



Samuel Austin Barbara

September 7, 1931 - September 26, 2021

Samuel Austin Barbara, “SAM THE MAN”, passed away peacefully on September 26, 2021 at the young age of 90! Sam made an impression on all who knew him and was well loved! He was an energizer bunny and had a zest for life that was fun to be around. He was a wonderful husband, dad, and grandfather (“Pop”)! He had the “gift of gab”, telling endless stories and his sense of humor was priceless. Sam always looked to help anyone in need. He had a soft spot for children, forever handing out toys and being “Santa Sam” all year long! He was a religious man attending church every Sunday and saying a daily rosary for anyone who needed prayers that day! Sam was an exceptional athlete from childhood to adulthood. He also loved watching LSU, the Saints, and the Olympics. He owned Big Wheel Novelties, Inc. in Kenner and many knew him as “Sam the Pencil Man” selling his favorite novelty pencils to hundreds of Louisiana schools for over 37 years. He had a smile on his face that was contagious. He loved to have a good time, dance, and drink his daily “high balls” and Port wine! It was his passion to “give”, so throwing beads and trinkets in Mardi Gras and Irish parades was always a “thrill” for him!! He enjoyed traveling in the USA and around the world. He loved bringing his entire family to Florida every summer making fun memories for all! Sam was a writer, documenting his life & career adventures and giving life advice through his poems. Sam planned his grammar school and high school reunions up until just a few years ago. He knew how important it is to keep in touch with friends and they always had a great time!

“Sammy” was born September 7, 1931 in New Orleans, LA. He loved growing up in Old Metairie attending St. Catherine of Siena Elementary. He was a 1948 St. Aloysius High School graduate and star basketball and baseball player. He received a degree in Marketing from Loyola University in New Orleans also pitching for the baseball team. He served in the US Army during the Korean War from 1952 to 1954 and even played on his Army base’s baseball team.

He is preceded in death by his father Salvadore “Sam” Barbara and his mother Inez Austin Barbara of New Orleans. He is survived by his beautiful wife Gloria H. Barbara of 64 years, 4 children, Karen B. Brown, Wanda B. Kelly (Michael), Connie B. Nickelson and Darrell S. Barbara (Stacy). 10 grandchildren Vincent Brown, Katie Brown Persick (Darren), Ross Brown, Raquel Kelly, Reed Kelly (Jamie), Chad Kelly, Samantha DiVincenti (Brian), Thomas Nickelson, Luke Barbara, and Brooke Barbara, and 2 great grandchildren Nicholas Persick and Austin Kelly. Also his dear sister Mary Virginia Probst (George) just turned 94.

Sam began his lifelong love for sales with Maxwell House Coffee in 1957 and Keebler Cookies in 1965 winning many top salesman awards. He started in School Fundraising sales working for Heath Candy Co in 1969. He held school assemblies motivating students to go door to door and sell his products to raise money for their schools. He continued in this field working for QSP/Readers Digest from 1973 to 1988 again being a top salesman in the country and a mentor for many young salesmen. His innovative ideas, crazy promotions, and endless energy always intrigued the company higher ups! He was a hard worker and an honest salesman.

He started his family business in 1983, Big Wheel Novelties, Inc. For the next 37 years, he worked very hard selling novelty & educational pencils to Louisiana schools as well as promotional items with their school logo printed. He loved his customers and they all loved him. He had a retail party store to sell his many fun toys, novelty school supplies, fair supplies, Mardi Gras and Irish throws, and customized items. He was a big kid loving all the

merchandise as much as them. His employees adored him, being a fun boss and friend to all of them! He employed many family members & friends over time and they all appreciated the great memories.

Sam enjoyed parading 40+ years in the Irish Channel Marching Club of New Orleans with the honor of being the 2009 Man of the Year. He also rode on a float in the Zeus Parade for over 20 years. He was a member of The Good Ole Boys of Metairie, Good Friends Club, St. Lawrence the Martyr Men's Club, Brothers of the Louisiana Ancient Order of Hibernians, Brother Martin Alumni, American Legion Post 0377, and VFW post 7732. Sam and Gloria were volunteer fair chairmans for St. Lawrence the Martyr Seafood Festival for many years. He was a member of Chapelle and Rummel High School PTO's as well. He loved coaching his son baseball at Westgate Playground when he was young. He was a volunteer for the WW II Museum, giving presentations to students promoting his love of history and to visit the museum. He has been a charter member and donating to the museum since 1998. He also traveled with the Gumbo Krewe after 911 to serve free Cajun food to first responders in New York. He is a monthly donator to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital since 1981 because he has a huge heart and loves kids. Sam said his goal in life was "to live as long as possible, work as long as he can, help his family and friends in need, and just make other people happy!" SUPER SAM will be dearly missed by many, but we know he is in heaven jitterbugging, playing baseball, eating boiled crabs, making the other angels laugh, and partying hard!

His family would like to thank the doctors, nurses, and caretakers who kept him healthy and happy this past year especially home health nurse Elisa, nurse practitioner Anne Favrot, Podiatrist Leon Shingledecker, the staff at St. Francis Villa Asst. Living in River Ridge, Serenity Senior Residence in Metairie, and Hospice Associates. Y'all are all angels on earth!

Relatives and friends are invited to attend the Visitation and Funeral Mass at St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church, 6421 W. Metairie Ave., Metairie, LA on

Monday, October 4, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. followed by a Funeral Mass at 12:00 p.m. Interment in All Saints Mausoleum in Metairie Cemetery, 5100 Pontchartrain Blvd., New Orleans, LA.

Family and friends are invited for a Celebration of Life party following the interment at The Ridgeway of Old Metairie, 2431 Metairie Road in Metairie.

In lieu of flowers, we ask that charitable donations be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Arrangements by L. A. Muhleisen & Son Funeral Home. To share memories or condolences, please visit www.muhleisen.com

Cemetery Details

All Saints Mausoleum

5100 Ponchartrain Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70124

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 4. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church
6421 W. Metairie Avenue
Metairie, LA 70003

Funeral Mass

OCT 4. 12:00 PM (CT)

St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church
6421 W. Metairie Avenue
Metairie, LA 70003

Tribute Wall



“ *Samuel Austin Barbara*

October 15, 2023 at 09:39 PM



“ *Barbara Family. Sam will be missed by everyone whose life he touched. He brightened so many lives with his smiling way. A friend from St. Catherine School days to Metairie Good Old Boys to the end.*

Michael O'Hare

Michael O'Hare - October 06, 2021 at 10:31 PM



“ *Barbara Family, Keith, Barbara, and I are so sorry to hear of Sam's passing. Sam was definitely one of a kind. We remember his fun-loving ways at St Lawrence Fairs, times at the beach and with the Men's Club, etc. We offer our deepest sympathy. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Please accept our condolences.*

Marion Ballas jr - October 05, 2021 at 09:59 AM



“ *Truly Sam is one of the best Christian men I have ever known. I am proud to have worked with him for many years and happy to have him call me "friend". He will be missed, but never forgotten. One can never forget greatness and kindness, the spreading of Sam The Candy Man.....Thank you Sam for bringing your smile to so many.*

Patrick Kelly Kielkucki - October 01, 2021 at 07:07 PM

JL

“ To the family of Sam Barbara,
My late husband, Maurice Legrand, considered Sam his best friend through St. Aloysius and Loyola. His memories of Sam were filled with stories of fun, laughter and ideas. He admired Sam's dedication to faith and valued him as the best kind of friend anyone could have. I am sorry for your loss, and pray that his stories continue to be told to inspire the young ones to walk in his footsteps with pride. Rest in peace - and happiness!

janet Legrand, Corsicana, Texas

Janet Legrand - October 01, 2021 at 06:00 PM

AW

“ I am so sorry to hear about Mr. Sam. He would stop by St. Joan of Arc School in LaPlace and visit when he was in the area. We bought many pencils from Mr. Sam for our pencil machine. Sending prayers for the family. He was a wonderful man, so kind, always had time to stop and share a story. God bless him!

Abby Wickboldt - September 30, 2021 at 09:52 AM

JC

“ Mr Sam was an inspiration to us all. His work ethic was amazing his love of life and his family was beautiful. He will be missed by so many. God certainly received a beautiful soul. May God continue to bless his family as they continue Mr Sam's legacy in life. It is said that all of us should leave this world a better place then when we entered it. Mr Sam certainly did that. "Well done my good and faithful servant “.

Joe and Josnna Cancienne - September 30, 2021 at 08:30 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



L.A. Muhleisen & Son Funeral Home - September 29, 2021 at 07:37 PM