

Sarah was the youngest daughter born to Allan & Margaret McDonald on January 26, 1966 — 10 days after the death of her maternal grandmother, Sarah McCormick. So, her name was an easy and honourable choice.

Born in Regina, SK she moved with her family to Wapella, SK in 1973. She had spent a lot of time in Wapella previous to the move, as that is where her grandparents and parents grew up, and it was any easy transition for her, having already made several lifelong friends. Sarah and her younger brother, Malcolm, had a special bond. Although Sarah was only three years older than him, she looked out for him his whole life and signed all her cards with his and her name.

Sarah was delighted to grow up in a small town, where literally everyone knew her and her dog's name. The burden of many older siblings going through school ahead of her was something she tackled head on — proving to her teachers that she was unique and was not intending to be the same as her siblings. Sarah marched to the tune of her own drum and was a force to be reckoned with. To this day, she is friends with many of those teachers.

After high school graduation, Sarah sought out higher education, first as a dental assistant and later as an education student at Minot State university — earning her education and master's degree from there. Much is unknown about those years because of a cone of secrecy that Sarah and her friends must have sworn to each other. There were many lifelong friendships forged while Sarah was going to school. She loved those friends as family, and so do her siblings now. After graduation, she worked for the ministry of Education for a short time, helping people navigate the intricacies of government.

Swift Current became home in 2000 and Sarah found her calling in the special education class at Swift Current Comprehensive High School. For 22 years she built relationships with students, colleagues, families, and her wonderful and supportive classroom staff. Not to mention their families, grandchildren, and pets. Sarah also taught at the community college for well over a decade.

In Swift Current, Sarah found her groove, becoming the SADD advisor with her dog attending check stops. She also sat on the provincial SADD board. Sarah worked tirelessly at the dog park, supported, organized, and volunteered with graduations, curling events, and charity walks. The list is endless.

Sarah often said she had lost count of how many nieces and nephews she had, so we did the math for her. She had fifteen nieces and nephews plus their lovely spouses, twenty-four great-nieces and nephews, and four great-great-nieces and nephews. Sarah loved them all immeasurably and unconditionally and was so proud of the title “aunt” — she was incredibly proud of you all. Sarah was one of ten siblings, many cousins, and was treasured by her special Uncle Rusty.

Sarah's friends became family, like our brother-in-law, Trent, Lisa, who is like a baby sister, and Gwen, who is a cousin, but also a friend beyond measure. Friends were always important to Sarah and there are too many to name you all, but if you were a friend to Sarah, you knew you were treasured.

Madonna, Cher, Gaga, Dolly, Adele — no, these are not the modern Golden Girls, but some of the many concerts Sarah attended as music was a huge part of her life. But her favourite tunes came from the bagpipes. No question about it.

Sarah delighted in travel and supervised many EF student trips around the world to places like Peru, Australia, New Zealand, London, Brussels, Holland, Washington DC, and many other ports we can't recall. She also travelled with family and friends, visiting Paris, Scotland, China, New York City, crisscrossed Canada, tried out for the Price is Right, and of course, Vegas, Baby!

Sarah's career was cut short by a cancer diagnosis in October, 2022. She was devastated to step back from her classroom, but knew it was in good hands. She was able to stay in contact with several students and keep up on the happenings at the school through colleagues.

Her battle with cancer ended Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at the age of 57. She fought hard, but cancer doesn't fight fair. She continued to think of others, show compassion, and advocate for family and friends to the very end. The many messages and tributes we have heard have shown us that Sarah's life was just what she wanted it to be — showing concern for others, whether animal or human, supporting others, and sharing what good fortune she had.

Sarah will be laid to rest in her favourite place on earth, the St. Andrew's Church grounds in Wapella. It is a place of picnics, family gatherings, and of life-long memories. She will reunite with many generations of family who have gone before her.

What Sarah would tell you — go to the concerts, volunteer when you can, cheer on your team (unless it's a certain team in ladies curling), go to the reunions, hold the babies, take the trip, pet the dogs. Choose to be kind but stand your ground when advocating for others. As someone told us, “What Sarah wants, Sarah gets,” but the “get” was seldom for her. That might have been her life-long motto.

Sarah — you left a trail of love, in the form of dog hair, everywhere you went. We hope there are lint brushes wherever you are, but they are only needed to gather the love dogs share. Whenever you are covered with pet hair, please think of Sarah, and know that you are her kind of people.

From Sarah — I was truly blessed with the most amazing and supportive family. I was always so happy with my life.

Left to share many happy memories (and truthfully all of the times I frustrated them!) are my siblings, Richard, Debbie (Ralph), Pat (Dawn), Peggy (Herb), and Sandy (Garry); my dear uncle, Rusty; many wonderful nieces and nephews; even more great-nieces and nephews; and even great-great-nieces and nephews! Plus, I had the best cousins ever — family reunions were a blast!

I will be reuniting with my mom and dad, Allan & Margaret; sisters, Edith Anne (in infancy), Chickie, and Rhonda; younger brother, Malcolm; and many pets.

I was always so incredibly fortunate to have so many friends and colleagues throughout my life — many who became like family to me and my siblings. I started to list you all then realized I couldn't possibly do that. I am so thankful that list is long. Listening to so many stories being told recently and all the laughs we shared showed me all over again why we were drawn together in the first place.

I was privileged to have a career in education where I was able to teach so many amazing individuals — both at SCCHS and Great Plains College. The students in the FIP program at SCCHS became “my kids” too and I was honored that I developed lifelong friendships with many of their families. As well the staff at SCCHS is second to none, we are a large staff but always come together when someone needs us. I had some of the best laughs of my life with my SCCHS colleagues.

To the many Educational Assistants in the FIP program that I worked with through the years — thank you — you are the reason that I was a good teacher. I valued and saw every single thing you did for our kids — how you consistently went above and beyond (especially all of the “extras” which came out of your pocket and your own time). I will celebrate when government and policy makers realize just how essential you are to a student's success and wellbeing and honor that by paying you a living wage. You do, however, deserve even more than that.

Many will wonder what happened to my furry sidekick who always called shotgun in the car. Marlee made this journey with me. She spent more than 9 years by my side. I couldn't imagine her waiting for me to come back home and me never showing. We are very thankful for the many friends (two and four legged) we met at the dog park.

This might be an appropriate time for me to admit that I never was Miss Saskatchewan Roughrider 1985. Sorry about that.

In Loving Memory of

Sarah McDonald

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Saturday, March 11, 2023 at 2:00 pm
Swift Current Comprehensive High School Cafeteria
Swift Current, SK

ORDER OF SERVICE

OPENING MUSIC – *“Scotland the Brave”* and *“Coming Home”*

OPENING PRAYER – John Peifer

TRIBUTE FROM SCHOOL – Heather Mitchell and Jackie Neustaeter

EULOGY AND PHOTO TRIBUTE – Sarah’s Nieces
Stacey Bryden, Ashley McFetridge, and Lexi Gross

CLOSING COMMENTS – John Peifer

CLOSING MUSIC – *“Amazing Grace”*

OFFICIATING – John Peifer

PIPER – Heather Campbell

USHERS – SCCHS Staff

GRAVESIDE SERVICE – Saturday, July 8, 2023 at 2:00 pm
St. Andrews Cemetery, south of Wapella, SK

LUNCHEON – Immediately following the service

DONATIONS – Swift Current SPCA, your local animal shelter,
the Salvation Army Food Bank, or your local food bank

ARRANGEMENTS – Swift Current Funeral Home



Sarah McDonald

January 26, 1966

February 21, 2023



Thank you to Sarah’s students for the lovely, personalized stones on the display table, Heather Campbell (bagpipes), Donna McCormick (photo montage), John Peifer, Duane Regier, and all who helped bring this celebration together on Sarah’s behalf.