



Herman Henry Butler

August 31, 1929 - February 18, 2018

Herman Henry Butler was so many things: a father, grandfather, brother, uncle, veteran, philosopher, card shark, dominoes expert, retired muni driver, ladies-man, “grill-man”; but most importantly, he was a family man.

Born August 31, 1929, in Clarks, Louisiana to Henry and Emma Butler.

Herman was the second of seven children. Clarks was a small segregated saw mill town and while many of young men in Clarks ultimately worked in the saw mill, Herman had aspirations to go to college. Unfortunately, the family could not afford to send both he and his sister to college so he sacrificed his own dreams and chose to help his step-father establish a family-owned cleaners in order to allow his sister to go to college. In 1950 Herman enlisted in the U.S. Army and was sent to Germany. He proudly served his country for six years.

In 1956 Herman returned to Louisiana (Monroe) to find work. There was little work available in the region, so many young men and women migrated North or West for viable employment. So Herman decided to follow his sisters and moved to San Francisco. At first, Herman took on several odd jobs to help him get settled in California, but in 1960 he began his career with SFMuni in 1960. Herman eventually became the “Commander” of the 30 Stockton Line. His children, nieces, and nephews would often ride with him and were amazed by the number of passengers who knew him by name, and how he had become friends with a number of them, especially, the ladies! Herman loved the Ladies, and the Ladies loved Herman. His philosophy was “Never let a lady

walk by without offering a pleasantry.” Several of the women would miss their stops since they would be so engaged in conversation with Herman, but they didn’t mind being late for work.

Herman loved and was committed to his children. Although his manner in raising his children was unconventional, he was fully present in his way. His children often comment that for years he would leave the house and say “I’m going to see a man about a dog.” However, he never came back with a dog or any other pet! They often remark on how he would sit each of them down and counsel them on various aspects of life and although they didn’t enjoy it, they live by many of his philosophies today.

Herman also considered himself a barbecue master. He loved having family dinners and when he was home, you would find him barbecuing or sitting at the open garage door philosophizing with whomever stopped by. He often “held court” at his garage door. His other hobbies included woodwork, home repairs and painting. He kept himself occupied in his retirement years with multiple projects around his house and when he completed those projects, he would visit his loved ones and offer to work on projects at their house. Herman also enjoyed playing cards, dominoes, talking trash and betting with his co-workers anyone who wanted to challenge him. There were many days he would take his children to the “Muni Barn” where he played. Since the kids didn’t enjoy the environment, they were sent to the car to entertain themselves. From that experience, his children often find humor in the fact that none of them play cards or any type of games.

Herman spent several of his final “holding court” at the Emeryville Starbucks where he amassed a number of friends who enjoyed and respected him. He will be remembered and has been commemorated on the Starbucks’ menu by a special drink called “The Herman”.

Herman married Billie Joyce Jackson, Lottie Farris (deceased), and Lydia Joy Cathers. He had five loving children: Hermann Henry Wieland, Carlos Elliott Butler, Karen Renee Grant (deceased) (husband: Tony Grant), Eric David Butler and Irene Noelle Lugo (husband: Jesse Lugo). He leaves seven

grandchildren: Lance Elliot Butler, Roman Anthonee Butler, Nicolas Grant, Kristen Grant, Demariea Butler, Cyrus Lucian Landauer, Athena Lydia Noelle Lugo, and two great-grandchildren: Romelo Lewis Butler, Auri Lashe James. His siblings: Willie Mae Walker (deceased), Lucille Taylor, Jean Keppard, Carolyn Martin, Raymond Simmons, Calvin Ray Simmons (deceased) and dozens of nieces, nephews, step-family and loved ones.

It has been said "To know Herman is to love Herman". Herman Henry Butler will be remembered for his charm and cunning sense of humor. While he no longer graces us with his presence on earth, his spirit will be cherished and felt for years to come.