



Sarah Ann O'Brien

February 17, 2026

Sarah Ann O'Brien (nee Pankonin) of Libertyville passed into the presence of her Lord Jesus on February 17, 2026, surrounded by loved ones. She was born in 1929 and raised with her three brothers on a farm in Wauconda, Illinois, loving the wonders and seasons of nature. She attended Texas State College for Women and graduated from University of Washington, after which she served as a 1st Lieutenant in the US Army at Walter Reed Army Hospital, where she met her husband Raymond O'Brien (1929-2015). They settled in Libertyville, raising together a family of eight children and innumerable animals of almost every variety.

She was active in the Libertyville Evangelical Free Church (CrossLife) as a member and leader from 1963 to the present day and served on the Libertyville High School District 128 School Board for many years. She was likewise a Board member with Lydia Children's Home in Chicago, a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity of Lake County, and a longtime supporter and advisor for Families in Training (FIT Moms) in Waukegan. Sarah's volunteer work reflected her deep commitment to serving others, both locally and abroad. She devoted herself to organizations such as M.O.P.S. (Mothers of Preschoolers) and PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter), and she traveled twice to Honduras on mission trips with Medical Ministry International. Sarah also had a gift for making things beautiful, expressed through her love of gardening and her long-standing involvement with the Libertyville Garden Club. In all she did, Sarah's life and generous heart for service were guided by

her enduring faith.

She was preceded in death by her parents Herman and Avis (Hayford) Pankonin, her brothers Wayne, Warren, and Harvey Pankonin, her husband Raymond, and her eldest daughter Catherine (“Kate”) O’Brien. She is survived by her children Eileen (Grant) Mitchell, Ceil (Steve) Folz, Matthew (Donna) O’Brien, Sarah (Herman) Klaus, Christopher (Heather) O’Brien, Maggie (Mark) Dryden, and Thomas (Lira) O’Brien-Dominguez, along with eleven grandchildren and fifteen great-grandchildren.

Services will be held at the CrossLife Evangelical Free Church, 431 W Austin Ave, Libertyville, on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 with visitation beginning at 10:00 and funeral service at 12:00. Interment will follow at Lakeside Cemetery. Arrangements by Burnett-Dane Funeral Home in Libertyville. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the FIT Moms program. https://www.paypal.com/donate?token=FsxvQJKRpxoDpXNbnWqR3rqYp1wFjupJ_3gtjTs_KE40Nd1nIMxMI_w0TNa1qGnNj9wmVkBmR2YaGWsw For info: 847-362-3009 or share a memory at www.burnettdane.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **24.** 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

CrossLife Evangelical Free
431 W. Austin Ave.
Libertyville, IL 60048
<https://www.crosslifeefc.org/>

Funeral Service

FEB **24.** 12:00 PM (CT)

CrossLife Evangelical Free
431 W. Austin Ave.
Libertyville, IL 60048
<https://www.crosslifeefc.org/>

Tribute Wall

AK

“ I am very sorry missed this event. Sarah was my cousin and had lost touch with her. My prayers are with her My mother was Helen Pankonin Alan Kalitzky at agkchief@gmail.com

Alan Kalitzky - April 02 at 04:03 PM

CC

“ Thoughts and Prayers are with your family and you RIP !

Craig Calhoun - February 26 at 02:07 PM

SS

“ Steve S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sarah Ann O'Brien.

Steve S. - February 23 at 04:43 PM

KE

“ Kris and Cindy Evanoff purchased the Beautiful i n Blue for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.



Kris and Cindy Evanoff - February 23 at 04:42 PM

LD

“ Love, Jane DiChristopher purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.



Love, Jane DiChristopher - February 23 at 04:28 PM

LD

“ Love, Jane DiChristopher planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sarah Ann O'Brien.

Love, Jane DiChristopher - February 23 at 04:28 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.



February 23 at 02:56 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sarah Ann O'Brien.

February 23 at 02:56 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.*



February 23 at 02:52 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sarah Ann O'Brien.

February 23 at 02:52 PM



“ *The Ballou Family purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.*



The Ballou Family - February 23 at 08:49 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.*



February 22 at 06:06 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.*



February 22 at 12:43 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sarah Ann O'Brien.

February 22 at 12:43 PM



“ *Mr. & Mrs. Campbell purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.*



Mr. & Mrs. Campbell - February 21 at 01:02 PM



“ *Rick and Kerry and Bob and Carol purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.*



Rick and Kerry and Bob and Carol - February 21 at 12:55 PM

RC

“ Rick and Kerry abd Bob snd Carol planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sarah Ann O'Brien.

Rick and Kerry abd Bob snd Carol - February 21 at 12:55 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.



February 20 at 01:20 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sarah Ann O'Brien.

February 20 at 01:20 PM

HO

“ Dear Sarah,

Your wisdom, kindness, and steadfast faith were precious gifts in my life. We shared so much — sewing, gardening, and above all, a love for Scripture. Our Bible studies, whether at work, in your home, or at church, were sacred moments to me. Sitting beside you and learning of Christ was a true blessing.

I smile thinking of the dinner recipes you tried to teach me — the pea soup was a disaster... haha

Yet even in grief, there is gratitude. I pray to serve Christ with even a portion of the devotion you embodied — and perhaps, one day, to reflect the grace of your wisdom you showed so effortlessly..... .

Thank you for everything.

With love, always. - Heather O'Brien. p.s. "You're Forgiven" wink wink

Heather O'Brien - February 19 at 06:40 PM

LS

“ *What a Sarah was. Always a smile, a helping hand. Through the years we enjoyed spending time with her and often going out to dinner with Sarah and Ray. A fun evening was had by all. So many good memories enjoyed with spending time with Sarah. Deepest Sympathy the family!*

Love and Hugs, Jim and Linda Strid

Linda Strid - February 19 at 10:12 AM

LS

Sorry, should say What a Woman Sarah was.

Linda Strid - February 19 at 10:13 AM

KM

“ Kim & Meg Maguire purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Sarah Ann O'Brien.



Kim & Meg Maguire - February 19 at 09:49 AM

KM

“ Kim & Meg Maguire planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sarah Ann O'Brien.

Kim & Meg Maguire - February 19 at 09:49 AM

SA

“ Mom, I never said goodbye! I was sure I'd see you at least once more, and that day was just a few before you left. And I'd cut your hair and we'd plan your 97th birthday party. But I think you knew the last time would be the last time. You didn't know how we all fought the tears every time we left your presence this last year, unsure of what the coming days would bring. But now those days are here. No more birthday party plans. No more talks about your health condition. No more days when we talk on the phone about when you think Jesus will return. I miss you, mom. But I can't wish you back, knowing that you are in the presence of the One you lived for, the one you served, the one who carried you through all your life's dreams and nightmares. You're praising God with the angels and saints, and I'm jealous. But we will be together again one day, as sisters of our King, Jesus. Bye for now, Mom.

sadie - February 19 at 09:44 AM

CO

“ *I woke up early to a new emptiness
My first day without you
Pain so fresh a sharp throbbing sense
That my whole world has come unglued.
1929 such a long long time your lessons learned hard and true
take just what you need
help those that you see
who are needy
just like you.
And never forget that we're just passing through
Again and again
You told me that truth
So here is to you
On your first day in heaven
Love you forever
Chris*

Christopher J. O'Brien - February 18 at 11:37 PM



“ *To my beautiful mom; you will never be forgotten. Your legacy will live on in your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, and in every life you touched with your endless sacrifices for others in the name of Jesus Christ. You left big shoes to fill, but my promise is that we will try our best to follow your example of living a service driven life, striving to be the hands and feet of Jesus to a world that needs Him.*

Maggie Dryden - February 18 at 08:42 PM

SA

Mom, I never said goodbye! I was sure I'd see you at least once more, and that day was just a few before you left. And I'd cut your hair and we'd plan your 97th birthday party. But I think you knew the last time would be the last time. You didn't know how we all fought the tears every time we left your presence, unsure of what the coming days would bring. But now those days are here. No more birthday party plans. No more talks about your health condition. No more days when we talk on the phone about when you think Jesus will return. I miss you, mom. But I can't wish you back, knowing that you are in the presence of the One you lived for, the one you served, the one who carried you through all your life's dreams and nightmares. You're praising God with the angels and saints, and I'm jealous. But we will be together again one day, as sisters of our King, Jesus. Bye for now, Mom.

sadie - February 19 at 09:34 AM