



## William "Terry" Fernandez

September 10, 1942 - February 4, 2025

We little knew that morning that God would call your name. With heavy hearts, we say goodbye to the most amazing man, who left behind a legacy of love, kindness, and strength that will carry on in all who knew him.

Terry was born in Miami, Florida on September 10, 1942, and passed away on February 4, 2025, in Orlando, Florida. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Sandra Neilson Fernandez; daughter Traci Tricoci and her husband Mario; his beloved 3 grandsons, Luca, Cristiano and Nico; sisters Tonda Volz, Tawny Rios and several nieces, nephews, cousins, grand nieces and grand nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, William and Vivian Fernandez, and brother Torre.

Terry graduated from Hialeah High School in 1960. He attended Pearl River Junior College in Mississippi on a football scholarship. Against all odds, Terry's Pearl River football team (dubbed "The Dream Team" by football legend and coach, Dobie Holden) won the State and National Championships. Terry was later recruited on a football scholarship by the University of Southwestern Louisiana (USL) in Lafayette. At USL, he met his wife Sandra. After college, he was drafted by the Washington Redskins. He went on to play for the Montreal Alouettes, Norfolk Neptunes, and the Orlando Panthers, eventually being inducted into the AFA Semi-Pro Football Hall of Fame. He was subsequently called up by the San Diego Chargers before retiring from

football.

In 1970, Terry began his DEA career under the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs in Miami, Florida. His assignments included Jacksonville, Orlando, Tucson, and Washington, DC. He was later appointed the DEA Country Attache to the American Embassy in Quito, Ecuador. Upon his return to the States, he was assigned to El Paso, and Shreveport, LA, where he retired in 1996. Terry went on to work for HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area) in Brownsville, TX, before moving back to Orlando as the HIDTA Director, where he retired again in 2013, after 43 years in law enforcement to spend more time playing golf and being with his grandsons. Terry often said he loved working in law enforcement so much that he would have paid the government to allow him to work.

Despite his fascinating and fulfilling career, Terry found the most joy through his family and friends. Terry was the epicenter of his family. His heart was as big as his stature, his demeanor gentle, and his love boundless. He was a man of extraordinary warmth and generosity, always putting family first. Terry was the best father who ever lived and he was the greatest "Nampa" in the world. He poured all his time into his grandsons and enveloped them in love. Terry was his grandsons' biggest cheerleader, mentor, and safe haven. He was nothing short of their hero. His presence in their lives was an abundant, never-ending gift. The boys are beyond blessed to carry on the traits, values and solid character of their perfect Nampa. He truly lives on through his grandsons.

Terry never met a stranger, nor forgot a friend, and he had a wicked sense of humor. Terry's devotion to his friends defined his character. He maintained his friendships because he really valued them. A round of golf with good friends amounted to a perfect day. The family had a standing dinner with the former Panther football team, a former law enforcement group, and friends he met

along the way. His was truly a life well lived.

A Celebration of Life will be held Sunday, April 6, 2025 from 12-3 pm at the Dubsdread Country Club Historic Ballroom, 549 W. Par St., Orlando, FL. Remarks will begin at 1:30 pm. We invite all who knew him to join us.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the charity of your choice.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

APR 6. 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Historic Dubsdread Ballroom  
549 W Par Street  
Orlando, FL 32804

*Remarks will start at 1:30 PM*

# Tribute Wall



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of William "Terry" Fernandez.

April 02, 2025 at 05:53 PM



“ Love's Journey was purchased for the family of William "Terry" Fernandez.



April 02, 2025 at 05:53 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of William "Terry" Fernandez.

March 31, 2025 at 12:09 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of William "Terry" Fernandez.



March 31, 2025 at 12:09 PM

GA

“ *Gene Gatwood and Charlie Amacker purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of William "Terry" Fernandez.*



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**Gene Gatwood and Charlie Amacker** - March 23, 2025 at 01:18 PM

BR

“ *Sandra & family, Sad to hear of your loss. Terry was a talented member of the 1960s era USL Ragin Cajun football team. A great teammate who will always be remembered fondly. RIP, Terry. Bert Resweber*

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**Bert Resweber** - March 06, 2025 at 02:01 PM

SF

*Thank you, Bert. USL was a very important time of our lives and he remembered you all fondly.*

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**Sandra Fernandez** - March 27, 2025 at 10:40 AM

JS

*Sandra, so sorry to see this. I was just checking to see where he was. We played football youth league from 9 years old through High School. He was a good friend.*

*Jerry Simpkins*

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**Jerry Simpkins** - November 24, 2025 at 07:25 PM