



Sandra Carberry, in memoriam

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Sandra “Sandee” Carberry, an internationally recognized researcher in user modeling and natural language processing, died on Thursday, June 26, 2025 at the age of 80. She was a pioneer in the fields of plan recognition, dialog systems, and natural language understanding. She was also an excellent teacher and a great public speaker, and last but not least, she was a wonderful person, who cared deeply about those around her.

Sandee received her PhD in Computer Science in 1985 from the University of Delaware. Her dissertation was in plan recognition in natural language dialog—an area in which she continued to make significant contributions over the years with many PhD students. Also, noteworthy is her collaborative and innovative research on intention recognition in information graphics such as bar charts, which aims to make them accessible to visually impaired people. Her interests spanned other areas, including document summarization, response generation, and intelligent interfaces. Overall, her research dealt with understanding people’s intentions in order to assist them.

In addition to her numerous articles in these areas, Sandee advanced the fields of user modeling and natural language processing through her leadership by chairing program committees of many conferences, guest editing special issues of *User Modeling and User-Adapted Interaction*, being an active editorial board member for many years of the journals *User Modeling and User-Adapted Interaction (UMUAI)*, *Computational Linguistics* and *Dialog Systems*, and being associate editor of the *International Journal of Human–Computer Studies*.

Sandee’s commitment went well beyond publishing—she genuinely cared about doing what was right and serving her department and communities. She was Chair of the Department of Computer and Information Sciences at the University of Delaware and served on the executive board of User Modeling, including as director at large; she was secretary and an executive board member of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL), and she also held a position on the executive board of the North American Chapter of the ACL.

Sandee wasn’t just an outstanding researcher—she was a gifted and inspiring teacher. Her teaching awards speak for themselves, as did the excellent presentations and inspiring keynote talks she delivered at conferences.

True to her caring nature, Sandee was also deeply committed to mentoring junior colleagues and students, and she was a great friend.

Overall, Sandee embodied the best qualities of a scholar and a human being, and we are privileged to have known her, and grateful to have been her colleagues and friends.

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