



Sidney (Sid) Blanks

April 29, 1941 - December 12, 2021

Sidney (Sid) Blanks, former Texas A&I football player and seven-year NFL running back, passed away on Sunday evening in his home in Webster, Texas near Houston, where he was surrounded by his loving caregivers. Sid was 80 years old.

Sid, the youngest of 10 children, was born in Del Rio, Texas on April 29, 1941, and raised by his parents, Roscoe and Leona. In 1960, Hall of Fame Head Football Coach Gil Steinke offered Sid a football scholarship to play at Texas A&I University. Sid's acceptance made him the first African American to play at an integrated school on a football scholarship in the state of Texas. In 1989, Steinke told the Houston Chronicle, "We integrated football in Texas. We had Sid Blanks before anyone else integrated." In spite of being the only African American player on the football team, Sid would eventually lead as team captain.

Sid went on to become an All-American member of the Texas A&I football team from 1960 through 1963 before he was drafted by the Houston Oilers in 1964 where he would begin his American Football League (AFL)/National Football League (NFL) career. His success continued as a pro which led to Sid being selected to the 1965 AFL All Star game. Before the All Star game was played in New Orleans, La. Sid took part in a player boycott that was triggered by racist acts targeted at African American players who were to play

in the All Star game. The boycott was so impactful that the game was ultimately moved from New Orleans to Houston, Tx.

Sid's charm off the field was magnetic in the Houston community. In 1967 he spent a significant amount of time with both Muhammad Ali and Ernie Terrell leading up to their Heavyweight Championship fight that took place in the Houston Astrodome on February 6, 1967.

He went on to play professional football for a total of eight seasons. He played seven seasons (1964-1970) in the NFL and one season (1974) in the World Football League (WFL). Sid was inducted into the Texas A&I Hall of Fame (1981), Lone Star Conference Hall of Fame (2002), and Texas Black Sports Hall of Fame (2011).

After his playing career, Sid spent an inordinate amount of time volunteering and coaching his sons with the South Main Mustangs in little league football in Houston, TX. In 1986 Sid founded a successful sports agency, representing both NFL and National Basketball Association (NBA) players. His roster of clients included his youngest son Lance who he guided to the 1990 NBA draft where he was selected in the first round by the Detroit Pistons.

In 2015, the San Felipe Exes, through the town of Del Rio, built a park in honor of Sid's life and legacy. Sidney's accomplishments in Texas helped pave the way for many people, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, to follow in his footsteps. Sidney is considered one of Del Rio's first community legends. He was loved for his steadfast leadership, soft-spoken manner, and loyal commitment to family and friends. His ability to speak Spanish fluently helped him connect with people and build strong bonds in his community. In one of Sid's last public interviews, in the book "Black Man in the Huddle" (published in 2019), Sid reflected positively on his time at San Felipe High School growing up in Del Rio and how the "barrio"

helped develop him for later success in life.

Sid is survived by his sons Sidney Junior and Lance, their mother, Clarice, and his four grandchildren, Courtney, Riley, Tatum, and Bryn. Sid and his family have made a significant investment in the Del Rio community over the past decade through real estate, community building and more. Sugarbear Estates, established in 2020 in South Del Rio, was founded by Sid's son, Lance, to live as a physical remembrance of Sid, whose nickname was Sugarbear. The estate was originally built the same year Sid was born in 1941 and it has long been a staple in the community.

With a deep passion for the people and history of the Del Rio community, Sid's family has and will continue to invest in the town that will always be his home.

Visitation will be held on Sunday, December 19, 2021 from 5 to 9 p.m. in the Trinity Chapel of Faith.

A Chapel Service is scheduled for Monday, December 20, 2021 at 10 a.m. in the funeral home Chapel. Burial will follow at Westlawn Cemetery.

A Remembrance Gathering will be held after the burial at the "Sidney Blanks Park", located at 215 Bridge St. in Del Rio. All are welcomed to attend and share memories of Sid.

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC **19**. 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM (CT)

Trinity Mortuary
206 Kings Way
Del Rio, TX 78840
(830) 775-2230
info@trinitymortuary.com
<https://www.trinitymortuary.com>

Celebration of Life

DEC **20**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Trinity Mortuary
206 Kings Way
Del Rio, TX 78840
(830) 775-2230
info@trinitymortuary.com
<https://www.trinitymortuary.com>

Graveside Service

DEC **20**. 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

Westlawn Cemetery
1313 W. 2nd St.
Del Rio, TX 78840

Remembrance Gathering

DEC **20**. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Sidney Blanks Park
215 Bridge St.
Del Rio , TX 78840

Tribute Wall

MA

“ I knew Sidney from high school football. Sidney was a year ahead so played with Sidney for two years. He was a quiet and nice guy. I played right side guard. I remember on one game at San Felipe that I was a pulling guard and I blocked for an end run. Sidney scored the touchdown and we celebrated. Sidney had the football on one hand celebrating and picked me up with his other arm. I weighed all of 115 pounds 5'6" tall. I remember and will never forget what a super nice guy Sidney was. I kept track on his football career at A & I and with the Houston Oilers. My brother Fred told me about Sidney passing. I t brought back memories of Del Rio and San Felipe. My bother Jose Angel and I played with Sidney our sophomore and junior years. Years pass and sometimes memories fade, but I will always remember Sidney.

amadeo vitela - (aka mayo) Los Lunas New Mexico

mayo - December 24, 2021 at 09:27 AM

MS

“ OUR DEEPEST CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY. MAY HIS LIFE BE AN EXAMPLE TO ALL OUR YOUNG ATHLETES OF WHAT THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH IN LIFE IF THEY SET THEIR MIND TO IT WITH THE HELP OF GOD, FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT. DIOS TO BENDIGA Y TE RECIBA EN SUS BRAZOS. QUE EN PAZ DESCANSES SIDNEY BLANKS. FAMILY OF MR. AND MRS. HENRY G. GOMEZ SR. 🌟🎁💖🏠💖



MARY ALICE AND HENRY G. GOMEZ, SR. - December 18, 2021 at 12:13 AM

MP

R.I.P. Sidney Blanks.

Mario Perales - December 19, 2021 at 12:41 PM

CB

My son's , granddaughter's and I would like to thank San Felipe and the entire city of Del Rio for your support and kindness as our State Legend Sidney (Sid) Blanks) was layed to rest . 💕🙏🙏

Clarice Blanks - December 21, 2021 at 10:51 AM



Sid, good friend and classmate--all around sports and school activities---my familia -- el barrio de San Fe, will miss you, Nolo and Rosalina, from -----Santa Barbara, Ca.

Arnoldo Gonzalez - December 24, 2021 at 08:46 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Sidney (Sid) Blanks.



December 17, 2021 at 04:35 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Sidney (Sid) Blanks.



December 17, 2021 at 01:04 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Sidney (Sid) Blanks.



December 17, 2021 at 12:22 PM

CB

“ *My condolences to the Blanks family. I have heard so many stories about Mr. Blanks from my father, Dick Watson. May God wrap his arms around all of you and bring you comfort during this time.*
Blessings,
Cindy Bishop

Cindy Bishop - December 17, 2021 at 11:09 AM

JM

“ *I work for Javelina Nation, but I never had the chance to meet Mr. Blanks. But his LEGEND is steeped in campus lore. Players that played with Sid lead with that important fact and then share a Sid Blanks story. When we share our campus history, we tell of Sid’s groundbreaking role in the integration of college football in the State of Texas and because of this we have three Pro-football Hall of Famers – Gene Upshaw, Darrell Green and John Randle. Houston Javelinas tell of watching Sid play as an Oiler. Sid was on campus a few years ago for the dedication of the Gil Steinke statue. People were jockeying to have their picture made with Sid. At our Homecoming Distinguished Alumni Awards dinner and auction, a few of Sid’s pro-football player cards were in the auction. A bidding war ensued, especially because of the odd-sized card in the set. As we approach our campus Centennial in a few short years, Sid will be at the top of the list when we recount our athletic points of pride. Rest in Peace Mr. Blanks. ¡Jalisco!*
Jeff McLain, Office of Giving and Alumni Relations



Jeffery McLain - December 17, 2021 at 10:06 AM

Gloria
Sotelo

“ I too lived on Bridge Street. Sidney's dad, Mr. Roscoe, would always come visit my dad Manuel and share the happenings in the barrio. Sidney was a very handsome and respectful guy. My niece Eva was a very close friend of his. When we found out he was playing for the Houston Oilers, I immediately let our kinfolk living in Palacios know that one of our neighbor's son was now playing football with their Oilers football team, It certainly didn't take long for Sid to become a favorite of our kinfolk.
My sincerest condolences and heartfelt prayers to the Blanks family.



Gloria Sotelo - December 17, 2021 at 01:07 AM

HA

“ My heartfelt condolences to family , loved ones and friends, may the Lord bring you peace in this difficult time .



Holly Adams - December 17, 2021 at 12:56 AM

KD

“ When I first met Sid, I had finished my last year in football, and coach Gil Steinke brought Sid, who was playing for the Houston Oilers, with him to E.E. Worthing High School to recruit players. There was 3 of us called to the gymnasium office and with our H.S. coaches we all met. Coach Steinke and Sid was from Texas A&I, down in Kingsville, Texas. Well, the questions were not directed at me initially and I was in a chair, leaning up against the wall but I was aware that Sid was a pro football player. I noticed how sharp and well dressed and articulate he was and that sort of impressed me. I know, Coach Steinke encouraged Sid to keep in touch with me and so did Coach. Coach Steinke, being the Head Coach and Sid being a pro football player sent Texas A&I right to the top. Myself, being a black quarterback, I talked to Sid quite a bit on how living in Kingsville, Texas would be since, he was the first Black football player to play at A&I, the Lone Star Conference and at an integrated college in Texas. I, also, would talk to him about Coach Steinke saying that I would play quarterback. Sid, said. "If that's what he said---that's what he meant". Sid was very influential, along with Coach Steinke that I signed with his Alma Mater Texas A&I. We developed a close friendship ever since. I know his sons well, Sid Jr. and Lance and my heartfelt feelings and condolences from the Douglas family (Karl, Kord and Arthur) to the entire Blanks family.

Karl Douglas - December 16, 2021 at 10:01 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Sidney (Sid) Blanks.



December 16, 2021 at 12:52 PM