



Sandra Lee Heller

December 26, 1939 - April 3, 2026

Sandra Lee (Schoenrock) Heller, 86, of Cedar Falls, Iowa, passed away following a brief illness, surrounded by her family, on April 3, 2026, at the Cedar Valley Hospice Home in Waterloo, Iowa.

Sandra was born December 26, 1939, at 2:00 am, missing Christmas Day by two hours, but she always celebrated her birthday with her father, who was born on December 25. She was the daughter of Edward Albert Schoenrock and Clara Leona Myers Schoenrock. She grew up on a farm outside of Fairbury, Nebraska, with three brothers, who lovingly referred to her as "Sis."

She attended elementary school in two different one-room schoolhouses in Jefferson County, Nebraska: District 100 (grades 1-7) and District 8 (grade 8). She later attended Fairbury High School, where she was a member of the marching band, and graduated in May 1957. She was united in marriage to Marvin Otto Heller on August 25, 1957 at Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church at Gladstone near Fairbury, Nebraska. To this union two children were born, a daughter, Kellie, and a son, Matthew.

Sandra worked at various secretarial positions, beginning at a law firm in Hebron, Nebraska, and then at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, eventually retiring from the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls in 2004 after 22 years in the Geography Department.

Sandra was active in her church, Nazareth Evangelical Lutheran Church, and P.E.O. She volunteered at local events, such as the Back to School Project and the UNI Museum. She loved making quilts for Lutheran World Relief, and she knitted countless prayer shawls for the church and scarves for children in need. She was a steadfast UNI fan and season ticket holder for the football, volleyball, and basketball teams for many years— you would often see her wearing purple and gold.

She enjoyed traveling with Marvin and Kellie, visiting Europe, England, Ireland, Alaska, and destinations across the continental United States. She loved her family deeply and cherished time spent with her granddaughters and great-grandchildren, attending many of their sporting events and activities over the years. Above all, she loved the Lord. Sandra and Marvin's strong Christian faith was the foundation of their marriage and was passed on to her daughter, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

She will always be remembered for her faith, her love of her family, her service to others, her generosity, her chocolate chip cookies, and wonderful sense of humor. She loved joking with the great grandkids and keeping her son-in-law on his toes. She was cracking jokes until her last day.

She is survived by her daughter, Kellie (David) Smith; granddaughters, Mallory Swenson, Leah (Alex) Crouse, and Johanna (Ryan) Berkey; seven great grandchildren, Rylan and Thayer Swenson, Marie and Celia Crouse, and Claire, Grace, and Paige Berkey; brother Roger (Judy) Schoenrock; sisters-in-law Jean Schmutte and Adella Schmidt; nieces and nephews. Preceding her in death are her husband, Marvin, her parents, son, Matthew Lee, and brothers, Gailon and Gary Schoenrock.

Funeral services will be 11:00 am, Thursday, April 9, 2026, at Nazareth

Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls. Livestream of the service is available at <https://www.naz.org/>. Click "Watch Live". Lunch and fellowship will be immediately following. A visitation will take place 4:00-7:00 pm on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at the Richardson Funeral Home in Cedar Falls. A private burial with the family will be held at Fairview Cemetery in Cedar Falls.

In lieu of flowers or plants, the family requests donations be made to Wings of Refuge (503 Duff Avenue, Ames, IA 50010) or the Job Foundation (4600 University Avenue, Cedar Falls, IA 50613) in Sandra's name.

Cemetery Details

Fairview Cemetery

12th and Division Streets
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 273-8628

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 8. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Richardson Funeral Service
615 Main Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 266-3525
richardsonfuneralservice@gmail.com
<http://richardson.funeralplan2.com>

Funeral Service

APR 9. 11:00 AM (CT)

Nazareth Evangelical Lutheran Church
7401 University Ave
Cedar Falls, IA 50613-5025
(319) 266-7589

Tribute Wall

CH

“ Sandra lived by us in Cherrywood for several years. And when she moved to the Western Home Communities she became a neighbor to my mother who lived at Windermere at the time. We always enjoyed comparing notes as to what was happening at the Western Home. Sandra was part of the knitting group at Bethlehem Lutheran Church and I really enjoyed my time with her as we made scarves for all the third graders in the Cedar Falls Schools. I wish I knew how many scarves she made over the years. She was there to help when we got ready every fall to bag and take the scarves to the schools. What a wonderful person and I am so lucky she was part of my life for so many years.

Claudia Hovden - April 08 at 08:46 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Sandra Lee Heller.



April 08 at 12:14 PM

IE

“ Ivan Eland purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Sandra Lee Heller.



Ivan Eland - April 08 at 12:07 PM

IE

“ Ivan Eland planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sandra Lee Heller.

Ivan Eland - April 08 at 12:07 PM

CD

“ Sandra was a wonderful cousin. She was a beautiful bride, even though I was only 6 years old I remember her wedding to Marvin. She always welcomed us when we would drop in when our daughter Sarah was a student at UNI, She was an immaculate housekeeper and a great cook. We are really going to miss her. Our deepest sympathy to Kellie, David, and her grandchildren and great grandchildren as you go through a difficult time. May the love and support of your family and friends give you comfort. Love to you all-
Cynthia (Schoenrock) Demers

Cynthia Demers - April 06 at 09:17 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Sandra Lee Heller.



April 06 at 07:33 PM

LM

“ Sandra and I were besties as children and teens even though we were cousins and lived 120 miles apart. When my parents did not go to Fairbury for awhile, I would take the Rock Island train to visit her and she would come and stay a few days with me. I have many wonderful memories of our times together.

Linda E Museus - April 06 at 04:46 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Sandra Lee Heller.*



April 06 at 04:32 PM



“ *Sandra always had the greatest smile! She tended to be quiet until you got her talking. Her home was always beautiful and she gracefully hosted 25 PEO Sisters for our Fall Salad Supper and meeting without batting an eye. I will miss her quiet light and warmth.*

Barbara Hatinger - April 06 at 02:37 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Sandra Lee Heller.*



April 06 at 11:42 AM

JF

“ To the family of Sandra Heller: I am John Focht and have been a friend of the Heller family through the years; Primarily through Marvin as I was an educator also.
I was saddened to hear of Sandra's passing and only heard recently that she was not well.
I got to know Sandra as we both worked out at the same times at the fitness Center here on WHC Campus.

I enjoyed our visits and always appreciated her good nature and her care for my wife, Judy, and I. Judy is with dementia at the Martin Health Center near downtown Cedar Falls.

Two wonderful people.. your Mom and Dad and relatives. I will be with you in spirit as you celebrate Sandra's life this week.

In sympathy and love: John Focht

John Focht - April 05 at 10:17 PM

BE

“ I always appreciated Sandra's intelligence and advocacy during the time I was a non-traditional student in the Geography Department at UNI. My sympathy to her family on this Easter Sunday. Bev



Bev - April 05 at 02:09 PM