

# John Norman Sandness

Dec 17, 2019 / [OBITUARIES](#)



**December 19,  
1937 – December  
17, 2019**

John Norman Sandness, 81, rose to join his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Tuesday December 17, 2019 at Ridgewood Lodge in Princeton B.C. after a long and courageous battle with Parkinson's Disease.

John was born December 19, 1937 in Duluth, MN to Norman and Sparling Sandness, graduating from Duluth East in 1956. He earned his B.S. in Biology in 1960 from the University of Minnesota Duluth on a full Hunt Scholarship. Drawn by stories of big fish and big mule deer in Outdoor Life Magazine, John moved west to teach biology in Colville WA. A National Science Foundation Fellowship led him to Oregon State University, where he earned his M.S. in Aquatic Biology in one year. He taught in Oregon for two years until tales of larger fish and deer pulled him North to Princeton, where he taught Biology for 8 years. He returned to Duluth and completed a B.S. in Industrial Arts, again in one year. He concluded his teaching career in Princeton teaching shop and arts

courses until his retirement in 1981.

In retirement, he started his own Custom Trout Fly business in Princeton, having outlets from Rock Creek to Princeton to Anaheim Lake. He loved the outdoors and would frequent local lakes and wooded areas hunting and fishing, being especially fond of Dry Lake and Darcy Mountain. John drove a Community Services Bus for several years, enjoying conversation with community members. John was also a 40-year+ charter member of the Princeton Lions Club, having a special interest in the collection of eyeglasses for third-world countries, and of course, the Lion's Club Fishing Derby. He was active in the arts community for many years, as a prolific painter, photographer, wood carver and Fall Fair participant. John assisted in the artistic design of the Bridge of Dreams over the Tulameen River in Princeton. He mentored youth in tying fishing flies, and was a freelance columnist for the Similkameen Spotlight, writing a weekly column on what else, fishing and the outdoors. His stories culminated in the publication of his book "Trout Talk" in 2004. He was a long-time member of St. Paul's United Church in Princeton. He lived in Princeton for almost 50 years.

John was united in marriage to Marcia Mary Gilbert in June 1992 surrounded by friends and family. They shared a life of love and community, hosting family and friends at their home on Billiter Avenue, some traveling, rummage sales and serving their community. A devoted father, John provided a loving home, life-changing adventures, wisdom and a full college education for his son Carl. John loved his grandchildren, each in a special unique way, teaching them to fish and tie fishing flies, marveling at their own stories and watching with great joy in their growth and development.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife

Marcy. John is survived by his son Carl (Dorothy) Sandness, his grandchildren, Matthew and Virginia, all of Hibbing MN, sisters Elizabeth French of Lauderdale MN, and Ann (Ken) Anderson, brothers Lynn (Patricia Maus) Sandness, and James (Beret) Sandness, all of Duluth MN, many cousins, nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday December 28th, 11 am at St. Paul's United Church in Princeton, B.C., with Pastor Sherri Fowler presiding. Cremation arrangements were provided by Hanson's Funeral Home. Charitable donations to the Princeton Secondary School Bursary Fund or Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

The family would like to express sincere gratitude to the staff at Ridgewood Lodge for their superlative care during his time there, and to Dr. Colleen Black, for her provision of outstanding medical care for John over the years. Special thanks to Mr. Bob Carlton at Hanson's for his courtesy and work in short order and to the congregation at St. Paul's for their support of John's memorial service.