
Donald Ray Bear Bryant(1941 - 2015)

BRYANT Donald Ray Bear Bryant of Jacksonville passed away January 22nd, 2015. He was a beloved husband, father and Papa . Born to Retha and James W. Bryant July 13, 1941 in Jasper, FL, he moved to Jacksonville at a young age with his family where his Dad owned and operated a barber shop. Don grew up watching the elder Bryant cut hair and thought this was something he could do so his father sent him to barber school and he became the youngest barber in the state of Florida at the age of 13. Don graduated from Paxon in 1959 where he played football, basketball and baseball. Baseball ended up being his ultimate calling as he was drafted by the Detroit Tigers organization in 1959. The 6'6 catcher was nicknamed Bear by his baseball teammates. After several years in the minor leagues with various teams he got his shot at the big leagues in 1966 with the Chicago Cubs and again in 1969 and 1970 with the Houston Astros. His career eventually landed him in Boston as a coach 1974-1976 which was highlighted by a trip to the 1975 World Series where the Red Sox faced the Cincinnati Reds in one of most memorable series of all time. He was a coach in the 1976 and 1979 All Star games and coached with the Seattle Mariners from 1977-1980 before leaving the game. Maintaining his barber s license throughout the years he continued to cut hair and returned full time to barbering at his own shop, Don s Barber Shop on Highway Avenue for many years. Don was a very kind hearted person who genuinely loved his family and friends and would do anything for them. He is survived by his loving wife Judi (Lowery), his mother and father (father passed 1/26/15), brothers Clyde (Carol) and Jim, sister Judy Gneisig (Fred), 3 children Darrell Taylor/stepson (Susan), Darren Bryant and Wendy Wood (Shane), 8 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Services will be held Thursday January 29th . Family will be receiving friends beginning at 12:30 followed by a service at 2:00. Jacksonville Memorial Gardens Funeral Home, 111 Blanding Blvd, Orange Park, FL, 32073. Please sign the guest book at www.jacksonvillememorygardens.com

Funeral Home**Jacksonville Memory Gardens Cemetery and Funeral Home**

111 Blanding Boulevard Orange Park, FL 32073
(904) 272-2435

Published in the Florida Times-Union on Jan. 28, 2015
