators Community Group.

Sandy believed that she could do all things through Christ who strengthened her (Philippians 4:13) and that her times were in God's hands (Psalm 31:15). Despite painful and fearful circumstances during her long battle with peritoneal cancer, Sandy continued to share Christ's love with those who cared for her.

Sandra Lyn Bates is survived by her husband of 58 years, David Bates, son Michael Bates and his wife Mikki, daughter Kay Strain and her husband Michael; grandchildren Kendall Strain, Jared Strain, Joseph Bates, Katherine Bates, and Matthew Bates; brother Michael Rhea and sisters Connie Gordon and Gerry Rhea. She was preceded in death by her parents M. C. and Fern Rhea, and by her youngest sister, Susan Rhea.

Services were held at First Baptist Church, Tulsa, under the direction of Moore Southlawn, followed by burial at Nowata Memorial Cemetery. Donations in Sandy's memory may be made to the First Baptist Church Caring Center and to Isaiah 58 In His Service ([isaiah58ihs.org](http://isaiah58ihs.org)).

Moore's Southlawn 918-663-2233

# Events

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**AUG**   **Memorial**   10:00AM

**8**

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First Baptist Church-Tulsa  
403 S. Cincinnati, Tulsa, OK, US

# Comments

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“ I did my student teaching in Sandy's class. She taught me so much! She gave me some of her old lesson plan books to have for ideas when I got my own classroom. I taught my students many songs I learned in Sandy's class...the days of the week song and all of the letter people songs! Many years later I was happy to see her occasionally at the YWCA in Tulsa. She was a very sweet lady. I will miss her!

**Lesa Davis** - August 12 at 12:52 AM



“ I forgot to say that my mom, Bette Davis, taught with Sandy at Catoosa for many years. My mom taught 2nd grade  
I was so excited that I got to do my student teaching in Sandy's classroom.

**Lesa Davis** - August 12 at 01:26 AM



“ I remember you and your mom, Lesa, and I think you and I were classmates, but I didn't realize your student teaching connection to Mom -- how wonderful! It would be fun to see those old lesson plan books again.

**Michael Bates** - August 29 at 11:55 PM

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“ Such happy and beautiful memories in my heart of times spent with Sandy. From ski slopes to fishing boats to Biltmore House, weekend trips to Branson, and times spent in each other's homes, we had such pleasurable times, our two families together. I am so sad for the suffering she has endured, but I know her sweet spirit and smile endured as well, and I know she is now home with her blessed Savior, Jesus Christ. My heartfelt love and sympathy to the entire Bates Family. Hugs/Joyce Anne

**Joyce Anne Whaley** - August 07 at 09:12 PM



“ Love you Joyce Anne. Thank you.

**Kay** - August 08 at 02:03 PM

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“ Lee Johnson & David Senger purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Sandra "Sandy" Lyn Bates.



**Lee Johnson & David Senger** - August 07 at 06:58 PM

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“ Aunt Bernie and Cousin Jan purchased the Joyful Memory for the family of Sandra "Sandy" Lyn Bates.



Aunt Bernie and Cousin Jan - August 06 at 11:17 AM

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“ Judith H. purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Sandra "Sandy" Lyn Bates.



Judith H. - August 05 at 11:08 PM

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“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Sandra "Sandy" Lyn Bates.



August 05 at 10:48 PM

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“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Sandra "Sandy" Lyn Bates.



August 05 at 10:35 PM

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“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sandra "Sandy" Lyn Bates.



August 05 at 10:31 PM

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“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Sandra "Sandy" Lyn Bates.



August 05 at 10:20 PM

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“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Sandra "Sandy" Lyn Bates.



August 05 at 05:11 PM

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“ When my husband first started his Santa adventure I met Sandy when my husband went to pick up a belt David had made for him. We hit it off because I was a teacher and we talked...a lot! She was always smiling and so sweet. She will be missed.

**Nora Green** - August 05 at 03:18 PM



“ Thank you for sharing this. Mom loved meeting people.

**Kay** - August 08 at 02:04 PM