



Mr. Louis "Beek" Sykes, Jr.

June 22, 1963 - August 26, 2023

With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of our beloved Louis Henry Sykes Jr., lovingly known as Beek. He leaves behind a legacy of love, laughter, and kindness that has made us all better people for knowing him.

Louis was born on June 22, 1963, in Plant City, Florida. The second oldest child, Louis was known for always caring for those he loved. Even as a kid, he made difficult decisions to protect others, sometimes at significant personal cost. A young trailblazer, Louis was part of the desegregation movement when he integrated Bryant Elementary School in second grade. Louis loved football and played throughout his childhood. He was a wide receiver on the varsity football team at Plant City High School and was a proud member of the Class of 1981.

Louis and his wife, April, embodied a love for each other we all admire. They had known each other since childhood, as Louis was best friends with April's now-deceased brother, Reginald Davis. Years later, they bumped into each other at the Elks Lounge in Lakeland. With white zinfandel in her cup and Hennessy in his, they spent the next three hours talking, laughing, and nurturing a love that would

continue to grow over the next two and a half decades.

In Loving Memory of Louis Henry Sykes, Jr

June 22, 1963 - August 26, 2023

A dedicated husband and father of six children, three he shares with his first wife, Mildred, and three with April, Louis embraced his role with unwavering love and devotion. From daily good morning texts to always being a reliable shoulder to cry on, Louis loved his children. His family was his greatest source of pride, and his nurturing spirit continues to guide them.

He was affectionately called "The Mayor" by his children because he was familiar with everyone in Plant City and genuinely cared for them. He was always willing to help, whether it was a \$20 "loan" he never expected to be repaid or new football cleats for a child whose family struggled to make ends meet that particular season. He was selfless and gave generously. When Louis traveled, he almost went broke handing money to every homeless person he met on the street.

Professionally, Louis was an incredibly hard worker. For four decades, he worked at Lykes Brothers and Evergreen Packaging. He was such a devoted employee that he joked about his hospitalization breaking his 15-year perfect attendance record at Evergreen. In 2021, Louis and April opened Sykes Sip & Paint Studio, where they loved hosting celebrations for the Plant City community.

Louis loved sports, especially football. Florida State University and The Commanders were his favorite teams, and he was a statistician when it came to keeping up with players. Louis often drove to Miami with his brother,

Michael, to tailgate the annual Seminole vs. Hurricane rivalry, bumping into famous football players while casually poking fun at them. In 2018, he finally saw his favorite NFL team play in person at FedEx Field. Louis also supported family members as they pursued their passions in sports and was a mentor to his nephew Anthony, who played football in college.

But perhaps what endeared Louis to everyone most was his incredible sense of humor. His quick wit and infectious laughter rivaled Dave Chappelle and Richard Pryor. He was a natural storyteller and made even the most unexpected experiences, like a standoff with a frog, sound like the funniest thing in the world.

Louis was also the king of hosting. Whether it was a Super Bowl watch party, a backyard BBQ with over a hundred guests, or a small family gathering to celebrate a child's birthday, his hosting was second to none. When Louis and April hosted a party at their home, you knew you were in for a good time. You could always find him on the grill, so much so that his oldest granddaughter, Jada, lovingly referred to him as BBQ Granddaddy. He even taught his kids how to make the best cornbread stuffing, a recipe he learned from Aungie and the staple of the family's Thanksgiving tradition. His warm hospitality, coupled with his infectious charm, made everyone feel like part of the family.

On August 26, 2023, Louis passed away at his home in Plant City after a two-year battle with cancer. He was 60 years old. He took his last breath while holding his daughter Crystal's hand and receiving comfort from his wife, April. We are incredibly grateful to Rodney "Big Dog" for the love and care he provided to Louis in his final months. Louis is preceded in death by his fathers, Louis Henry Sykes and Tom Thomas, sister Crystal Sykes, nephew Anthony

“Dude” Lawrence Jones Jr., uncle Michael Stallworth, and aunt Vergena Jordan.

He is survived by his devoted wife, April Sykes, ex- wife Mildred McCloud, loving children, Crystal Sykes, Jeanita Sykes, Simone Sykes, Tyana Sykes, Tanay Tatum-Edwards (Travis), and Troy Tatum Jr. (Shakidris), grandchildren Jada Bennett, Nina Minnis, Kyan Outlaw, and Zora Edwards, adoring mother Mary “Joice” Thomas, siblings Michael Sykes, Tania Sykes Jones (Anthony), Andrea Sykes Poynter (Chris), Juanita Sykes, Joseph Sykes (Marshanna), Frank Sykes, Sharon Hargrove Bruce (Anthony), Melessa Bradley Lowery (Reginald), Angela Sullivan, and host of nieces, nephews, aunties, uncles, cousins, friends and extended family who will forever love him.

Louis will forever be remembered and cherished by those whose lives he touched. As we grieve his loss, let us also celebrate his life and emulate the kindness and generosity he showed to each of us. Rest in peace, dear Louis. Though we are heartbroken, we will continue to run our race with the hope of hugging you again.

Tribute Wall

CR

“ April, I am deeply saddened by your loss

Carl Rupp - September 03, 2023 at 08:35 AM

CB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Cecelia Brown - September 02, 2023 at 08:17 PM

CB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Cecelia Brown - September 02, 2023 at 08:09 PM

CB

Gone but never forgotten. Miss you Lou ❤️ CeCe and Jeff 🥺

Cecelia Brown - September 02, 2023 at 08:14 PM

SJ

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Suzanne Jackson - September 02, 2023 at 06:04 PM