

Martin Martinus Beijer



April 16, 1959

*"The Music in Heaven
Just Got a Little Sweeter"*

-Peter Hester

August 15, 2013



Life is a journey. As we travel along that road, we often meet people who shine more than others. People who have an effervescent smile, a comfortable handshake, and a welcoming hug; people who you just know will be tremendous friends; people who you would like to emulate for their integrity, devotion, loyalty and generosity. Martin Beijer was one of those people. He was a shining star.

Martin Martinus Beijer was born on April 16, 1959, as a Netherlands native, born in the city of Lochem. He was still an infant when the Beijer family left Europe to immigrate to the United States.

This family of seven, headed by Jan and Leonie Beijer, arrived at Ellis Island in October of that same year. They then headed straight to Indiana to stay with Uncle Johannes Beijer and his family. Two cold and icy northeast winters, were two too many for the Beijer family. In the summer of 1962, Jan and Leonie loaded up the six kids (yes, now there were six!) into the 1954 Ford sedan, and headed west to California on Route 66. The family finally settled in Pasadena where Martin attended Madison and Longfellow Elementary Schools, Washington Junior High and John Muir High School (Class of '77).

As a child and teenager, he boxed for many years, winning several matches and tournaments through the Junior Olympics and Golden Glove circuit. As he matured, he chose to take a different route and moved on to become a husband and father.

Martin married Raylene Smith in 1979, and shortly after had their first child, Meisje Nicole in 1980. Alonzo Satú then followed in 1983, and they completed the family unit in 1991 with Ceora Monique. Martin was a devoted father and husband, often working extra hours and multiple shifts to ensure that his family was financially secure. By trade, he was a graphic designer, working in this field all of his adult life. He enjoyed the technical and artistic aspects of his career, but his profession is not what defined him. He used to say we should "work to live, not live to work". He lived this motto as exemplified by the many interests and passions he had.

As the family grew, he moved them to the Santa Clarita Valley, often spending weekends doing his woodworking in the garage and fixing up the house. When he was not occupied by the household duties, he often took the family to music festivals to see his favorite musicians.

He had a strong passion for music, which began when he was a child. He loved the drums. He saved his money and bought his first drum set, a used one, while he was in high school. He would play for hours, listening to his favorite songs in his room until he could accompany the song perfectly (or until Mama and Papa told him to stop). A common sight was Martin sitting at his drum set, a few friends sitting on his bed, and the stereo blasting tunes, old or new, while he played along. In his later adult years, Martin became fascinated with Latin Jazz and took upon himself to become a congero. Presented by Poncho Sanchez himself, he received his first set of congas and was the understudy to Robertito Melendez. He always wanted to be in a band, and being the determined man he was, he made it happen becoming the cofounder of the L.A. Mambo Combo Latin Jazz Ensemble.

With all his passions and interests, he still found time to return to study self-defense in the form of Pentjak Silat, the Indonesian style of martial arts. So meticulous and dedicated was he in these studies, that he rose to become a Guru.

Besides doting over his grandchildren: Hennesy Valerie, Jayden Alonzo, Micaiah Tsion, and Menah Leonie; Martin's latest passion was karaoke. He sang just about every weekend, competing in contests and making new friends. Family gatherings became a karaoke party with Martin leading the way. He loved singing and tried to get everyone involved in the act; no matter if you could sing or not, the goal was to have fun.

On the early morning of August 15, 2013, Martin Beijer could no longer fight his battle with colon cancer. He fought every step of the way, keeping his good humor and high spirit alive. We have lost a shining star, and although our hearts are heavy, Martin would not have wanted us to grieve. He was a firm believer in living your life to the fullest, doing the things you most enjoy with good company. He would've wanted us to celebrate his life with singing, dancing, conversation and laughter. So tonight, and on every other clear night, take a look up into the heavens and smile...maybe he'll wink back at you.

Perhaps they are not stars, but rather openings in heaven
where the love of our lost ones pours through and shines down upon us
to let us know they are happy

- Eskimo Proverb

