



Frank Cook Sanders

December 29, 2019

We invite friends and family that are unable to attend the service to click on the link provided to view the live stream on Tuesday 1/21/20

www.mcbsfs.org/ourmedia/livestream

Frank C. Sanders

March 1931 - December 2019

Frank C. Sanders, age 88, passed away the morning of Sunday, December 29, 2019, at the home he shared with his son Carlos Sanders and Carlos' family, in Fairfield, CA. He made his transition peacefully, while surrounded by loved ones.

The youngest child of Thomas B. Sanders and Zerline L. Cook, Frank was born in March of 1931, in Charleston, South Carolina. He spent his formative years growing up in Charleston. He was educated in both the private and public school systems. He completed high school and some college, while serving in the United States Coast Guard.

At the age of 23, Frank married Mercedes Leticia Morales (Leticia) of San Juan, Puerto Rico. To this union, one daughter and three sons were born.

During their marriage, Frank and his family lived in various locations throughout the United States and its territories, including San Juan, Puerto Rico, New York, NY, San Francisco, CA, Richmond, CA, San Jose, CA and Burke, VA. After Frank's final retirement, he moved and lived for thirty plus years in his home in Stockton, CA, before spending his final year plus in Fairfield, CA.

Shortly before Frank's retirement from the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the family moved to San Francisco, California. Frank served 20 years with the Coast Guard before his retirement. Frank was the first African American to serve as an Intelligence Officer with the Coast Guard. After his retirement, Frank became a Special Agent with the United

States Treasury Department, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). During his 20 year career with ATF, Frank served with honor and integrity in various positions and at various locations, primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area. Frank was the first African American Special Agent hired by ATF west of the Mississippi river. During his ATF career, Frank often assisted agents who felt that they had been discriminated against or otherwise not treated fairly. Frank played a major role in the successful class-action lawsuit filed by the African American Special Agents of ATF. Frank knew, and it prove to be true, that his career would be negatively affected by him taking on such a primary and visible role in this lawsuit against the agency (ATF). Undeterred and undaunted, Frank personally wrote a number of the initial documents that were used to initiate the groundwork that ultimately lead to the filing of the class-action lawsuit. Due to his role as a senior spokesperson for the group, Frank became known as the “Godfather of the Black ATF Agents.” As a result of this lawsuit, the Federal court required that ATF make a number of changes to minimize discriminatory actions and policies. Many of these changes are still in effect to this day. In 1988, Frank retired as the ATF Resident Agent in Charge of the San Francisco Arson and Explosives Group. After his retirement from ATF, Frank served for three years as an investigator with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.

Two of Frank Sanders’ three sons followed their father’s career path. Frank’s middle son, Carlos, also joined the Coast Guard and his youngest son, Howard, also joined ATF. Carlos served with the Coast Guard from November 1975 to August 1979 and was a Second Class Storekeeper (E5). In June of 1983, Frank swore in his son Howard, as an ATF Special Agent and thus, they became the first African American father and son team in ATF history and possibly in the entire history of Federal law enforcement. Frank’s third and eldest son, Frank C. Sanders III, stated, in a joking manner, “although he did not follow in his father’s career path, he didn’t feel left out because he (Frank III) inherited dad’s intelligence and problem solving skills. Hahaha”

In his working career, Frank was a pioneer and “the first” in many positions he held. In addition to becoming the first African American to become an Intelligence Officer with the Coast Guard, he was the first African American Special Agent hired by ATF west of the Mississippi River, the first African American ATF father son team and the first African American Investigator hired by the State of California, Department of Toxic Substances Control.

Frank was a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, son and brother. He was very proud of his family and loved family gatherings. Anytime he was able to spend time with his family was important to him. He also loved to barbeque and make home-made ice cream. He loved to fellowship with his Coast Guard and ATF friends and

co-workers. He was also a sports car enthusiast, having owned a number of Datsun/Nissan Z cars and a Porsche 911. It was not unusual for Frank to get in his car and drive cross-country. He did so many times in his lifetime. He also enjoyed boating, having owned multiple boats.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Zerline Cook Sanders, father, Thomas Sanders, sister, Thomasina Sanders-Jackson, brother William Milledge Sanders and daughter, Carmen Sanders-Stephens.

Memories of Frank will be forever cherished by his family and friends. He will always be thought of with a smile, and forever loved and missed. Those left behind to mourn his passing includes three sons, Frank C. Sanders III (Donna Smith) of Richmond, CA, Carlos M. Sanders (Elizabeth Byrd) of Fairfield, CA and Howard E. Sanders (Valerie James-Sanders) of Chino, CA, brother Thomas Sanders (Jacqueline Sanders) of Charleston, SC, sister-in-law Queenie Victoria Sanders of Charleston, SC, son-in-law Quentin Stephens of Ceres, CA, grandchildren Eric G. Stephens of Hayward, CA, M. James Stephens of Modesto, CA, Cameron Q. Stephens of Turlock, CA, Alexander J.N. Stephens of Modesto, CA and Roderick C. Stephens of Van Nuys, CA, Francisca Nykol Sanders of Houston, TX, Frank C. Sanders IV of Richmond, CA, Jazmyn Angel Leticia Sanders of Houston, TX, Domyinique Alexandrina Sanders of Houston, TX, Charlton Sanders of Fairfield, CA, Branden Sanders of Chino, CA, Stephanie Sanders of Chicago, IL, 15 great-grandchildren, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and other relatives and friends.

Frank, your work here is done and it is time for you to rest. You will be missed.

Cemetery

**Sacramento Valley
National Cemtery**
5810 Midway Dr.
Dixon, CA, 95620

Events

JAN 21 Funeral Service 10:00AM
Mount Calvary Baptist Church
1735 Enterprise Drive, Fairfield, CA, US, 94533

JAN 21 Graveside Service 02:30PM - 03:00PM
Sacramento Valley National Cemetery 5810 Midway
Road Dixon CA 95620
US

Comments



“ Carlos, Frank, and Howard my heart felt condolences to you in the lost of your Dad. May you find comfort and peace in the Heavenly Father during this time of loss. So many fond memories I have during my season with the Sanders Family. Take care of each other!

Camille Williams - January 21 at 07:22 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Frank Cook Sanders.



January 20 at 10:07 PM



“ Julie Noel lit a candle in memory of Frank Cook Sanders



Julie Noel - January 20 at 03:54 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Frank Cook Sanders.



January 19 at 03:27 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Ann Dilly Davis-pugh - January 14 at 01:32 PM



“ Frank Sanders was a old-style Gentleman that believed in his country and fair place for everybody. I met Frank in the early 1980s and we instantly became the best of friends, more like brothers. We traveled all over the united States for different events and job related business. Losing Frank has left a big hole in my heart. He will be dearly missed.

Bill Newberry - January 07 at 03:40 PM



“ Thanks Bill for your kind words and thoughts. Howard

Howard Sanders - January 09 at 10:08 PM



“ Frank was a trailblazer and his efforts led to changes that benefit African-American Agents to this day. He was my supervisor, so I had a chance to gain a unique perspective pf him. He was very learned and always willing to share his knowledge. He was very meticulous. I credit him with teaching me to check the details to be more efficient. He was a great mentor and some of his accomplishments will live on through me.

RIP Frank

John C Ross - January 13 at 01:32 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Frank Cook Sanders.



January 07 at 03:34 PM



“ Services will be available via Live Stream
www.mcbcfs.org/ourmedia/livestream



“ Mr. Sanders was a trailblazer for those of us African Americans who followed his foot steps in the United States Coast Guard. He was also a mentor and leader for African Americans who followed him in the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). He lived a good life and will be missed. His legacy will live on. Condolences to my brother in laws- Frank, Carlos and Howard Sanders and the rest of the family.

Quentin Stephens - January 02 at 09:07 PM



“ Thank you Q for your kind words and thoughts.

Howard

Howard Sanders - January 06 at 09:44 PM



“ <3

Jazmyn - January 24 at 03:11 AM