



## Don Thomas Murray

September 12, 1944 - August 2, 2021

Don Thomas “Coach” Murray, a remarkable and loving man, passed away in the early morning of August 2, 2021, after a battle with COVID.

Born September 12, 1944, to Walter Lee and Lela Murray, Don spent his entire childhood in Jacksonville, Texas. Don attended Jacksonville High School where he starred for the football team before graduating in 1963. Don’s performance as a center for the Jacksonville football team earned him a full football scholarship to Sam Houston State University.

At Sam Houston State University, Don continued to enjoy success on the football field wearing #57 and starring at center and middle linebacker. Don was a proud member of Sam Houston’s 1964 squad that won the Lone Star Conference championship and tied 7-7 with Concordia College in the NAIA National Championship game. Don also served as a resident assistant and assistant coach at Sam Houston and earned a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and a Master of Education in Physical Education.

He began his coaching and high school teaching career in Beaumont, Texas, before moving to Groveton Independent School District. He ended his teaching and coaching career in Bastrop, Texas where he was head coach and taught American History before retiring in 2001. After retirement, he served as a substitute teacher at Montgomery High School in Montgomery, Texas. At each of his career stops, he was loved by his students and faculty.

Due to his natural humility, Don never talked much about his accomplishments as a football player, a coach and teacher of thirty-five years, or as an exceptional person. Those accomplishments included being a great dad, fostering children, adopting a child, influencing countless students and student-athletes, and always standing ready to help out a friend or a stranger. He did enjoy talking about how much he loved his family, his friends, his home, his ukulele and guitar, his music, old movies, books, history, and life in general. He talked about places he had gone, places he wanted to go, and how fortunate he was to have so many people who loved him. People were naturally drawn to Don’s

charismatic personality. He loved people, and they loved him. Seemingly before people were even introduced to him, he was automatically called "coach."

Don was a loving husband, dad, stepdad, and pawpaw and a friend to everyone no matter what wrongs they may have done in life, no matter if they were rich, poor, or where they came from. He made a lasting impression on everyone who were so fortunate to meet him. His love was unconditional.

Don was preceded in death by an infant son, Guy Edmund Murray, his parents, sister Patricia, and an infant brother. Those left grieving are his wife of twenty-five years Diane Murray, son Matt Murray and wife Kelsey, grandsons Dane, Hudson, and Lincoln; Son Darren Murray, wife Brandi, granddaughter De'arra, (step-grandchildren Isaiah, Jaylee, Jaya); His daughter Jill Castro, husband Audrey and grandson Dalton; Stepchildren – Michelina Fedele Cullivan, husband Thomas, grandchildren Zeke, Augustus, Silas, and Cillian; Mario Fedele and wife Jennifer, grandchildren Avery, Autumn, Brianna, and Levi (step daughter Tori); Stepson Shawn Fedele, granddaughter Hailee; Daughter in law, Casey Coday and Josh; grandchildren Avery Fedele, Cooper, and Addie Coday; Step daughter Deena Catron and family; Brothers, David Murray (Lila Jean), Jimmy (Gwen) Murray; Sisters, Anne Green and Billye McGowan Also numerous nieces and nephews, and too many friends, neighbors and family to mention all.

A musical celebration of his life will be announced at a later date.

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## When Great Trees Fall

By Maya Angelou

When great trees fall, rocks on distant hills shudder, lions hunker down in tall grasses, and even elephants lumber after safety.

When great trees fall in forests, small things recoil into silence, their senses eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die, the air around us becomes light, rare, sterile. We breathe, briefly. Our eyes, briefly, see with a hurtful clarity. Our memory, suddenly sharpened, examines, gnaws on kind words unsaid, promised walks never taken.

Great souls die and our reality, bound to them, takes leave of us. Our souls, dependent upon their nurture, now shrink, wizened. Our minds, formed and informed by their

radiance, fall away. We are not so much maddened as reduced to the unutterable ignorance of dark, cold caves.

And when great souls die, after a period, peace blooms slowly and always irregularly. Spaces fill with a kind of soothing electric vibration. Our senses, restored, never to be the same, whisper to us.

They existed. They existed. We can be. Be and be better. For they existed.

Watch Over Us – We Love You  
Your Family

# Tribute Wall



“ *Don Thomas Murray*

November 15, 2022 at 08:33 PM

DE

“ *It is coming up on on 1 year that we lost our precious Don. One of the best people I have ever known and loved. Always a special light in my heart.. He is so missed by all. Love Deena*

**Deena** - June 15, 2022 at 08:04 AM

DM

“ *I miss you every minute of every day and my love for you is never ending. Your wife Diane*

**Diane Murray** - April 18, 2022 at 10:44 PM

MD

“ *Diane, I was so shocked and sorry to hear of Don's death! I was in Junior and Senior High Schools with him. He was the life of the party and a very kind person. I have enjoyed reading about his life after we graduated so very much. I have seen and visited with him at several of our class reunions, but really did not know of his accomplishments. I am not surprised because he was a great person. My condolences to you and to his family. This COVID pandemic has been, and continues to be, a terrible thing. I hope you are well. You and your family will continue to be in my prayers.*

*Mary Pavletich Dublin*

**Mary Pavletich Dublin** - August 17, 2021 at 03:57 PM

JB

“ *Don was a classmate of mine for 12 years, grade school until graduation. A lot of fond memories. Don was always a great football player and a very jovial person. He will be missed by all our classmates. Rest in Peace.*

*Janie Campbell Barber*

**Janie Barber** - August 17, 2021 at 12:37 PM

GB

*Me too! Twelve years. So sorry for your loss and I pray God will comfort your family. Sounds like he had a full and blessed life, and he will be missed. RIP Don.*

**Gammel Barbara** - August 17, 2021 at 06:51 PM

LA

“ *Coach Murray was my history teacher during his tenure at Groveton High School. He always taught our class where it was interesting and wanted to learn. He was also a great coached and was very well liked by the students. My thoughts and prayers go out to each of his family. May you rest in peace, Coach Murray.*



**Linda Parish Andrews** - August 16, 2021 at 06:58 PM

LO

“ *I had the privilege of working with Dom Murray at Bastrop High School. He was always very kind and respectful man. My condolences to his family. May he now Rest In Peace.*

**Lucy Orozco-Faz** - August 12, 2021 at 02:14 PM

MH

“ *Marvin Hyvl sent a virtual gift in memory of Don Thomas Murray*



**Marvin Hyvl** - August 11, 2021 at 10:44 AM

LH

“ *I am so sorry that Don had to leave this world battling this horrible disease. He came into our family when I was 10. I took many a camping trip with him around the United States. I will never forget the time we were in a tent on Galveston Island when a tropical storm hit and he drove us out in the middle of the night. We also did a lot of singing and made up songs at night when we camped. He was a great dad to Jill and Matt on these trips and had so much patience. Rest in peace Don*

**Leann Herrera** - August 10, 2021 at 09:18 PM