



Sylvester Joseph Francis

September 1, 2020

On Tuesday, September 1, 2020, Sylvester was called home after battling a long term illness. He was 73 years old. Born to the union of the late Evelyn and Herman Francis Sr. on September 11, 1946. He was raised in the Seventh ward of New Orleans. Sylvester was the founder and Curator of The Backstreet Culture Museum in 1999 with great support from his sister. Elvera Touro, D. Joan Rhodes and the spirit of Fi Yi Yi, and the Mandingo Warriors. The museum showcases African American history of New Orleans, with a particular focus on the culture of Second Lines, Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, Mardi Gras Indianans, The Baby Dolls and The Northside Skull and Bone Gang.

Sylvester is survived by his devoted wife: Anita Dilling Francis, and his children: Museum Co-Owner Dominique Dilling Francis, Sylvester Jr, Clifford, Emanuel, Santana, Dwayne Dilling, Jonathan and Crystal Francis. He leaves three brothers, Robert, Lawrence and Louis Francis; four sisters, Aline Brooks, Evelyn Green, Gail Mercadel and Pamela Francis; Seventeen grandchildren, Sylvester III, Savan, Canisha, Sarell, Cierra, Clifford Jr, Emari, Emani, Emanuel Jr, Troven, Todd, Myesha Wells, Montez, Janeice, Ja'Kayla, Jonathan Jr, Dwayne Dilling Jr, DeVante Dilling and Ador' Musical Pigott; four God-children, Clerence Lenaris, Lisa Hickman, Terrence Grandpre and Tiffany Dilling, a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and two devoted friends, Clerence Cordova and Henry Kerr., as well as friends all over the city as well as the globe.

A public drive-thru viewing will be held at D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70125 on Thursday, September 10, 2020 from 5:00 pm until 7:00 pm

Relatives and friends of the family, also all Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs members, Mardi Gras Indians, Baby Dolls and Skull Gangs are invited to attend a Funeral Service honoring the life of Mr. Sylvester Francis at the Treme Culture Community Center, 900 North Villere Street on Friday, September 11, 2020 beginning at 11:00 am. Visitation will be held at 8:00 am from 10:45 am. A traditional Jazz Funeral will follow after service. Interment: St. Louis No. 1 Cemetery. Arrangements entrusted to D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 1728 N. Claiborne Ave. As mandated by the State of Louisiana due to the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance is limited. Everyone is required to adhere to all restrictions. You must wear a face mask at all times and practice social distancing. Please visit www.rhodesfuneral.com to sign the online guestbook, share memories and condolences for the family. For any donation, please log on to www.backstreetculturemuseum.org

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **10.** 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Rhodes Funeral Home - Washington Avenue
3933 Washington Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70125
(504) 822-7162
<https://www.rhodesfuneral.com>

Visitation

SEP **11.** 8:00 AM - 10:45 AM (CT)

Treme Community Center
900 North Villere Street
New Orleans, LA 70116

Service

SEP **11.** 11:00 AM (CT)

Treme Community Center
900 North Villere Street
New Orleans, LA 70116

Tribute Wall

MM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Mo Michelle - January 27, 2022 at 05:17 PM

MM

“ I want to share a quick memory of Mr. Francis. In 2017-18, I was studying Public History at UNO and managing a hat shop in the French Quarter. Mr. Francis, and the amazing museum he created, became my touchstone for all things having to do with New Orleans history. I know I probably bugged him so much with my many, many visits and questions. But you would never know it. He was always so kind and willing to share his knowledge with students. Mr. Francis would ALWAYS take time to talk to me-- sometimes for hours. Forget all of the big fancy museums in NOLA. The Backstreet Cultural Museum IS New Orleans history, and Mr. Francis will live forever through that legacy. My work sent me to Kansas City in 2019, but I miss New Orleans more than words can say. Anywhere I go, I try to carry the spirit of Mr. Francis with me. He taught me how to look at historical through the peoples' eyes-- and so much more. Any time I am working on a project and I get stumped, I ask myself, "WWMFD?" What would Mr. Francis do. Thank you Mr. Francis. You changed the way I look at history... and life.

Mo Michelle - January 27, 2022 at 05:07 PM

VD

“ *RIH Sylvester from Valerie and Racquel Dorsey in Killeen and Houston Texas. You will truly be missed. To the family and friends y'all have my deepest condolences .*

Valerie Dorsey - September 10, 2020 at 09:05 PM

EA

“ *To Robert and family,
"The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living." M. T. Cicero.
May the memories of your love bring you joy and the God comfort you
with His love and peace. "Jeannie"*

Eugenia Adams - September 10, 2020 at 03:14 PM

DW

“ *May your legacy forever shine throughout the lives you've touched!
Thank you for the culture enriched experience.
Da'Mon Williams, Balthazar Elektriks Inc.*

DaMon Williams - September 09, 2020 at 10:09 AM