



William Granville Sykes

December 5, 1936 - July 31, 2017

On December 5, 1936, Herman Spencer Sykes and Willie Lee Anderson Sykes welcomed into this world their second son, William Granville Sykes, in Halifax, Virginia. William's parents were both primary school educators, influential in establishing upward academic mobility for the minority community in the area. In an environment where segregated minority students were not provided optimal resources, the Sykes' ensured that the educational opportunities for their children were on a level playing field with others.

William demonstrated a love of learning from a very early age, accelerating through his high school studies at Mary Bethune High School by the tender age of fifteen. He entered Hampton Institute and quickly established himself to be a leader in his class, and on the campus at large. Among classmates he excelled academically but with humility; declaring himself 'lucky' in his various achievements. He had an uncanny ability to remember details about individuals and made everyone feel that their contributions were valuable. He displayed his academic acumen through college and graduate studies at Hampton Institute (Bachelor of Science in Sociology, with high honors, 1956), Howard University (Master of Social Work, with highest honors, 1962), and Central State University (honorary Doctorate of Laws, 1986) respectively.

His pursuit of education at Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) led to the fortuitous meeting of the love of his life, Delores Ann Butler. During his time at Hampton, William was elected to membership in the Gamma Iota Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., in 1954 and remained a member of his beloved fraternity for the rest of his life. He enjoyed the tremendous respect and admiration of his classmates, who elected him as the President of the Class of 1956; and he maintained a strong affiliation reinforced by frequent visits to their "Home By Sea" for all of his days. William (Bill) ensured that his class kept in contact and supported their alma mater. For nearly thirty years, William was a dutiful servant leader on the Hampton University Board of Trustees. It was during his time at Hampton that he and Delores developed friendships that lasted for the rest of their lives.

William was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army in June 1956. From June 1956 to April 1957, he was Assistant Director of Public Relations at Hampton Institute. He served six months active duty between April 1957 and October 1957. He was honorably discharged after completing an eight-year reserve obligation in June 1964.

On August 16, 1958, Bill was married to Delores. They had two daughters, Angela and Jacquelyn, and ensured that they had the best educational opportunities and network of friends. Bill and Delores' accomplishments led to many job opportunities in Baltimore City and the state of Maryland. Their network of friends supported one another and took every opportunity to celebrate their zest for life through numerous social groups and activities and community service organizations.

For three years, Bill worked as a Case Worker in the Department of Public Welfare. He also served as a Probation Officer in the Criminal Division of the Supreme Bench, and as a School Social Worker before moving on to positions with the National Committee for Children and Youth, ultimately becoming Training Director of that organization. In time, he returned to city government where he served as the Chief Social Worker for the Baltimore City Health Department. With Baltimore Model Cities Agency Bill held the positions of Health Coordinator, Acting Director and Director. He served as Chairman of the Mid-Atlantic Region and as the National Vice President of the Model Cities Directors' Association. Bill was selected by Mayor Tommy D'Alesandro to be his Assistant and Director of the Mayor's Office of Human Resources. In this role, Bill represented the Mayor at the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Bill was subsequently named Deputy Secretary of the Maryland State Department of Human Resources. In addition to other Boards, Bill faithfully served on the Maryland State Board of Education over many years, ultimately being unanimously elected as President, the first African American to serve in this role.

In 1979, William was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to become Deputy Director of the U. S. Peace Corps, under the leadership of Director Richard Celeste. Over the course his two years there he was afforded extraordinary opportunities as a part of his duties to survey parts of Africa, South America and Asia. After being elected Governor of the State of Ohio, Celeste would appoint him in 1983 to a Cabinet position as the Director of the Ohio

Department of Administrative Services in Columbus, Ohio. Historically, he was among the longest serving Directors to hold this position. Prior to moving to Columbus, Bill accepted a three-month assignment in West Africa for the World Bank.

During his time in Columbus, he never lost sight of charitable endeavors and for several consecutive years hosted a golf tournament fundraiser to benefit the United Negro College Fund, calling upon friends and associates to generously sponsor and support for a good cause.

In 1989, Bill established Sykes Associates as a small consulting firm, lending support, oversight and administrative recommendations to businesses and institutions seeking his savvy expertise and wealth of knowledge. He was ultimately offered a position as Director of Public Relations for The Limited, Inc. (now L Brands). He retired happily and returned to settle in Vienna, Virginia in 2002. Bill and Delores' love of Baltimore eventually led them back to their beloved city.

Throughout their years together, Bill and Delores maintained a close knit community of friends and strong networks in both Baltimore and Columbus. They were inaugural members of the President's Committee for the world-renowned Morgan State University Choir during their prime, under the direction of lifelong friend and classmate, Dr. Nathan Carter. They enthusiastically supported the choir and even traveled with the choir for many of their performances around the world. Bill enjoyed the camaraderie of his affiliations of more than twenty five years with Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and more than fifty years with Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. Bill also shared Delores'

love for various social and philanthropic organizations, embracing his role as Connecting Link, SophistiCat and Carateer.

Bill and Delores celebrated almost sixty years of marriage during which Delores and her incomparable beauty were ever the apple of his eye. They took great pleasure in entertaining their circle of friends, with Bill's keen, dry sense of humor and Delores' elegant style, culinary skill and class, as the core of every event, formal and informal. Even through his health challenges and loss of his beloved wife, a wide network of friends, colleagues and classmates held him dear, and he enjoyed any opportunity to make them laugh.

Bill and his lovely wife traveled around the world, visiting practically every continent. They felt it important that their family be exposed to different cultures and attained mementoes and artwork from their travels. They even helped establish a Hampton group of cruisers that quickly grew to include many of their friends.

Bill is survived by two daughters, Angela Delores Sykes and Jacquelyn Sykes-Washington (Samuel L. Washington, Jr.); two grandchildren, Chloe Allegra Sykes and Jordan William Washington; one niece, Lisa Sykes Winstead; one nephew, Herman Sykes, III; one first cousin Frank Bondurant; three sisters-in-law, Rita Herndon, Paulette Watts and Rose Butler; three brothers-in-law, Paul Butler, Donald Herndon and Terry Watts; and a host of other relatives. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Delores Ann Butler Sykes, his parents, Herman Sykes, Sr. and Willie Lee Anderson Sykes, and

his only brother, Herman Sykes, Jr.

Cemetery Details

Druid Ridge

Previous Events

Public Viewing

AUG 6. 12:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Life Tribute Center, P.A. - Randallstown
5616 Old Court Road
Windsor Mill, MD 21244
(410) 655-0110
<https://www.marchlifetributecenter.com>

Family Hour

AUG 6. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Life Tribute Center, P.A. - Randallstown
5616 Old Court Road
Windsor Mill, MD 21244
(410) 655-0110
<https://www.marchlifetributecenter.com>

Wake

AUG 7. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

The New All Saints Roman Catholic Church
4408 Liberty Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD

Service

AUG 7. 11:00 AM (ET)

The New All Saints Roman Catholic Church
4408 Liberty Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD

Tribute Wall



“ *William Granville Sykes*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *My sincere sympathy to the family in the passing of your loved one. May you find comfort in 1 Peter 5:7; God cares about you.*

A.H. - August 05, 2017 at 07:14 PM



“ *Gamma Boule purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of William Granville Sykes.*



Gamma Boule - August 03, 2017 at 02:48 PM



“ *We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.*

March Funeral Homes - August 03, 2017 at 09:11 AM