

With gratitude and in loving memory

Sean McCrackine

*A great public servant and friend of the Council
for more than two decades.*



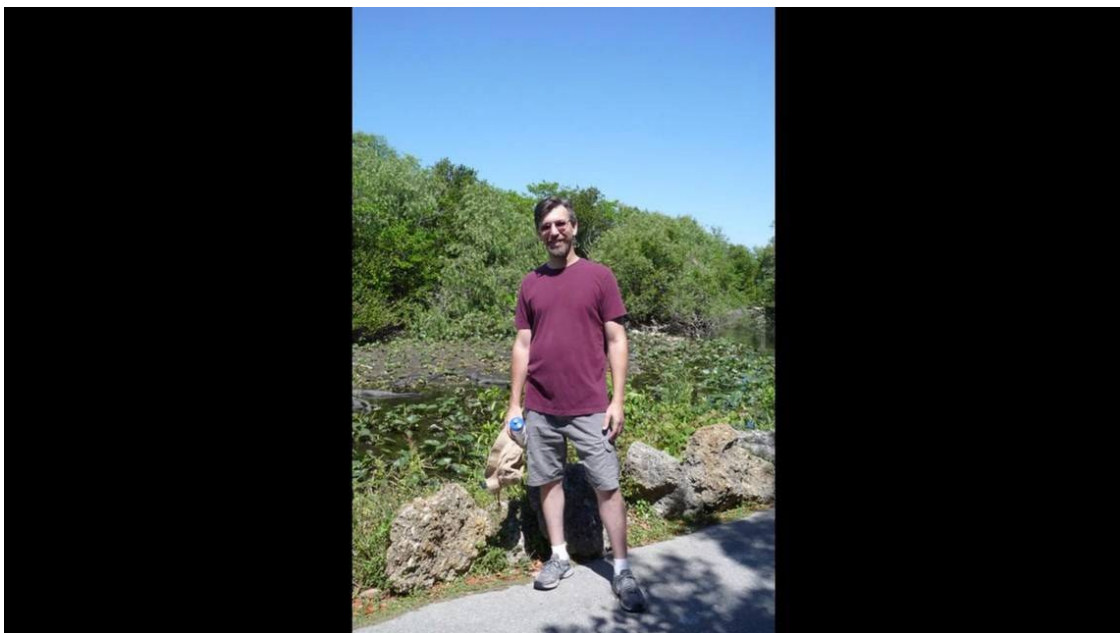
1971 - 2024

LOCAL OBITUARIES

‘A quiet warrior.’ Sean McCrackine, top environmental aide to the mayor, dies at 53

BY ALEX HARRIS

UPDATED FEBRUARY 06, 2024 12:25 PM



Sean McCrackine, a longtime environmental policy aide in Miami-Dade, is remembered as a “quiet warrior.” *Lou McCrackine*

All across Miami-Dade, there are parks, bike lanes, wetlands and dozens of policies that bear the fingerprints, if not the name, of Sean McCrackine.

A longtime aide to Mayor Daniella Levine Cava with thirty years of work in environmental policy in the county, McCrackine was a familiar — and usually silent presence in the background of most environmental meetings.

Friends and colleagues called him “a quiet warrior” for all things green in Miami- Dade, his hometown that he never left and never stopped trying to improve.

McCrackine died Jan. 28 after a battle with cancer. He was 53.

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While he avoided the public spotlight, McCrackine was known for his encyclopedic knowledge of environmental issues in the county, his wonky approach to solving them and his warm relationships with fellow environmentalists.

He was Levine Cava's closest advisor, and last held the title of her director of policy for the county. She described him as a kind, patient and thoughtful colleague with deep bonds to the community.

"He always identified ways we could make a difference, things that could really move the needle," she said. "I think Sean really created a lot of hope for people who cared about all these issues."

The two of them first met while he worked for former commissioner Katy Sorenson, a seven-year stint that resulted in a lifelong friendship between McCrackine and Sorenson. It was his second stop in his nearly 30-year county career, following a decade working for the Department of Environmental Resources management. After another few years working for Commissioner Jean Monestime, McCrackine joined Levine Cava full-time.



Sean McCrackine, second from left, poses with Miami-Dade County government staffers and Mayor Daniella Levine Cava. *Lou McCrackine*

He provided the environmental chops, and connections, that Levine Cava said propelled her to pursue ambitious sustainability and resilience policies, topics McCrackine championed long before they became as popular as they are today.

"He was essential," she said. "We have had major success because of his persistence, because of his knowledge, because of the partnerships we had in the community."

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His interest and influence spread from the annual Baynanza cleanup to the county's push for more solar energy to converting the county's fleet to electric vehicles. He helped preserve and restore several parks, including Charles Burr Park, Debbie Curtin Park, Briar Bay Park and Devon Aire Park.

His greatest hits list, Levine Cava said, is pages long. And it continues. At a groundbreaking ceremony for improvements to the county's central district wastewater treatment plant last week, the Mayor reminded the crowd of attendees about Sean's impact.

"All week I've been meeting with department heads and thinking, this was Sean's project. And this," she nodded toward the wastewater plant around her, "was Sean's project."

Levine Cava said she's picked up a new habit lately of concluding staff meetings by asking, 'what would Sean do?'



Sean McCrackine and his wife, Lou McCrackine, enjoyed kayaking in South Florida. *Lou McCrackine*

"That will be his legacy," she said. "To not give up, to have a clear path. These seemingly small changes are moving the needle on our resilience in Miami-Dade County and we have to accelerate our efforts, and we should do it in gratitude and in tribute."

His dedication to improving and cherishing the place he lived stretched from professional to personal. His wife, Lou McCrackine, said he was a capable handyman who could repair anything in their home, the same one Sean was born and raised in. His addition, once they started their family there, was a flourishing butterfly garden in the backyard full of native pollinator-friendly plants.

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“He did not like other people to fix things he could,” she said.

The pair met through his mother, a teacher at his alma mater, Miami Southridge Senior High, where Lou also taught. It was a brief romance, with a proposal on a scenic corner of the beach of Manuel Antonio Park in Costa Rica. They married at Alice Wainwright Park in Miami in 1997 and celebrated their anniversary every year they could in nature.



They were regulars in the Everglades, paddling through Florida Bay, biking Shark Valley or meandering along the Long Pine Key Trail, often with their kids, Brandon and Olivia.

A visit to a national park was a special thrill for the McCrackine family, she said. It became the theme of their home office, complete with a McCrackine family park badge crowned with a Sasquatch, a loving jab at their son.

Sean spent many hours in that office, Lou said, as well as at county events all over the region. He even joined the mayor on her trip to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland — a career highlight.

“Work was not like work for him, it was life and love,” Lou said. “It solidified and rooted him to the community.”

In his final weeks, as his son shuttled him back and forth to medical trials in Orlando, he chose to stay involved in the county’s ongoing meetings about various environmental problems, like the fate of the county’s waste incineration plant.

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Sean McCrackine, his wife, Lou, son, Brandon and daughter, Olivia, were socially active in issues they cared about, including gun violence prevention. *Lou McCrackine*

Despite his deep interest in his work, Lou said Sean was a dedicated family man, “an incredible role model, not just as a father but as a partner.”

He recently introduced them to the Patch of Heaven Sanctuary in Homestead, and Lou and her children visited a few days after he passed. As they wandered through the garden, her kids kept pointing to various flowers and trees and asking their mother to identify them. “I should have listened all those years when he was explaining it to me, all these plants,” she said. “I just kept saying, oh, Sean would know.”

Sean is survived by his wife, Lou, his son, Brandon, his daughter, Olivia and his sister, Brandee. The family is working on the details of a service and encouraged any donations in Sean’s honor to organizations he supported, including the Southern Poverty Law Center, Doctors Without Borders or the Miami Foundation.

This story was originally published February 6, 2024, 5:30 AM.



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Sean McCrackine

Miami-Dade County Mayor and Commission

Director of Policy, Mayor Daniella Levine Cava

Miami-Dade County

November 2020 – January 2024

Chief of Planning and Policy

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava

November 2014 – November 2020

Legislative Director

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jean Monestime

November 2010 – November 2014

Environmental Policy Aide

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Katy Sorenson

January 2003 – November 2010

Miami-Dade Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM)

Communications Program Manager

June 1996 – January 2003

Pollution Control Inspector 1

April 1996 – June 1996

Acting Public Information Officer

February 1996 – June 1996

Education

FIU Master's Degree in Public Administration, 2014

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