



Sandy Rockwell Becker Class of 2014

Sandy Becker moved to Oroville from Portola when she was 11 years old. She attended Bird Street School and then graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1955. At OHS she won a Bank of America Achievement Award for Home Economics and was a member of CSF. She was a member of the Girls Athletic Association (GAA) for 3 years, sang in the school chorus, and was in the Spanish Club.

Following her graduation from OHS, Sandy earned her AA degree from American River College and her BA degree from Sacramento State College (SSC). Along with her BA degree she also earned her kindergarten/primary and general elementary teaching credentials.

In 1965, Sandy was hired to teach in the Thermalito Union School District (TUSD) where her illustrious career spanned the next 39 years. By the end of her 3rd year of teaching, she was so well respected that she supervised student teachers in her classroom for 36 consecutive years. Sandy was a unique teacher who extended the norm and went far above and beyond with her students. Her students, in pairs of boys or girls, were invited to her home where they spent the night along with going out to dinner and shopping. Students earned good behavior outings where they could choose between camping overnight, hiking, roller skating, going for pizza, and other special things. Up to 6 students at a time were treated to these award trips. Pets were an integral part of Sandy's classroom where she and her students cared for a variety of snakes, rats, lizards, tarantulas, hamsters, mice guinea pigs and rabbits. Students learned how to care not only for pets, but for their classmates, friends, family, and others.

Receiving recognition became commonplace for Sandy as she was Rotary Teacher of the Year, Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year, twice nominated to the National Teachers Hall of Fame, Oroville Masonic Teacher of the Year, and was named 6 times in Who's Who Among America's Teachers. In 2008, Sandy was honored in an article by Kyra Gottesman in the publication, Genealogical Goldmine, entitled, "Sandy Becker Conquering Mount Whitney."

To quote Sandy, "I consider my years of teaching in the Oroville Area to be such a blessing and never to be forgotten. Yes, I taught the 3 R's, but teaching is so much more than that. It is a meeting and bonding with the students, parents, grandparents....in and out of school."

During her life, Sandy has always found time to maintain excellent health, serve others, and give back to her community. She has been published 4 times, annually leads up to 45 hikes in the Sutter Butte's, and has taken 59 people on hikes to the top of Mt. Whitney. She has taught Sabbath School for her church for over 20 years as well as Vacation Bible School and counseling for Pathfinders, a church group similar to Boy and Girl Scouts. During the past year, she has also found time to do what she loves best... **teach!** She was in primary grade classrooms for 130 days last year, serving as a substitute teacher!

To this day she maintains contact with former students, sending them personal congratulatory notes on significant events in their lives, along with a two-dollar bill! She contacts over 300 former students annually during the Christmas Season. Yes, she loves kids, and she eagerly says, "I flunked retirement!"

As busy as she is, Sandy is an avid backpacker, hiker, and runner. She has backpacked for over 50 years, her longest journey being a 19 day 22 mile hike on the John Muir Trail. She has run 26 10K runs, 53 half-marathons, and 38 marathons, just to name a few. She continues to walk 4 miles per day 5 days per week.

To quote from one of Sandy's letters of support, "Sandy has taught, loved, and made a lasting impactful difference for thousands of our local children. Her dedication to her students spans generations. They are her legacy." When you look up "**teacher**" in the dictionary, there should be a picture of Sandy."

Sandy retired from TUSD June of 2004 and today, in addition to her busy schedule, finds plenty of time to devote to her family and their numerous activities together. She and her husband of 59 years, George, had 2 sons and 5 teen-aged foster sons, 6 of whom live in the Oroville area. Their daughters-in-law, and 13 grandchildren, 3 of whom are OHS alumni, and 10 great grandchildren round out the Becker family.