

SANDRA MERCER MOORE

Abalinx 21 April 2022



My mate Sandra, a grossly underestimated by many. An extremely caring and sensitive individual hiding behind a veil of armour and steel. Every time my thoughts take me down the river of memories, they occasionally become snagged on my mate Sandra. Words alone are not enough to describe my friendship and although I knew of her in the nineties it was not until the new millennium that I was able to understand her better. Both of us had made the choice to follow Michael Kroger after the split between Peter Costello and Michael Kroger and both of us made the choice based on our values and paradigms of our upbringing.

It has been just over twelve months since she left this earthly existence for another no known to us at this point in time. I prefer to believe that despite her physical absence, her advice and memories of her support keep running through my head, making sure that I do not make the ideological errors of judgement and find myself in the political desert. I laugh within myself at the numerous political projects we were involved in, many of which are now under lock and key; to be revealed long after I have given up the reins of life.

We have a few close political friends that feel the same way as I do about the advice, we all received from Sandra. The political lunches, dinners and working on political projects to bring about change within the Liberal party in Victoria. Many of these meetings were discussed, planned in the 'War Room' at Watsonia, adjacent the 'Great Hall'. Sandra was a wealth of knowledge, a great facilitator, extremely confident, never domineering but a dominant political player, always able to tell a joke or a yarn when discussions became intense, skilled in the art of identifying those who were sincere, believed in Australian values and direct their passion towards political projects that enhance the individual and that of the Liberal party. Sandra was a great listener, mentor and a friend to all who met with her and made sure that by the time the meeting was over you felt that she had empowered you with such confidence that you could take on the world.

There are many who can attest that their political wellbeing began with Sandra who was able to harness their political assets towards a successful career. There were some who felt they knew better, only to find themselves wallowing in the political quagmire for those associated with failure. Sandra always called a spade a spade and she was very passionate about being an Australian, and had a soft spot for Queensland due to her early upbringing. A professional in her own right, travelling the world as the President of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (physiotherapy).

There were times when Sandra was unfairly treated on the political stage, especially behind the scenes, political back stage and in the halls of power. There were individuals that were envious of her status and position and these same people sought to bring her down no matter the cost to the Liberal party of Victoria. Not one once or twice but on many occasions, Sandra would advise those present that something was amiss and advise caution before embarking on a particular course of action. In each case Sandra was correct and the members of the Liberal party suffered as a result of the inaction of those who held the reins of power and responsibility.

I remember the last time I saw Sandra was when she was in hospital for an operation on her wrist. When she saw me she cracked some jokes to make me feel better when it should have been the other way round. I advised that I was going to Greece for my health and wished her well. She looked at me, told me to look after myself and to return back home when the weather was better. Sandra had difficulty moving as a result of her wrist being in plaster and hiding the fact that she was in obvious pain from other matters not known to me at the time.

When I was in Greece recovering, we kept in touch by email and sent me a message saying that I would probably be much their longer than I thought. I laughed, but she was correct as I was stranded for some 17 months from home. Sandra supported the Hellenic ANZAC Memorial in Pella, Laconia Greece (Home to Helen of Troy) and became a Guardian of the memorial now known as HANZAC. Her name along with others are etched into the marble stele for all time. Such is the respect that this lady attracted.

In December the month before her passing she had sent me a final email regarding her condition which was not good, yet I was hopeful that all would go well. Although Sandra did not live to see me being politically exonerated, I feel that one absent vote that decided my political activist future was her influence and hers alone. She supported me through thick and thin and I for one respected her judgement for all matters of a political nature. A good friend, a cobbler, digger, mate, someone I would go to war with and I am forever grateful for have known her. The articles below were gleaned from online assets which are displays of deep affection and respect that these people had for Sandra.



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SANDRA MERCER MOORE

By John Moore and Debra Stewart April 16, 2021

January 15, 1943-January 15, 2021

World leader in physiotherapy. In the debate on the status of women, it is timely to remember the strong female role models and their impact on both women and men. Dr Sandra Mercer Moore AM was one of those women. Described by one of her close friends as the Boudicca of her time, she was also remembered for her compassion, listening skills, and mentoring. She was a woman of these changing time, reflecting both her past while she sought to understand the future of women in our society.

Sandra was elected president of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (physiotherapy) at the 15th general meeting of the confederation in Yokohama, Japan, in 1999. The Emperor and Empress of Japan, who appear at only one international conference each year, were present – an indication of the standing physiotherapy has in Japan. “They were exceedingly gracious, polite and knowledgeable,” she said. Through 178 member organisations, the confederation represents 625,000 physiotherapists in 121 countries. Sandra was the only the second Australian to be president in the confederation’s 70 years and served two terms of four years.

Sandra believed that strong national organisations, regional groupings, and active specific interest groups could strengthen the confederation and most importantly could raise the profile and voice of the profession. She was the first chair of the Asia-western Pacific region of the confederation and in 1995 she helped found the International Private Practitioners’ Association (IPPA), becoming its first chair and guiding it towards full recognition by the confederation. In the words of her IPPA colleague Eckhardt Boehle: “She directed the IPPA with great care and diplomatic skill. She earned great respect and recognition leading later to her becoming world president of the confederation.”

Later as world president, her guidance, support, business skills and willingness to take a chance now and again, saw the confederation move forward in great leaps. She didn’t dominate, she facilitated, supported and empowered those around her to achieve their potential and to drive the organisation forward. She also recognised that the process doesn’t always go smoothly, and she stood by at times when the going got tough.

She travelled widely on behalf of the confederation representing it at meetings in countries where the profession was well established as well as countries where the profession was aiming to achieve globally recognised professional status. Among the countries she visited in her role as world president were Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Kenya, Peru, Denmark, Spain, Canada, South Africa, Bulgaria, Oman, China, Portugal, and the USA. She also represented the profession at meetings of the World Health Organisation both regionally and globally.

Sandra was born in 1943, the first child of Sep and Tottie Stewart. She was raised on the family sheep and cattle property near Cunnamulla, Queensland, enjoying the freedom of being a bush child. She attended All Hallows school in Brisbane from 1953 to 1960 where she enthusiastically embraced the role of an "all-rounder" participating academically as well as in swimming, tennis, music and drama. She went on to enrol in Faculty of Physiotherapy in 1961 at the University of Queensland, benefiting from a world leading educational facility in her profession.



While at university, she met medical student, Bob Mercer, who moonlighted as a talented jazz band leader. Following her graduation, they married in 1964, moving to north Queensland where they both worked as health professionals. They came back to Brisbane for family reasons, and both worked at the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital. This was followed by a move to London where they both furthered their professional careers. Returning to Australia in 1975, with an optimistic future for their personal and professional lives, tragedy struck with the early death of Bob from meningitis.

While devastated, Sandra went on to build a new life managing a successful physiotherapy practice in Brisbane. She became increasingly involved as an advocate of the profession focusing on both private practitioners and research to improve the efficacy of physiotherapy practice. She also developed an interest in the long-term effects of ocean diving on the body, especially those who were professional divers. She also completed additional qualifications in her area of physiotherapy.

Attending a conference on fundraising on Queensland's Gold Coast, Sandra met her second husband, John Moore, who was involved with child and family protection services in Victoria. Following a long-distance courtship, they married in 1989. Sandra relocated to Melbourne, where she worked as a physiotherapist and later as trainer of physiotherapy aides. She also completed an MBA from the University of Southern Cross.

She also served on the board of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital and was able to donate her corneas. Sandra also served the Liberal Party with great distinction. She was chairman of the Menzies electorate council for 16 years and served on the Victorian state executive. She received a distinguished service award from the party in 2018 in recognition of her service. In 2009, she was made a member of the Order of Australia for service to physiotherapy through leadership roles with professional organisations, as a clinician and to the Victorian division of the Liberal Party of Australia.

Following a vibrant childhood and early adulthood where Sandra excelled and delighted in physical activities such as swimming and diving, she was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. The final years of her life were marked by increasing pain and loss of her muscular activity. Due to her autoimmune condition, she quickly succumbed to an initial fungal infection of her lungs, which developed into severe respiratory disease. Sandra is survived by husband John Moore, sister Debra Stewart and three stepdaughters. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/world-leader-in-physiotherapy-20210416-p57jvp.html>



DR SANDRA MERCER MOORE AM

January 15, 1943-January 15, 2021

Cherished wife of John for 31 years. Loving sister to Debra. Adored stepmother of Joanne, Kristen and Philippa. Wonder Woman and "Nana" to step-grandchildren Hannah, Emily, Ryan, Mia, Spike and Jake. Her life and inspiration is shown in her contribution to international physiotherapy where her work has been acknowledged and acclaimed throughout the world.

In her eight years as World President, she advanced the cause of physiotherapy in a number of Eastern

and Asian countries including Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Palestine and Indonesia. Sandra also served the Liberal Party with great distinction. As Vice-President of the Victorian Division, Chairman of the Menzies Electorate for 16 years, she was conferred a Distinguished Service Award by the Party in 2018 for her significant service. She is now set free from unrelenting pain to rest in peace. [https://tributes.theage.com.au/obituaries/396911/dr-](https://tributes.theage.com.au/obituaries/396911/dr-sandra-merc-er-am-moore/)

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DR SANDRA MERCER MOORE AM TRIBUTE BY MR KEVIN ANDREWS. Mr ANDREWS_(Menzies)

(19:55): I rise tonight to pay tribute to the late Dr Sandra Mercer Moore AM. Raised in rural Queensland, she was educated at All Hallows' School in Brisbane and then at the University of Queensland, where she trained as a physiotherapist. In 1964, Sandra married Dr Robert Mercer, and they worked together in North Queensland for a number of years before then moving to the UK, where they both worked in London, and subsequently returning to Brisbane.

Unfortunately, Robert died in 1975, having contracted an infection from a patient he was caring for. Sandra continued her work as a physiotherapist. She became the president of the Australian Physiotherapy Association and subsequently the President of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy, an international role which she served in for some eight years. In later times, she became a director of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital in Melbourne. In 1989, Sandra married John Moore and moved to Melbourne.

For the past two decades, Sandra has been a friend, a confidant, a supporter and a willing worker for the Liberal cause. She served on the Menzies electorate council executive and was subsequently elected chairman, a position she occupied for some 16 years. In this role, Sandra was superb, maintaining a close eye on everything happening locally in the party and the broader community. She had an ability, when chairing meetings, of deflecting criticism with a disarming comment and a smile.

She also served as chair of the Menzies 200 Club for many years, helping to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for our campaigns both in Menzies and in marginal seats. When I say that she was chairman of these bodies, she was addressed once as 'Madam Chair' in a meeting I recall, and she responded: 'I'm the chairman. I'm sitting on the bloody chair.' Thereafter, her interlocutor and all others referred to her as 'the chairman'.

I recount this anecdote because it was this directness that I admired in Sandra. She had a strong set of values, a clear set of principles, that endeared her to many but of course annoyed others who either didn't share them or were jealous of her abilities. She was closely involved in the Victorian division of the Liberal Party, serving in senior roles on the administrative committee for a decade, including, I think, some eight years as a vice-president of the party. Her ability to negotiate the labyrinthine passages of a political party with grace and courage was remarkable, and I have no doubt, had she decided that that was her aspiration, she could have become a senator for Victoria, but her focus remained firmly on assisting others.

Sandra made great friends and she also made enemies. She didn't suffer fools gladly. Through it all, she handled victory and defeat with the same equanimity. She was awarded a distinguished service award in 2018 for her contributions to the party. She was also made a Member of the Order of Australia for her magnificent leadership of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy and her significant contributions to the party.

I last saw Sandra on Christmas Eve, when I dropped around to wish her the best. She'd been in pain and a considerable discomfort for not just months but some years, and she was obviously in discomfort at that time. But I left that discussion on Christmas Eve, having talked about current political issues, believing I'd have many more such discussions in her lounge room or around the dining room table. Alas, it was not to be.

So I pay my respects and pay tribute tonight to a wonderful woman; a generous, witty, intelligent and kind person; a world leader in her chosen profession; and a great contributor to our democracy through her tireless work for the Liberal Party. She was truly a woman of character, integrity and courage, and I extend my condolences to her husband, John; to her sister, Deb; and to her stepchildren Joanne and Kristen. May she rest in peace.

House adjourned at 20:00

<https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansard%2F7db96a7b-474a-4dd3-8dce-bda08a6345ac%2F0196%22>

SANDRA MERCER MOORE. Firstly, to the members of the Liberal Party and, most importantly, my local members: thank you for your unwavering support. I always felt as though I had a battalion backing me up. I would also like to record my debt of gratitude to Sandra Mercer-Moore, who has believed in me from the beginning. You are a wonderful mentor and friend, and none of this could have been possible without you.

Michael Sukkar MP – First Speech – 18 November 2013 <https://www.michaelsukkar.com.au/about-michael/first-speech/>

SANDRA MERCER MOORE. First, my Liberal Party members, especially my loyal and dedicated Electorate chairs including Neil Guppy, Tom Sweeney, Hal Grix, Michael Gartland, Philip Radcliff, Andrew Asten and the indomitable Sandra Mercer Moore who represented the very best of the values I have sought to uphold; and members of the Menzies 200 Club, chaired most recently by Bernie Capicchiano and Anthony Fernandes, without whom I would not have had the resources to support my campaigns. **Valedictory Speech Kevin Andrews House of Representatives, March 31, 2022.** <https://www.kevinandrews.com.au/new-page>