



*Honoring*  
**SANDI'S LEGACY**  
CHURCHILL CENTER & SCHOOL

*"Far and away the best gift  
that life has to offer is to  
have work you love that is  
work worth doing."*

THEODORE ROOSEVELT  
PARAPHRASED

Dear Churchill Trustees, Faculty, Staff, Families, and Friends,

This has been one of the most difficult letters I have ever written. Not because I don't know what to say, but because there is so much to say. Little did I know at the time, but the trajectory of my life totally changed when the Founding Trustees of The Churchill School honored and entrusted me with the remarkable opportunity to join them and share their dream of developing a school in St. Louis that would provide a specialized program for high potential children with learning differences to flourish and succeed.

Starting with a seven week summer program and developing Churchill into the respected institution it is today was accomplished because of the help of countless individuals, friends, community organizations, businesses and professional colleagues who stepped forward, when needed, during the incredible journey to create what is now Churchill Center & School. I am so grateful to Churchill's Founders, Perry Streett and Bonnie Summers Wolfarth, for their vision, passion, dedication, boundless energy and unwavering support. It is because of them and their wonderful dream that I found my true life's calling.

In 1978, we became pioneers joining other pioneers along the way, forging ahead to establish a school that would meet the individual needs of our students by delivering the best instruction possible, helping them to reach their full potential. Teachers, who had never envisioned leaving the security of a public school environment to work at a start-up private school, fell in love with the idea of creating a school which considered only what was in the best interest of each child. Parents, who based upon trust, hope and faith, made the choice to send their children to Churchill. Board members and friends, who supported us by giving of their time, expertise and financial support...all because they believed in the importance of the dream and the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of so many children. When I think about the early days, I remember the feelings of excitement, urgency, commitment, energy and spirit of adventure that we all shared. There were challenges of course, but there was always that feeling that we were going to accomplish our goals. We were a team and the work we were doing was important. That mindset continues today.

Leading Churchill has been a blessing and I have loved every minute of it! Having the opportunity as Founding Director to be an integral part of the birth of this unique school and then be able to watch it grow and mature over the years has been an extraordinary gift. This accomplishment is not mine alone; it also belongs to the cadre of gifted educators who have worked side by side with me since the early years. I have enormous pride and love for them.

I look forward to watching Churchill's next chapter. I am assured of the school's continued success under the extraordinary leadership of my colleague and friend, Anne Evers, Churchill's new Head of School. I know she will not only maintain the Churchill tradition of excellence but she will continue to develop and strengthen its program.

I am thankful that I do not have to say good-bye to all of you. It would be too painful. I am thrilled to have been recently appointed as an Honorary Lifetime Board Member by the Churchill Board of Trustees. My Churchill Book is not closing, just moving on to Part II.

I will be forever grateful for the hundreds of friendships that I have formed; most of my closest and dearest friends can be found within the extended Churchill community of past and current trustees, faculty, staff, parents, and former students. And I am honored by the unwavering support of the entire school community over the past 42 years. My life has truly been enriched and I feel fortunate to have found work that I love, work that is so worth doing.

Forever Grateful,

Sandi Gilligan  
Founding Director Emeritus