



## Sara Kay Lawyer Danke

March 10, 1940 - December 23, 2022

Sara Kay Lawyer Danke passed away peacefully after a long battle with Parkinsons at the age of 82 on December 23, 2022, at home in Delaware, Ohio, with loved ones by her side. Her family would like everyone to remember her not only as a wife, mother, and grandmother, but also as a smart, successful trailblazer, a life-long learner, and a champion of women.

Her husband, Richard, is proud to have called her his bride for over 60 years. Her three children—Cheryl Lohman of Maryland, Michael Danke of Texas, and Karen Danke of Delaware—celebrate their mother’s love, encouragement and support through life’s many ups and downs. Her daughter-in-law, Adrienne Danke, cherishes the wisdom Sara shared on motherhood, delicious recipes, and negotiation of creative family solutions. Her grandchildren—Andrew and Cleo Danke and Kate and Julia Lohman—will always remember their Grammy’s unconditional love and the wonderful ways she spoiled them. Sara’s doting parents, Hugh Lawyer and Hazel Weber, preceded her in death.

At an early age, Sara rejected the notion that her accomplishments in life would somehow be limited as a female. While attending school in Oklahoma City, she found she was good at leadership and enjoyed serving. An exchange of student officers with a local all-minority high school solidified what she already knew—never underestimate the ability of people to achieve, even in the face of adversity or perceived limits of society.

Sara blazed a path through the science department at Oklahoma State University and earned her Bachelor of Arts in 1962, majoring in Chemistry. With an eye toward teaching high school, she wrote notes to herself on the back of an envelope that she wanted to teach science because “promising students should be stimulated to continue with their interests.” True to that commitment, she chaperoned her three qualifying students at C.E. Donart High School in Stillwater, Oklahoma—one young man and two young women—to the 1964 National Science Fair in Baltimore. Also that year, Sara completed her Masters work in Natural Sciences with a scholarship from the National Science Foundation.

Sara and her husband, Richard John Danke, were married in 1962 and blessed with three children, two daughters and a son. His career took the family to St. Louis, Sioux Falls, Omaha, and finally Ohio. In addition to managing the household and raising her children, Sara never shied away from meaningful work. In St. Louis, she chaired an advisory committee to the school board which studied and reported on year-round schools. In Omaha, she not only taught chemistry at the University of Nebraska but also performed and reported on laboratory analysis with funding from a grant for Vitamin K research.

When her daughters began training in gymnastics, Sara became a qualified judge with the U.S. Gymnastics Federation. Private clubs as well as middle and high school meets depended on her to deliver a score within thirty seconds to each participant using a complex judging formula at local, district, state, and national events. She also served as meet referee and chief judge when her skills were needed. Her son remembers a mother who made participation in a different type of national tournament possible when she did not hesitate to serve as a debate judge. Required to bring a judge with him to the event, Sara determined she had the necessary qualifications and

volunteered to go when her son's debate coach refused to attend.

Sara's official work record ended with 12 years at The Dispatch in Columbus, where she was instrumental in setting up their on-site computer training room as well as designing manuals and teaching classes. When Sara retired, more than 1,000 employees had taken one or more classes through the program with many thanking her publicly for the extra effort she made to guide them through specific challenges.

Always ready to embrace a new experience, Sara challenged herself mentally, physically, and spiritually with activities such as square dancing, remodeling a house for profit, and service to her church and community. The Building Committee at St. John's Episcopal Church in Worthington benefitted over a decade from her inquisitive mind and persistence whenever their historic buildings presented new and unexpected renovation opportunities. With 50 years of membership in P.E.O., Sara was very proud to be a "Golden Girl." Her passion for awarding the organization's philanthropic scholarships and loans to women pursuing higher education opened doors of opportunity and achievement for promising female students. And as her family and friends well knew, Sara was always ready for a friendly—but serious—game of bridge. A Silver Life Master, she played weekly at the Franklin Club Bridge Center.

A memorial service celebrating Sara's life will be Saturday, January 28, 2023 at 10AM at St. John's Episcopal Church, 700 High St, Worthington, OH 43085. Family and friends are invited to remember her with memorial donations to P.E.O. International, 3700 Grand Ave, Des Moines, Iowa 50312 or St. John's Episcopal Church in Worthington.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JAN 28. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. John's Episcopal Church  
700 High Street  
Worthington, OH 43085

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sara Kay Lawyer Danke* ”

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January 28, 2023 at 10:24 AM