

## Clyde "Sandy" Bridges: 1939 - 1997

Clyde "Sandy" Bridges, 58, of 2616 Woodland Avenue, Duluth, MN died at home surrounded by his family on December 26, 1997 following a year's courageous battle with cancer.

Sandy was born in Little Rock, Arkansas on June 25, 1939 to Carolyn and Sanders Bridges. In April 1997 Sandy retired from a 30 year career with the National Council, Boy Scouts of America, where he served as the Director of the Northern Tier High Adventure Programs and Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base for the past 27 years. He married the former Cherie Hegg in the lodge of the Sommers Canoe Base on June 13, 1970.



Sandy's love for the outdoors commenced as a young boy in his native Arkansas. Joining the Scouting program at the age of 8, he ultimately attained the Eagle Scout Award, the highest rank awarded in Scouting. He was also a Vigil Member of the Order of the Arrow, a Scouting organization recognizing honored campers and dedicated to service. He served as the Chief of the Quapaw OA Lodge and was a leader of its dance team. His youthful vision of the Sommers Canoe Base and the northwoods was realized when as a teen, he joined fellow Scouts and traveled on a bus to the Sommers Canoe Base, northeast of Ely, Minnesota, where he took the first of many canoe trips during his lifetime. He later returned during his college summers to work as a canoe guide at the Sommers Canoe Base, instilling his passion for wilderness in the lives of the groups he led.

He returned permanently to Ely in 1962 and eventually became the Director of the Sommers Canoe Base in 1970. Through his uncommon vision and leadership during the next 27 years, he touched the lives of tens of thousands of youth and ignited a consuming fire within their souls that will never be extinguished. Sandy was the steward of a successful program, innovated where he could, but preserved those aspects of the program which made it successful. In the early 1970s he founded a winter camping program which he named "Okpik", the Inuit word for the snowy owl.

His Okpik program was later adopted as Scouting's national winter camping program. He traveled extensively throughout the United States, instructing local council volunteers in the Okpik program. Between his many journeys, Sandy authored the Okpik Winter Camping Manual and contributed several chapters to Scouting's Fieldbook. Following the flow of water to the north, he also created challenging canoeing programs operated from satellite canoe bases in Atikokan, Ontario and Bissett, Manitoba. Sandy warmly embraced Scouts Canada and the International Camp Staff Program, and recognized no international boundaries in developing the many relationships he treasured.

Throughout Sandy's career, he was extremely involved in the design and refinement of many outdoor products commonly available today, including personal flotation devices, tents, packs, sleeping systems, stoves, winter clothing and innovative food packaging. Both manufacturers and the military sought his expertise and knowledge. Through the 1970s and the early 1980s, the Department of Defense equipment testing laboratory situated in Natick, Massachusetts, conducted extensive arctic equipment testing at the Sommers Canoe Base.

Serving as a volunteer deputy sheriff for Lake County, Sandy assisted in many search and rescue efforts and later founded the Northern Lake County Search and Rescue Squad. In 1968, he attended a course sponsored by the National Council of Orthopedic Surgeons which was the forerunner of the Emergency Medical Technician Program.

Throughout his childhood years he was a paperboy for the Arkansas Democrat. He graduated from Little Rock Central High School in 1957 and attended Arkansas A&M College, in Monticello, Arkansas, majoring in Forestry. His studies were twice interrupted when his Arkansas National Guard unit was federalized, first

during the integration crisis and later during the Berlin Wall crisis. His last assignment was as a sergeant at the 148th Evacuation Hospital, Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas. He continued his involvement as a volunteer instructor in arctic survival for the U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard representing the Fourth and Fifth Armies and the 179th and 148th Minnesota National Guard. In 1985, Sandy received the Department of the Army Commander's Award for Public Service.

Sandy's love for the circumpolar arctic and sub-arctic regions, their people and cultures, led him to Swedish Lapland in 1985, where he was involved with members of the Swedish Army's survival program. Sandy incorporated many ideas and concepts that he observed during subsequent trips to his beloved Scandinavian northlands. His final trip in 1995, led him to St. Petersburg, Russia, where he visited with recently organized Scout troops.

He was a member of First Unitarian Church, Duluth, a board member of the Wilderness Education Association, a supporter of the Wilderness Medicine Association and a volunteer with the American Field Service.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Carolyn Bridges. He is survived by his wife, Cherie; children, Michael, Katie and Sandra Bridges, Susana Pelayo Woodward (David), and Daniela Pelayo Jimenez (fiancé Nathan Maki), grandchildren Catalina and Mikie Bridges, all of Duluth; AFS family: Pattra Likitkunwong, Thailand, Laura Maria Barrantes de Vega, Costa Rica, Lisa Kiselevich, Chicago and Einar Boiesen, Norway; Scout grand-daughter Iida Lyly, Finland; his beloved "furry kids" Little Bit and Missy; his father, E. Sanders Bridges and sisters Rebecca Bailey (Tom) and Beverly Douglas, all of Little Rock; his "extended childhood family" Jimmy & Becky Strawn, Jim Strawn III (Libby) of Little Rock and Anne Sorrels, Hot Springs; numerous nieces and nephews; and countless brother Scouts throughout the world.

Sandy lived a life of dedicated service and was a giver of life to all those around him. His loss will be keenly felt by his family and friends. His legacy shall always endure and his voice shall always be heard in the lodge at the Sommers Canoe Base.

Memorials are preferred in lieu of flowers to the Sandy Bridges Memorial Training Fund of the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, the American Cancer Society, or St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

Memorial services will be held on Saturday, January 3, 1998, 1:00 P.M., at Pilgrim Congregational Church, 23rd. Ave. E. and 4th St., Duluth, MN with the Rev. Karen Johnson Gustafson officiating; and also in Little Rock, Arkansas later in January, 1998.