

In Loving Memory of Stephanes Petrus “Faan” Naudé

2 May 1941 – 4 April 2026

Born on 2 May 1941 in King Williamstown to Ben and Gertie (née De Lange) Naudé, Stephanes Petrus Naudé, better known as Faan, lived a life marked by resilience, service, humour and deep love.

As the first-born grandchild in both the De Lange and Naudé families, Faan grew up surrounded by women, passed lovingly from one aunt to another across the family table. His lifelong affection for women and companionship was rooted in those earliest years.

At the age of two, Faan contracted polio, a devastating illness that affected his mobility but never defined the man he became. When he was six, a school nurse recognised that reconstructive orthopaedic surgery could improve his quality of life. At the time, the family lived in Breyten, Mpumalanga, and Faan spent two years at the Hope Training Home in Johannesburg undergoing treatment and surgery. One leg remained shorter and thinner than the other, and throughout his life he wore different-sized shoes. Only later in life could he afford to buy separate pairs. Until then, thick socks helped make up the difference.

Coming from a family of talented sportsmen, Faan longed to play rugby. Although this was not possible, he remained close to the game as a school linesman, determined simply to be part of the field and the camaraderie. He played cricket at school and later took up wrestling, becoming a South African champion while studying at Stellenbosch University. In later years he played squash and remained physically active throughout his life, walking on Table Mountain, attending gym regularly and chopping wood to maintain his upper-body strength. That strength served him well in later years, when he became dependent on crutches, and again during his recovery from quadruple bypass surgery.

Faan studied Social Work at Stellenbosch University under Professor Erica Theron. In the 1960s he moved with his young family to Krugersdorp, where he began a long career in local government, working mainly in Black communities during the apartheid era. He later moved to the Eastern Cape with the Cape Provincial Administration before finally settling in the Western Cape as Regional Manager.

He was never afraid to challenge injustice. In 1990/1991, he defied instructions from then-Administrator Kobus Meiring to criminalise the destitute squatters of Hout Bay. Instead, he helped establish Imizamo

Yethu as the first formally recognised informal settlement in the Western Cape, with a Site and Service plan that later became a blueprint for integrated development and service delivery elsewhere.

Faan also played a leading role in negotiations around local government demarcation in the Western Cape, spending countless hours with unions and community leaders to ensure equitable participation during South Africa's democratic transition. Disaster management later became part of his portfolio, overseeing responses to events such as the rebuilding of Meiringspoort and devastating fires in informal settlements that left thousands homeless.

One of his final great battles was advocating for dignified permanent housing after the devastating Joe Slovo fires in Langa. He believed passionately that people deserved proper homes, not temporary structures. Even now, decades later, the development remains unfinished, a reminder of how far ahead of his time he often was.

After a successful 45-year career, Faan stepped away from politics and public life. When diagnosed with prostate cancer, he once again refused to let illness define him. Instead, he became an example of courage and positivity in the face of adversity.

Retirement brought him closer to the things he loved most: gardening, the sea, travelling, and dreaming of becoming a chilli farmer. Together with his beloved Labrador, Skollie, he travelled far and wide in the famous "Red Bus", becoming something of a legend among friends, family and neighbours from the Eastern Free State to the Eastern Cape and the West Coast.

For 35 years, we shared a partnership built not on paperwork, but on commitment, loyalty, endurance, respect and love. We faced life together, the joys and the hardships alike. We accepted one another fully, flaws and all, both of us strong and independent in our own ways.

He supported my own 30-year career in cancer care advocacy with unwavering encouragement. When I left government service in 1996, he told me:
"You need to remain relevant, because one day I will no longer be here to take care of you."

Those words reflected the kind of man he was, wise, practical, loving and steadfast to the very end.

The last 18 months of his life were not easy. Together we faced Covid, pneumonia, congestive heart failure, diminished hearing, reduced mobility and declining cognitive ability. Yet every morning he woke with gratitude and a smile, thankful for another day together.

When the time came to make the decision not to prolong life artificially, he accepted it peacefully, understanding that life had become increasingly difficult. The loss of Skollie in December 2025 deeply traumatised us both. He truly was our child. We comforted one another with the thought that Skollie was simply paving the way for him.

Faan's life came peacefully to an end on 4 April 2026 at 4:30am at Vincent Pallotti Hospital in Pinelands. It was a privilege beyond words to be with him in his final moments.

He leaves behind a legacy of dignity, courage, compassion, humour and unwavering strength.

Rest in peace, my love.

Salome Meyer, May 2026