



## Ellen Sanders

February 26, 1949 - December 10, 2021

We celebrate the life of Ellen Melvina Sanders, a woman who was truly one of a kind and will forever be missed. Melvina, as she preferred to be called, was born in Detroit on February 26, 1949 and was the oldest of four children born to Romer and Ellen Ferguson. As a child, Melvina and her family worshipped at St. Mary's Episcopalian Church.

After graduating from Cass Technical High school, Melvina attended Michigan State University where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Education. She would later go on to earn a Master's Degree in Secondary Math Education from the University of Detroit. Melvina always believed that a solid education was essential and spent decades teaching Math to high school students at Redford High School and Walled Lake Western High School. After retirement, she continued to contribute her talents to advancing education by tutoring students at Hartford Memorial Baptist Church, as well as friends and family members that asked for her assistance with their math classes.

Melvina married Terry Archie Sanders and they were blessed with two children, Kimberly and David. Kimberly and Melvina shared a love of travel and cherished the "Mother/Daughter" trips they took together. Kimberly also inherited Melvina's love for the theater and live music. David and Melvina shared a love for good food, and the two of them would often enjoy dinner together at restaurants or at home, where they would watch Melvina's favorite

show, Law & Order, together. Melvina was a phenomenal mother who loved spending time with her kids and with her three grandchildren, who were her pride and joy.

Melvina inherited a passion for sewing from her mother Ellen. She was quite a talented seamstress and loved shopping for the fabrics and patterns that she used to make many of her own stylish outfits.

There were several other hobbies that Melvina had, and as a lifelong learner she was always taking lessons to learn more about various things. She had a love for dancing, and over the years took dance classes to learn the latest Detroit ballroom and Detroit hustles. She developed an affection for golf after retirement and had taken golf lessons to sharpen her golf swing. Learning American Sign Language had been something she'd always wanted to do, and she also briefly took lessons to learn the basics of ASL.

Melvina loved her hometown of Detroit, and constantly made time to give back to the community. She had been a volunteer at the Belle Isle Conservancy, where she served as a docent in the aquarium providing visitors with info on the various aquatic animals that were on display. She also served as a Board Member and Recording Secretary for Renaissance Head Start, an organization that strives to play a key role in early childhood development to ensure kids are prepared to enter school.

Melvina was an exceptionally thoughtful person. She would often send sweet cards to friends and loved ones to help them celebrate a birthday, to express condolences for their losses, or just because she wanted them to know she was thinking about them. She also loved sending inspirational or funny memes via text, which always lifted the spirits of those that received them. She had an incredible sense of humor, and a hearty laugh that could be infectious. She was an extremely intelligent woman with a quick wit, a huge

heart, and an honest and straightforward knack for “telling it like it is”. She was truly a special lady whose memory will be cherished by those that knew and loved her.

Ellen Melvina Sanders peacefully departed this life on December 10, 2021. She was preceded in death by her parents (Romer and Ellen Ferguson)) and her brother (Ralph Ferguson, Sr). She leaves to cherish her memories her children Kimberly Leniar (Malcolm) and David Sanders (Amanda), and her grandchildren Kendall Lucy, Donovan Leniar and Sienna Leniar. She is survived by her siblings Joanna Childs and Andrew Ferguson (Linda), nephews Ralph Ferguson Jr (Misha) and Lamont Ferguson (Cynthia) and beloved grandnephew and grandnieces, cousins, and countless friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Belle Isle Conservancy in Melvina’s name.

Please encourage the Sanders family with words of love and encouragement on our Tribute page.

# Cemetery Details

## Elmwood Cemetery

1200 Elmwood Street  
Detroit, MI 48207

# Previous Events

## Family and Friends Gathering

DEC **23**. 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services  
24585 Evergreen Rd  
Southfield, MI 48075  
(248) 702-5367  
info@kempfh.com  
<https://www.kempfuneralhome.com>

## Funeral Service

DEC **23**. 12:30 PM (ET)

Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services  
24585 Evergreen Rd  
Southfield, MI 48075  
(248) 702-5367  
info@kempfh.com  
<https://www.kempfuneralhome.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Ellen Sanders*



**Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services** - December 23, 2021 at 05:12 PM



“ *Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Webcast in memory of Ellen Sanders*



**Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services** - December 23, 2021 at 12:19 PM

TM

*Continue to rest in power and grace beautiful cousin Melvina....We love you Kim, Malcolm, David, Terry, and family 🙏🙏🙏  
~Tracy and Mike Mayberry*

**Tracy Mayberry** - December 23, 2021 at 01:15 PM



“ *Ellen Sanders*

September 27, 2022 at 08:40 PM



“ *Ellen Sanders*

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September 27, 2022 at 06:52 PM



“ *2 files added to the tribute wall*



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**Dr. Karen Stewart** - December 23, 2021 at 02:16 PM

JR

“ I met my cousin Melvina on one of her trips to NYC when we were both in our teens. We hit it off right away, became pen pals, and remained in touch for the rest of our lives. My dad and I visited her family a year after she and I met and stayed with them, which even more solidified our relationship. We would get together when she came to NY throughout her life. I remember our trip to Canal Street for lunch and shopping. She bought several pairs of shoes. How she loved shoes! We also spent a couple of days in her aunt Christine's apartment, cleaning it out after she passed. Good times were abundant when she stayed with our cousins Lovely and Gina in Tuckahoe, NY. On one of those trips we found out that we were distantly related to the singer Marian Anderson! I loved Melvina's laugh and sense of humor. She could make a joke about anything. The last time I saw her was at her brother Ralph's funeral. My daughter and I drove down to pay our respects and to have an opportunity to be with family. The last time we spoke was in August of this year when she called to tell me that our cousin Kyle Beltran was featured in a show on tv. I already miss my cousin, knowing that I won't see her again, but so grateful that I have many memories of her and our times together to keep her in my heart. Blessing and peace to Kimberley, David, Andrew, Joanna, and their families.



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**Jo-Ann Raines** - December 23, 2021 at 01:37 PM

JG

“ Melvina my BFF over 50 years. We met in high school. I will truly miss you, and our long conversations about our grandkids. We both loved to sew, and watch black and white movies. She would text me inspirational messages on a daily basis. My condolences to the family. May you rest in peace. God has called you home, your work is done!

Love  
Jennifer Gardner

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**Jennifer Gardner** - December 23, 2021 at 11:40 AM

AM

“ Melvina, was a wonderful neighbor. Now God has called her to heavenly home. Rest in peace.

Adrienne McMurray

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**Adrienne McMurray** - December 22, 2021 at 07:00 PM

SB

“ Melvina was a longtime friend who I met at Cass Tech and shared our Michigan State student teaching venture together. May she rest in peace for her journey is over. To the family, my sincerest condolences.

Sylvia Bostic



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**Sylvia Bostic** - December 21, 2021 at 10:19 PM

CB

“ That Should Say From Cousin Norman, Waynette, Elijah Bullard 🙏  
🙏❤️🌹🌹🌹

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**Cousin'Norman, Waynette, Elijah Bullard** - December 21, 2021 at 08:00 PM

CB

“ To The Family Of Our Dear Cousin Melvina As She Was By Us. To Kim, David, Andrew And JoAna, God Has Called His Angel Home. He Has Free Her To Rest With Him. We Will Miss Her Smiles. Phone Calls, Texts, Cards Etc. Praying That The Family Will Be Comfort Knowing That She Is Safely Home With Her Heavenly Family. In Jesus Name We Pray Your Peace, Amen 🙏🙌❤️

Cousin'Norman, Waynette, Elijah Bullard - December 21, 2021 at 07:55 PM

CB

Also Waynette James

Cousin'Norman, Waynette, Elijah Bullard - December 21, 2021 at 07:56 PM

SJ

*Melvina was a wonderful true friend. We met at Redford High School. We had a lot in common; we both taught mathematics, enjoyed sewing and shared many sewing tips, as well as recipes. Melvina enjoyed texting me messages. Some of them had me rolling with laughing. I always looked forward to them on a daily basis. One of them toward the end was: " I just wanted to wish you a bright sunny day". The final one that Melvina texted me really stucked heavily in my mind that I could not shake off, It said " Life is short, don't be afraid to go after what makes you happy. Remember to laugh. Spend time with the ones who make you smile, and don't let negative people bring you down." I will miss my messages as well as her.*

*To the family, wishing you PEACE to bring you comfort, COURAGE to face the days ahead, and LOVING MEMORIES to forever hold in your heart.*

*With deepest sympathy,*

*Severine M Jeanpiere*

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**Severine M Jeanpiere** - December 23, 2021 at 08:09 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ellen Sanders.*



December 21, 2021 at 01:50 PM



“ *Melvina and I were friends for greater than 50 years. We met in high school. We are both Ellen and never used the name until the government forced us to when we both worked briefly at the post office after we graduated from high school. I will miss you my "dear friend". I love you, and God loves you more. Ellen Sharp (Truett)*



**Ellen "Denise" Sharp** - December 20, 2021 at 06:17 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ellen Sanders.*



December 20, 2021 at 12:49 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Ellen Sanders.*



December 20, 2021 at 10:54 AM

SH

“ Ms. Melvina became our next door neighbor when we moved into our home 10 years ago. As a young couple with a growing family she was always kind helping us with great advice on how to take care of our home and yard. Her presence will truly be missed . Our thoughts and prayers are with the family!  
-Hanifa Family

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**Sabreen Hanifa** - December 19, 2021 at 10:09 AM

LC

“ Ellen and I taught together at Walled Lake Western. We both started at the same time so we “bonded” from the beginning. I will never forget her great sense of humor and how deeply she cared for others. I heard from her every Christmas and on my birthday. She will be missed by so many. My heartfelt condolences to the family. RIP my friend.



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**Linda Casterline** - December 18, 2021 at 08:26 PM

LC

“ Ellen and I taught together at Walled Lake Western. We both started at the same time so we “bonded” from the beginning. I will never forget her great sense of humor and how deeply she cared for others. I heard from her every Christmas and on my birthday. She will be missed by so many. My heartfelt condolences to the family. RIP my friend.



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**Linda Casterline** - December 18, 2021 at 08:26 PM

NH

“ *Melvina was a true friend. Every year since college I got a birthday and Christmas card from her. She was constantly reaching out to check on me and strengthen our relationship. She was about to ask me to be the Godmother of her son when I told her I was leaving Detroit to move to Los Angeles several decades ago. She visited a few times and I would always see her when I came to town. Yet In spite of the difference in location, she was always present in my life. I learned a lot about friendship through her. May her beautiful spirit rest in peace and her memory live on. Blessings and peace to Terry, Kimberly and David. Love you Melvina.*

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**Norma Hollis** - December 18, 2021 at 03:56 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ellen Sanders.*



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December 17, 2021 at 07:36 PM

AF

“ *I remember when we lived on Parker as children Melvina and her friends would come home from school and play records and dance in front of the bookcase. They dance nearly every day until they wore a hole in the carpet. She loved her Motown R & B music.*

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**Andrew Ferguson** - December 17, 2021 at 06:34 PM

NH

“ I was just informed of the passing of my dear friend Ellen.💔

We taught together at Walled Lake Western High. She was a true friend from the very beginning and her sense of humor gave me so many belly aches! I will miss her terribly!

“Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal”.

ONLY GOD knows the pain that you're experiencing. I know that He will comfort, strengthen and keep you now and then the days to come, especially in the midnight hours.



Norma Hill - December 17, 2021 at 05:23 PM

ES

My ride or die for more than 50 years. We met in high school, both with the first name of "Ellen " neither of used until we graduated. We work at the post office and that is when the government forced us to use Ellen. Ellen "Melvina" I cannot get my heart and head around you not being here with us. I will miss you my dear unfailing "friend" and will cherish our precious memories from our childhood into adult women.. we love you,but, God loves you more. RIP..Ellen "Denise"

Ellen "Denise" Sharp - December 17, 2021 at 11:24 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ellen Sanders.



December 17, 2021 at 05:16 PM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Ellen Sanders.*



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December 17, 2021 at 05:11 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Ellen Sanders.*



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December 17, 2021 at 02:14 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Ellen Sanders.*



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December 17, 2021 at 01:56 PM