



Lee Denton Sandy

March 5, 1945 - May 17, 2025

Lee Denton Sandy passed away peacefully at Munson Medical Center in Traverse City, with family by his side, on May 17, 2025. He was 80 years old. Those who knew Lee might say, "Well, he finally retired." He was school superintendent for more than a dozen Michigan school districts, working actively until recently. Most notably, he filled the role at Forest Area Community Schools, Pine River, Alpena, and Kalkaska Public Schools. Lee was known for being direct, dedicated, and knowledgeable. He was quick to laugh, frugal with his own money and any school district's, and genuine. He didn't know a stranger, and he didn't ask anyone to do a job he wouldn't do himself. In his early days as superintendent, he was known to man a school bus if there weren't enough drivers. He would rise early on wintry mornings to check roads himself, with assistance from fellow school staff. If he couldn't tolerate anything, it was whining. He truly liked most people, and they knew it. On March 5, 1945, Lee was born in Mt. Pleasant to Lottie and Kenneth Sandy. His mother was a homemaker and his father was a roughneck on a pipeline. Lee was never one to shy away from hard work, putting himself through college. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Central Michigan University, and completed coursework for his PhD. at the Teacher's College at Columbia University. On September 3, 1965, he married the love of his life, Sue, and they had five children. Two of them are Forest Area alums and the younger three are Pine River graduates.

Lee was a school administrator who honestly cared for his students and staff. He attended countless athletic events, ceremonies and board meetings. One of Lee's frequent statements to his central office personnel was, "Don't make it hard," meaning he only wanted them to buckle down and get the job done. He freely offered guidance and praise, with criticism only when necessary. Everyone knew what Lee stood for: responsibility, ethics, compassion, and plain old grit.

He was a longtime member of the Church of Christ, and his faith provided him comfort throughout his life. When his wife Sue passed away in 2006, he was devastated, but he knew her earthly journey was a good one and he would see her again. He lived his life to honor what was most important to him. Faith, family and friends topped the list. He enjoyed Walt Disney World, the Detroit Tigers, and the occasional casino visit, but family members were always in his company.

He was honored to be a National Trout Festival King during his time in Kalkaska. He was a founding member of the Forest Area Federal Credit Union, and was chairman of that board for many years. In 2014, he was named Superintendent of the Year for the educational region he served. In his long career with public school administration, Lee became a trusted and experienced resource for peers and those entering the field.

Lee was preceded in death by his parents and his wife. Surviving are his brother Joe (Pat), and five children: Erik (Kelly), Jamie, Niki, Kelly, and Wendi (Shawn) Archer, grandchildren Lee (Dana) Archer, Alexis Archer, Logan Sandy, Chloe Sandy, Mary (Chad) Brass, and Daniel (Jennifer) Harrington. The family will receive friends for Lee on Thursday, May 22, 2025, from 5:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home.

On Friday, May 23, 2025, visitation will take place beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the Kalkaska High School gymnasium, with funeral services at 5:30 p.m. officiated by Pastor Andy Bratton, with dinner to follow.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be sent to the Alpena Community College, designated for the Lee and Sue Sandy Scholarship.

Arrangements provided by Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home, our family serving yours.

Cemetery Details

Evergreen Cemetery

Kalkaska, MI 49646

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY **22**. 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home
106 S. Cherry
Kalkaska, MI 49646
(231) 258-5121
<https://www.wolfeoneill.com/>

Visitation

MAY **23**. 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM (ET)

Kalkaska High School
109 N Birch Street
Kalkaska, MI 49646

Service

MAY **23**. 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM (ET)

Kalkaska High School
109 N Birch Street
Kalkaska, MI 49646

Tribute Wall

DI

“ So sorry to hear of Lee's passing. He was always so inspiring to speak with. He always had a kind word and sage advice to share.

Denise Ivester - May 30, 2025 at 05:49 PM

PR

“ Sorry to hear of Lee's passing. We had not seen him in a long time. Our deepest sympathy and prayers for his family!

Patty Rodgers - May 25, 2025 at 09:17 PM

KC

“ My deepest sympathy goes out to the Sandy family. I knew your dad when he was at Forest Area Schools. He always had a smile and was good natured. Losing both your parents is heartbreaking. I am thinking of you all. Peace and prayers, Karen Costley

Karen Costley - May 21, 2025 at 06:33 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Lee Denton Sandy.



May 21, 2025 at 04:22 PM

DF

“ So sorry for your loss. Lee was a great guy.
He will be missed.



Don Friend - May 21, 2025 at 09:03 AM

KR

“ Mr. Sandy was truly one of the good ones—a well-respected leader with a gentle presence and a kind heart. I’ll always remember how he led with confidence and trust, especially when times were tough. My dad respected and valued the level of leadership Lee brought forth and always spoke highly of him. His calm presence and compassion touched everyone he met. I’m deeply sorry to hear of his passing, but grateful for all he did for the communities he served.

Kristi Peters Reichart - May 21, 2025 at 12:34 AM

DE

“ David Hall, Theresa C. & Jill Ehlers planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Lee Denton Sandy.

David Hall, Theresa C. & Jill Ehlers - May 20, 2025 at 09:09 PM

DE

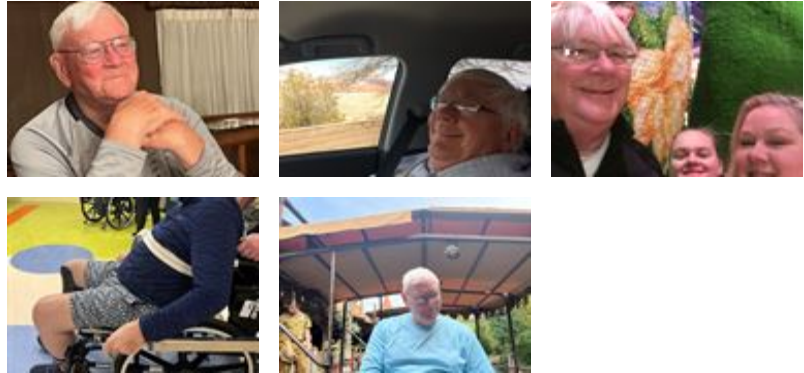
“ David Hall, Theresa C. & Jill Ehlers purchased the Basket of Memories for the family of Lee Denton Sandy.



David Hall, Theresa C. & Jill Ehlers - May 20, 2025 at 09:09 PM



“ 65 files added to the album Life Tributes



Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home - May 20, 2025 at 04:33 PM



“ H.Pete Moore, your friend for eternity. purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Lee Denton Sandy.



H.Pete Moore, your friend for eternity. - May 20, 2025 at 03:07 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Lee Denton Sandy.

May 20, 2025 at 02:58 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Lee Denton Sandy.



May 20, 2025 at 02:58 PM

JJ

“ Lee was a straight shooter. He is well known, respected and admired by superintendents across the state. We are all lucky to have known him. I am grateful for the conversations we had—about school stuff and baseball—over the years. Lee Sandy was the real deal.

Jason Jeffrey - May 19, 2025 at 03:58 PM

SH

“ Mr. Sandy was one of the few superintendents we had that showed genuine concern for all the staff & students. I will always remember when I was moving out of state the kind words he said to me. You made a positive impact on so many lives. Prayers to his family.
Sharon

Sharon - May 19, 2025 at 11:49 AM

RL

“ Lee was always a trusted person that I could count on. We have spent years working together as a founder of Forest Area Federal Credit Union. I will never forget the times we have spent with Lee and Sue. Your friend always Rodney Larr.

Rodney Larr - May 19, 2025 at 11:46 AM

H(

I got my first mortgage from you when you were first starting out. It was wonderful. You and Lee were so good to me, and I really appreciated it throughout my life.

Henry Moore (Pete) - May 20, 2025 at 08:51 PM

BA

Lee started out being my boss but became a good friend. I will miss our lengthy conversations with seriousness and humor. I could be honest it's Lee and I believe he appreciated that. You will be missed my friend.

Barb - May 27, 2025 at 10:20 AM

BR

Lee Denton Sandy and I were on the same football team @ MPHS - Lee & Sue attended the same church (First Church of Christ) in Mt Pleasant - Lee was Best Man at our wedding (1965) - he was my best friend and will be missed by all who knew him. He was an intelligent, honest gentle Spirit of a man - with his perpetual, warm smile. God has just recruited an exceptional Angel to help in Heaven. Love and Peace come from God!

Bill Robison - May 28, 2025 at 11:53 AM

LB

So sorry, we just learned of his passing. He was an excellent superintendent in Alpena and many enjoyed working with and for him. Wishing him and the family peace.

Les Burnham - September 04, 2025 at 11:03 AM