



Stephen Cullen Sanders

DEC 5, 1950 - APR 14, 2025



Scan to Visit

Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Tribute Wall	Page 5
Media	Page 7



Stephen Cullen Sanders

DEC 5, 1950 - APR 14, 2025

S TEPHEN CULLEN SANDERS

With heavy hearts, Steve's family announces his death on April 14, 2025. We are grateful for him, his love, and the life that he lived. As he told it, he was born in Madison, TN, at the intersection of Due West and Gallatin Road in a cab on December 5, 1950. Memorial Hospital still sent a bill for his birth which his dad never got over. His parents were Joe and Guynell Sanders who helped start St. Joseph Catholic Church. After graduation from St. Joseph, Steve attended Father Ryan High School.

At age 14, Steve began working for his brother, Joe, at Shoney's cleaning the parking lot and being paid out of petty cash. A year later, he officially went to work as a busboy. Steve worked his way into management, including time as Director of Personnel and Training. He developed the New Orleans market and eventually became President of Shoney's at the age of 39. He worked for Shoney's until 1992. When he left, Shoney's had over 1200 locations. He formed a management company that had, at various times, Shoney's, Copeland's of New Orleans, Qdoba's, and Jake's Mountain Grill. He even did another stint at Shoney's as President in the late 90s.

Steve was married to Melinda Lawrence for 32 years; and they had two sons, Eric and Sam. He is also survived by his brother Joe. Steve loved deeply and was fiercely loved in return. He spent years as a leader in Boy Scouts so he could spend time with his sons and ensure that they became Eagle Scouts. He specialized in teaching the Swimming, Life Saving, Fishing, and Cooking Merit Badges to more boys than he could count. He was responsible for cooking lunch for the annual Clays Fun Shoot for the Middle Tennessee Council. One of his proudest moments was when he was honored with the Silver Beaver Award for his service to Boy Scouts.

Steve was proud of his Cajun roots, loving a good crawfish boil, New Orleans, Mardi Gras, andouille and boudin sausages. He loved to cook and especially enjoyed finding and cooking new recipes with his family. We will cherish the memories of all the meals that we cooked together.



Obituary

Stephen Cullen Sanders

DEC 5, 1950 - APR 14, 2025

Most of them turned out very well. He loved to read westerns and science fiction. When he discovered that he could check books-on-tape out of the Nashville library to listen to as he traveled, he proceeded to listen to every book in those genres that they could acquire.

Steve's faith was strong, and he and Melinda raised their sons in the Presbyterian Church. He became an elder and served on sessions, taught Sunday School, sang in the choir, cooked church-wide Thanksgiving dinners, and served as treasurer. He served on and chaired the Personnel Committee for the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

Steve is preceded in death by his parents, his son, Guy Randall, his sisters, Carolyn, JoAnne, and Jeannie. When he was diagnosed with cancer in 2020 and given 6 months to live, he commented that they didn't know what a fighter he was. He beat the cancer, but the effects of the treatments eventually took their toll.

We want to thank Dennis McBride and Mark Taylor for their friendship and steadfast visits as Steve became weaker. Steve was blessed with good friends in Nashville and in New Orleans who he loved dearly. We will miss him greatly but are comforted in the assurance that he is home – hopefully, cooking hashbrowns crispy and eggs over medium.

There will be a private burial with his sons, Greg Sanders, Dan Adams, Clayton Lawrence, and Marc Carr, as pallbearers. A Memorial Service will be held at 4:00 p.m. Friday, May 23, 2025 at Woodland Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Mark DeVries will officiate.

Arrangements entrusted to Spring Hill Funeral Home, 5110 Gallatin Road, Nashville, TN 37216. 615-865-1101. www.springhillfh.com



Tribute Wall

Stephen Cullen Sanders

DEC 5, 1950 - APR 14, 2025



Jeff Hitt posted:

Steve hired me as a cook at 16 years old and had a huge influence on me by demonstrating what a real work ethic was. I was later able to work with him again has a truck driver for Shoneys for 21 years. I am grateful for knowing him and he will not be forgotten. Rest in peace my friend. Jeff Hitt

October 19 at 2:49 AM



Mary Marion posted:

Spending time with Steve at Boswell during Boy Scout summer camps. He always loved the boys and lead the boys with such kindness. He was so knowledgeable about so much to do with scouting and so calm and patience while teaching the young boys their new scout skills. He was a wonderful man and leader and such a great friend to so many. He will be sorely missed.

May 23 at 8:29 AM



Ginger sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Sanders family.



May 21 at 3:34 PM



Cheryl Polsley shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I met Mr. Steve in 2008 when I had just started serving at Shoney's of Dickson. He would arrive early every Monday and Friday morning and at first, I was scared to talk, but after a while it became easier as we shared connections through our shared hobbies of coin collecting and Ohio State University. My daughter was a student when he shared the backstory between Shoney's and OSU. I have missed his presence and my confidante on all my coin treasures. Rest in peace Mr. Steve. Your friend, Cheryl



April 23 at 5:50 PM



Ginger Roy lit a candle in honor of Stephen.

My deepest condolences. I've worked for Steve for 30 years. He was a great man. Always had funny stories to tell and an all around great guy. He did enjoy his Cajun roots for sure . Ginger roy. Morgan city Louisiana



April 22 at 3:39 PM



Tribute Wall

Stephen Cullen Sanders

DEC 5, 1950 - APR 14, 2025



Dennis McBride posted:

It's impossible to share one from a friendship that spanned 70 years. It started in Sunday School at the age of four, carried over to a shared love of comic books read at Elders drugstore while we were deciding what we could afford, and then the girls that caught our attention and jobs at Shoney's so we had money to date. I recall FRHS graduation night and bachelor hangs before weddings and baptism rituals for our firstborn's. Shared interest in movies, careers and family. Through it all, the highs and lows we were there for each other and knew the meaning and the comfort of true friendship. May you rest in peace Steve until we share eternity. Your friend Denni.

April 17 at 2:50 PM



Anonymous sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Sanders family.



April 17 at 10:42 AM



Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Stephen.



April 17 at 10:42 AM



Bobbie Jo Worrell lit a candle in honor of Stephen.

Bobbie Shumake lit a candle in memory of Stephen Sanders



April 17 at 8:47 AM



Media

Stephen Cullen Sanders

DEC 5, 1950 - APR 14, 2025



Cheryl Polsley shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

April 23 at 5:50 PM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Stephen by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



Scan to Visit