

Harlan Christopher Scales

Our beloved Harlan Christopher Scales, 58, died in the arms of his wife on the 4th of May, 2022 after a short but valiant battle with pancreatic cancer. He was born on the 13th of January, 1964 to Marcelyn Scales in the Bronx, NY. He and his mother moved to Austin when he was just six to live close to his maternal grandmother and many other family members. Harlan liked to claim, “Austin is MY town.” He prided himself on being raised in East Austin in the Rosewood Courts projects. Harlan came from extremely humble circumstances. He wanted for a lot as a kid and sometimes went hungry. He liked to say that his dream, as a kid, was to someday live in a place that had central air conditioning and heat. Circumstances notwithstanding, Harlan had an optimism that would not quit and he loved people. He could, and did, talk to anyone within earshot. He had friends of every stripe and from all walks of life. He’d greet his wife every day with an exuberant “Good Morning!” and, to her frequently frosty reply of “what’s good about it?” he would always say, “It’s a great day to be alive!” Once, out of the blue, he was warmly greeted in a movie theatre line by someone he had only recently investigated and ruled out as a suspect in a sexual assault case. People just liked him. They told him all of their personal business and trusted him to keep their confidence. He did not disappoint.

He worked hard and from a young age, first at McDonald’s and then at an Exxon gas station, to keep the lights on and food on the table for him and his mother. He graduated from Crockett High School in 1982. He wanted a college degree and he earned one, graduating from Texas State University with a Criminal Justice degree in 1996. He liked to tell people he was on the “10-year collegiate plan.” He thought he had the temperament to make a good police officer—and he was right. He was commissioned with the Austin Police Department in May of 1987 and was promoted through the ranks to Lieutenant over his 28 years of service. He loved his job. He worked side-by-side with so many of his real-life heroes and was proud to count them among his dearest friends.

He married Kathryn Arnold on the 4th of November, 1995 and together they raised two boys. Simon, born in 1998, and Owen, born in 2001, were Harlan’s pride and joy. His bragging knew no bounds. The boys were frequently delightful and occasionally a handful. Whenever they acted up and Kathryn would ask, in exasperation, “what are we going to do with them?!”, Harlan would always respond: “We are just going to love them.”

After retiring from APD in 2014, Harlan enjoyed relaxing at home and working in his yard. For a time, he served on the parish council for his church and he got great satisfaction from volunteering at his church's food pantry and for the St. Vincent DePaul Society.

Harlan is survived by his wife Kathryn and his two children, Simon and Owen. He is also survived by Sharon Scales Mooney and Alicia Scales Rushing, two cousins with whom he shared an especially deep bond, his mother-in-law Nina Arnold, as well as numerous other family members and friends. He is preceded in death by his mother, Marcelyn Scales as well as other family members including his aunt and uncle, Gladys and Al Fielder, both of whom took great pride in Harlan and doted on him whenever the opportunity presented itself.

A gathering of family and friends for visitation will be held Thursday, May 19, 2022 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at Cook-Walden/Capital Parks Funeral Home, 14501 North IH 35, Pflugerville, Texas 78660. The Funeral Mass will be held on Friday, May 20, 2022 at 11:00am at St. Louis King of France Catholic Church, 7601 Burnet Road, Austin, Texas 78757. Immediately following the Mass, Harlan will be laid to rest at Cook-Walden/Capital Parks in Pflugerville.

The family would like to express deepest thanks to dear friend Beth Payan, Harlan's medical oncologist Dr. Kathryn Hudson, his surgical oncologist Dr. Shaun McKenzie, the entire medical staff at Texas Oncology, the medical staff on the 5th floor and in ICU at St. David's Hospital and the medical staff on the 4th floor at Seton Medical Center. If desired, and in lieu of flowers, friends may make memorial contributions to the St. Louis King of France Catholic Church Food Pantry at <https://www.wesharegiving.org/App/Form/eb84f581-ebo8-4269-b499-e43089290f9d> or to the Society of St. Vincent DePaul at Donate - Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Diocesan Council of Austin - Austin, TX (ssvdp.org).

To share words of comfort and memories of Harlan with his family, please visit www.cookwaldencapitalparks.com.