



## Sara "Sally" Lynn Benner

December 18, 1944 - August 17, 2018

TRAVERSE CITY – Sara Lynn (Sally) Benner, age 73, of Traverse City, passed away on Friday, August 17, 2018 at Orchard Creek Supportive Care in the loving care of her family.

Sally was born in Mt. Clemens, MI on December 18, 1944 to Fitz and Margery Bridges. She was raised in Mt. Clemens and attended Mt. Clemens Public schools graduating in June of 1962. She had a fun filled childhood and enjoyed a close relationship with her grandparents and her cousins. She had many friends in Mt. Clemens, many of which she has remained close to throughout her entire life.

Sally went on to attend the University of Michigan where she studied preschool and early elementary education receiving her bachelor's degree in December of 1965. During the summer between her freshman and sophomore years at U of M she met her future husband, Carl Benner, who was helping set up a day camp at the Mt. Clemens YMCA where Sally worked for the summer. After only one week in Mt. Clemens, Carl had to return to Ann Arbor, where he was working between his freshman and sophomore year of medical school.

But it was love at first sight for both and after their first very informal date Sally announced to her mother that she was going to marry Carl. When they both returned to Ann Arbor in the Fall of 1963 their romance bloomed and they were eventually married on a very cold, snowy January 8, 1966.

Sally went to work for the Wayne School District as a first grade teacher, while Carl finished Medical School and then his internship at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. After a brief move to Detroit they returned to Ann Arbor for Carl's Residency in General Surgery. Their time in Ann Arbor was cut short when Carl was drafted into the US Army. Carl served in Viet Nam from August 1968 until August 1969 and Sally returned to Mt. Clemens where she taught in Mt. Clemens Public Schools. After completing their military obligation, they happily returned to Ann Arbor for the completion of Carl's training. Those were hard but happy days, with the development of many life long friends. Peter was born

in Ann Arbor on September 25, 1970 and at that time Sally became a very active Mom!

Sal's next adventure took her to Traverse City with a very active three year old son, and a nearly absent father and husband as Carl began his practice in General Surgery. As her children grew she became involved with The Community Coop Preschool and Central Grade school where she worked helping children needing her special help. Sally volunteered in the Central Grade School Library, was PTO President and worked with enrichment activities. One of Sally's joys was to have students see her years later and give her a big hug for the relationship they had.

On October 16, 1975 Sally had their second child, Sara Lynn. She continued to volunteer over the years and she was involved in Red Ribbon Week and the move to make girl's soccer a varsity sport at TCHS.

She expanded her volunteer work to The Northwest Michigan Symphony Auxiliary, and continued her work with children as a board member of the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, eventually serving as Co-President with Dr. Ken Taylor from 1999-2000.

In 2000 both Sally and Carl became involved with the Community Health Clinic (now The Traverse Health Clinic). While Carl worked on developing physician volunteers and organizing services that the clinic might provide, Sally worked to recruit people that could work at the front desk to greet people and also to handle the patient's charts, answer the phones and generally direct the activity in the office. For that project Sally and Carl were awarded The Distinguished Service Award by The Traverse City Chamber of Commerce for 2004.

Outside of these activities Sally enjoyed time with her family, sailing on Grand Traverse Bay and beyond, family trips, especially winter ski trips and time in South Carolina. One of Sally's favorite pastimes was the time she spent in her gardens at their home on Sixth Street. She could often be found digging in her flower beds with old overall shorts and her garden gloves and a big smile. She loved digging in the dirt!

Sally was first made aware of her memory problems in 2009. She had increasing problems with her memory and more and more confusion over recent years. She was admitted to Orchard Creek Supportive Care with advancing Alzheimer's disease in May of 2017 and remained there until her death on Friday, August 17, 2018. The Staff of Orchard Creek and Hospice of Michigan provided her with great comfort during her stay.

Sally is survived by her husband Carl, daughter Sara (Bill) Bageris, granddaughters; Alexa and Olivia, sisters; Mary (Phil) Harmeson, and Harriet Linville. Carl's siblings; Leslie (Keith) Berkely, Ernest (Barbara) Benner, and Susan (Robert) McKecknie, in addition to numerous nieces and nephews. She is also survived by her favorite cousin Dale Hawkins. She was preceded in death by Carl's parents, her parents, and by her son Peter.

A visitation for Sally will take place from 4:00 – 7:00 pm on Wednesday, August 29, 2018 at Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home. A memorial service honoring Sally will take place at 3:00 pm on Thursday, August 30, 2018 with a visitation beginning at 2:30 pm at Grace Episcopal Church, 341 Washington Street, Traverse City. The Rev. Kathryn Costas will officiate. Family and friends are invited to the top of the Park Place Hotel immediately following the service for hors d'oeuvre's and refreshments.

In lieu of flowers the family requests memorial donations be directed to the Northwestern Michigan College Scholarship Fund, 1701 East Front Street, Traverse City, MI 49686, The Leelanau Conservancy, 105 North First Street, Leland, MI 49654 or The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, 3860 N Long Lake Road, #D, Traverse City, MI 49684.

# Events

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**AUG** **Visitation** 04:00PM - 07:00PM

**29**

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Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home  
305 Sixth St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

**AUG** **Visitation** 02:30PM - 03:00PM

**30**

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Grace Episcopal Church  
341 Washington, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

**AUG** **Memorial Service** 03:00PM

**30**

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Grace Episcopal Church  
341 Washington, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

# Comments

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“ I didn't really know sally but I knew you and behind every great man there is a great woman so she must have been really great. Thinking of you during this time. I'm sure you have great memories. My mom had memory loss and I know that can be so difficult.

**sandy coil** - September 01, 2018 at 11:57 AM

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“ Carl and family, so sorry to hear of Sally's passing. She had so much love for children and her students. My oldest son, Clark, was welcomed into the school community with Sally as one of his preschool teachers. I was so grateful for the kindness and compassion that she showed toward him in his first school experience. It was an honor to know Sally and a blessing to have her as Clark's teacher. Sherry Small

**Sherry Small** - August 31, 2018 at 06:48 AM

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“ Dr. Benner, I am so very sorry for Sally's passing. She was a beautiful lady, inside and out, and always had a kind word and smile. This is a great loss for her family and friends, and the entire community.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Laura Salvatore  
Traverse City

**Laura Salvatore** - August 29, 2018 at 05:31 PM

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“ Carl and Sara, we are so sorry for your loss. Sally was a good friend to my mom and dad. She blessed so many with her kindness. Our family is keeping your family in our thoughts and prayers.

**Mary Pittel** - August 28, 2018 at 02:57 PM

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“ Sally was an elegant lady who did so much for our community. I had the pleasure of knowing her through Central Grade School and her dedication to the students there--especially in the Enrichment Room. Sally always offered her home for our PTA (now PTO) and never said "No" to a project. Carl, Sara, and Mary, may you find comfort  
Cathy Griffin

**Cathy Griffin** - August 27, 2018 at 04:20 PM

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“ Dr.Benner and family. This is Tulip from MMC Radiology. Thank you both for your love and kondness. You guys gave meva place ti stay when we first got married. You we bithva bright lite in our world and i am sure many others. My heart, love and prsyers goes out to you and your family. God Bless you.

**Sherry Gierok** - August 24, 2018 at 08:26 PM

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“ Linda Anderson lit a candle in memory of Sara "Sally" Lynn Benner



**Linda Anderson** - August 24, 2018 at 06:37 PM

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“ Carl, Sara, Bill and the girls, our hearts go out to you as you celebrate Sally's life. The peace that is hers and yours now must be so comforting. The memories of our beautiful friendship in Aiken are of great dinners, Hilton Head Beach walks and dolphin sightings, bike rides, USCA basketball games, ice storm clean up, great political discussions and lots of wine. Our hope is that Bob will very soon join Sally to keep an eye out for all of us.  
Love and friendship, Judy Miller

**Judith Miller** - August 23, 2018 at 07:00 AM

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“ Wishing you peace to bring you comfort, courage to face the days ahead and loving memories to forever hold in your heart.

Our thoughts are with you.

Lilian, Stephen, Edward and Robert Yeo

**Lilian** - August 22, 2018 at 03:48 AM

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“ So very sorry to hear about Sally's passing. She was one of the kindest people we knew in Traverse City and it was a pleasure to have known her. She will be missed. All the best to all of you, Chuck and Maria Danek

**Chuck Danek** - August 21, 2018 at 02:46 PM

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“ I will always remember Sally's quiet grace, beauty and genuine kindness. May memories of wonderful times together sustain all who so loved her.

**LuAnn Heinert** - August 21, 2018 at 09:06 AM

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“ Colleen Davidson Benedict lit a candle in memory of Sara "Sally" Lynn Benner



**Colleen Davidson Benedict** - August 20, 2018 at 12:58 PM



“ Sally was a sweetheart. She had a special way of connecting and was always helpful and kind. Ann and Mark Smith

**Ann Smith** - August 23, 2018 at 10:16 AM



“ Carl, Sara, and family, Chuck and I are so sorry to hear of Sally's passing. She was an amazing person. With all her life challenges, she remained strong and gentle.

**Lynn** - August 28, 2018 at 07:19 PM



“ Carl , Sara and family - what a wonderful woman she was. I had the pleasure of spending many hours with her at Hickory Hills, Grand Traverse Ski cub Events and many TCCH Ski meets. May she Rest In Peace and you cherish the wonderful memories of her. Bob and Pam Stanley

**Pam Stanley** - August 30, 2018 at 06:16 AM



“ I will always remember as a parent helping with Mary's 2nd grade class, releasing monarch butterflies in Sally's beautiful flower garden. What a nice memory! So glad that you were able to teach all 4 of our children, Mary.

Thinking of you at this difficult time,  
Tim and Jackie Hall

**Jackie Hall** - August 31, 2018 at 06:50 PM



“ Sara. I think everyone who knew your mom admired her for her calmness and gentle spirit. She will be remembered fondly by the Traverse City community, as she contributed so much in every organization in which she was involved.

My family(Michele, Becky and I) extend our sympathy to you and your family.

Gloria Ransom

**Gloria Ransom** - September 04, 2018 at 12:33 AM