Sanford Tandowsky (1931 - 2016)

Sanford (“Sandy”) Tandowsky
September 21, 1931 - February 22, 2016

A resident of Burlingame, Sandy passed away peacefully with his family at his side.

He was born in San Francisco to Margaret and Nate Tandowsky. He graduated from Lowell High School and then from U.C. Berkeley with a degree in Civil Engineering.

In October 1953, Sandy met the love of his life, Selma Garbowit, at a dance for U.S. Army soldiers in Washington, D.C. They married within 6 months and, 3 weeks later, Sandy was deployed to Korea while his bride remained on the East Coast. Sandy and Selma reunited a year later and moved to Pasadena, CA, where Sandy earned his M.S. in Civil Engineering at Cal Tech. Following graduation, Selma and Sandy moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to be close to Sandy’s family.

Sandy enjoyed a successful career as a Structural Engineer. He worked for several San Francisco firms before becoming a co-founding partner of an engineering firm (ultimately named Cygna) in 1973. Sandy served as President of Cygna and, at its height, the company employed 400 nationwide. His structural work had a major impact on many notable projects in San Francisco, the Bay Area and across the country until he retired in 2000.

Sandy enjoyed an active retirement. He loved tennis, learned to play the piano at age 70, regularly attended the Symphony, theater and Giants games, travelled with Selma extensively all over the world, and spent “week 29” at Club Tahoe.

A man of deep values and ethics, Sandy was a devoted and tireless contributor to the community. He was a long-term member of Peninsula Temple Sholom and served on its board for many years. He served the Jewish Community Federation in many capacities: board member, and chair of the North Peninsula campaign, the Planning and Allocations Committee, and the Security Review Committee. He was awarded JCF “Volunteer of the Year” in 2006. He also served a number of agencies including: as President of Jewish Vocational Services, VP of the Peninsula JCC, and as an active Board member of the Jewish Community Relations Council and Jewish Public Affairs Council.

He also loved doing hands-on community work: for more than 10 years, he and Selma taught reading to grade school students as part of the Jewish Literacy Program, he conducted Shabbat services regularly at local Seniors homes, and was inspired to get passionately involved in righting injustices with causes like the "Save Darfur" movement.

Sandy relished spending his life with Selma and their family. He provided Selma with unwavering love and devotion over the course of their marriage, a love that continued to grow after Selma’s Alzheimer’s diagnosis. They were truly sweethearts, holding hands and exchanging kisses to the end.

Sandy was immensely proud of his 3 children, their spouses, and his 9 grandchildren. He loved experiencing every grandchild’s milestones, including his oldest grandchild’s recent wedding. He would tell everyone how lucky he was to have his children and grandchildren living within 15 minutes of one another.

Sandy was an intelligent, humble, kind, sweet, gentle and generous man. He was a role model for his family and community as to how to enjoy life in an ethical and meaningful manner. Sandy’s presence was a gift to those who knew him and he will be forever missed. May Sandy Tandowsky’s light remain in our hearts and may his memory be a blessing.

Sandy is survived by his loving wife of nearly 62 years, Selma, and his proud legacy: children, Keith & Michelle Tandowsky of Burlingame, Joan & Michael Fox of Hillsborough and Neal & Ilana Tandowsky of San Mateo; and grandchildren: Adam and Carly Fox, Jared & Lindsey Fox; Ethan, Jordan, Blake, Olivia & Meredith Tandowsky.


The family is deeply grateful to the loving staff at Sage Eldercare and Mission Hospice for their care and compassion. A memorial service will be held on Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 1:30 PM at Peninsula Temple Sholom, 1655 Sebastian Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010.

The family suggests that memorial contributions may be made to Peninsula Temple Sholom, the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, the Alzheimer’s Association or the charity of your choice.

Funeral Home
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