

# Jonty Sandler 1950 - 2021

*Generous benefactor and  
Visionary businessman*

Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE,  
London, August 2021



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The passing of my cousin Jonty, following a sudden heart attack in Johannesburg on 4 May 2021, was a great shock. He was just 70 and had so much going for him. He was the son of Archie and Eileen (née Bergman) Sandler. He was born in 1950.

With his international vision and business connections, Jonty travelled abroad regularly. He would often appear at short – or even no notice – at our front door in London. Having him here was always an exciting time as his ideas and imagination were truly mind blowing.

Jonty's wife is Melody They have a son Nathan who lives with his mother in Botswana, while Jonty lived and worked in the Johannesburg area at Ingwenya Country Estate and Farm. They spent a lot of time together before Covid struck. Nathan who is 12, had just spent a month with Jonty on the farm.



Being very good friends with Kenneth Kaunda, Jonty and Nathan travelled together to Zambia in April 2021, to celebrate Kaunda's 97<sup>th</sup> birthday. (in the picture above, Nathan is playing happy birthday to Kaunda on the trumpet, while Jonty sits on the couch talking to the former President of Zambia)

Jonty and Melody (who converted to Judaism) have been staunch members of Temple Israel in Hillbrow, Being a good trumpeter, Nathan also blows the shofar which he did with aplomb at their synagogue in Johannesburg on Rosh Hashanah before Covid struck. (left)

Jonty always managed to be with us in London at special times like Loren's wedding – and also just at the time when she passed away. He also happened to be with me at my house when news of his mother Eileen's death came through. We have always been close since I was 11 and he was a baby. My children and grandchildren always enjoyed spending time with Jonty and with Nathan and Melody when they visited us.



Above is a picture of Jonty at about 18 months, with from the left, my mother Beryl, me, (Geraldine, Kretzmar) and his mother, my Aunt Eileen Sandler at our swimming pool in our back garden in Kimberley.

**Barney Horwitz**, Chairman of the Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation writes Jonty Sandler was one of our strongest non-resident community supporters. Unseen and without fanfare he helped us regularly and not only is his passing a personal tragedy for his family and us, but one of the pillars of our support has fallen away. We wish his entire family long life and pray that they will be comforted together with all mourners in Zion.

We remember Nathan's stirring blowing of the Shofar in our shul shortly before Rosh Hashanah two years ago. At the time it was Jonty's wish to join us last year for the High Holy days but because of Covid-19, his plans had to change. What a pity it is that he will now not be able to fulfil that wish.

**Schoolmate Jules Lusman wrote:**

Jonty and I were schoolmates @ CBC Kimberley. A brilliant scholar, we will miss you. I remember that Jonty was a great equestrian rider who loved show-jumping. With our close friend, the late Anthony David, I would visit the Pony Club equestrian school outside Kimberley. We would meet up with Jonty Sandler who had a passion for gymkhana. Together we would go on rides in the veld outside Kimberley. Fond memories remain. A great mind, a loyal, ambitious, kind person. I wish Jonty Sandler's family long life. Jules Lusman

**Natalie Sussman, Cape Town wrote**



Archie (below) and Eileen were close neighbours and Eileen and I shared a very special friendship. I remember the excitement and happiness at Jonty's arrival. We hugged and tears flowed like a river. Ella and Jonty grew up with our children. Jeff and Jonty both participated in show jumping events. We spent many happy weekends together at the Pony Club where the horses were stabled. The girls Ella and Laura also enjoyed riding, but we did not encourage them to jump, but rather to concentrate on dressage. My thoughts are with you all.

Stay well Natalie

(When Jonty was called up for SA Army service, his equestrian prowess came in very handy and he was able to spend most of his army time on horseback!)

**Justine David in California wrote:**

I am so sad to hear about Jonty Sandler. I haven't heard of him or from him for many years. He was a very good friend of my late husband Anthony David. (Son of Lorraine and Bob) When Anthony passed away in November of 2000, Jonty appeared by our sides and his generosity was truly touching. I believe he has a son and wife, not sure where they live. I would love to contact his family. I have a cousin in Boston, Barry Sacks, (also Jonty's cousin). Regards Justine.



Geraldine adds, Jonty was the one who continually tried to connect me with the David family – and at last it happened through Justine and with information from her brother-in-law Rick David. See the 'David Family' story of Louis and Connie and children and grandchildren ([https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/David\\_Family\\_2.html](https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/David_Family_2.html) )

Jonty taught me a lot, gave me ideas and suggested actions when I was working in Jewish music. It was Jonty who suggested we should establish a Bert Jansch Foundation after Bert and Loren sadly died. This was something that we did manage to do a few years later. You can see it here: (<https://bertjanschfoundation.org/>)

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## Business Genius

Jonty was a very gentle, very generous and fun-loving man. But his ideas and vision were huge. He managed to achieve many of his dreams, though there were often obstacles for him along the way.

Jonty was always dedicated to black empowerment. He worked with some of the most important black leaders in South Africa and many areas of Africa. He was project manager and director of many companies and endeavours. He will surely be sorely missed.

### Project Manager and Director

Jonty's first professional project was in conjunction with the Krok brothers where he created a kind of 'Mothercare' of shops serving pregnancy and young motherhood

### Wild Waters, Boksburg



Jonty then created and built the first water park in South Africa called "Wild Waters" outside Boksburg. It was an innovative and exciting family attraction in the late 70s. There were huge water slides and a wave pool. You could picnic and braai on the lawns beside. I see on the internet that Wild Waters Fun Park, Boksburg is still in operation today.

### Shareworld Director and project manager Mar 1981 - Jan 1990 (8 years 11 months)



In the 1980s, Jonty raised R30 million to develop 'Shareworld'. The Los Angeles Times wrote this about Shareworld when it opened in 1988: 'On the outskirts of Soweto, rising like a mirage amid ridges of gold-mine refuse, is the first Disneyland-style theme park intended primarily for blacks. Whites, too, are welcome at Shareworld, and a small but steady stream of them have come since the complex opened last November. It is one of the few places in this racially stratified country where white

families can be seen swimming, playing and picnicking in a predominantly black environment. You can read the full article here <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-04-24-mn-2541-story.html>'. Above is a picture of the first ever wave pool surfing event in South Africa at Shareworld, Johannesburg in 1988.

Shareworld was a concept way ahead of its time, hoping for and enabling Black and White South Africans to share at play, 'growing through education and maturing in partnership' with the dual aim to help Black South Africans participate in the mainstream of the economy and create an environment where Blacks and Whites could meet each other during the 'dark' days of apartheid. A truly amazing theme park with restaurants, rides and entertainment hubs a – but being so far before its time in the 1980s, it did not survive.



In the picture above by artist /photographer David Goldblatt we see the new Soccer City stadium above the sad ruins of Shareworld.

**Here are some of Jonty's other projects of which he was the creator and director**

**ASA - African Strategic Advisors**

Jan 2007 – Present                      14 years 6 months

Johannesburg Area, South Africa

Promoting the vision 'The Africa we all Want' [www.nepad.org/content/towards-agenda-2063---africa-we-want](http://www.nepad.org/content/towards-agenda-2063---africa-we-want)

**Director**

**Maghilda Investment Pty Ltd**

2014 – Present                              7 years

Johannesburg

Property development and Investments in different sectors of the economy. Working towards a better Africa. Adopting new technologies into building world class cities in South Africa and Africa as a whole.

**Director**

**ASCF - African Strategic Capital Foundation**

Jan 2007 – Present                      14 years 6 months

Johannesburg African Initiative in Infrastructure Investments in Africa. African Union vision 2060 "Africa we all want"

## Jonty and Former President Kenneth Kaunda



In the picture above. Jonty (on the right) is presenting the first President of Zambia, **Kenneth Kaunda**, with a gift on his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday in April 2019. Next to Kaunda on the right is current Zambian President Edgar Lungu and on the left Past President Chissano of Mozambique and Past President of Namibia, Sam Nujoma. Jonty and Kaunda were close friends for over 20 years and Kuanda stayed with Jonty when in South Africa.



On the left is a photo from a video message **Kenneth Kaunda** made for Jonty's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in December 2020.

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### **Jonty Sandler**

Profile compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London August 1021 with photographs supplied by Melody Sandler and some previously sent by Jonty himself.