



Sheldon Bass

AUG 25, 1932 - MAR 17, 2026



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Sheldon (Shelly) Bass (93) of Delray Beach, Florida, passed away on March 17, 2026, after a long period of physical decline. Shelly was predeceased by his wife, Sally, and is survived by his son Neil Bass and wife Leslie Meskin and their children Jessica and Adam.

Born and raised in East New York, Brooklyn, Shelly's life was one defined by resilience, determination, and love. Diagnosed with infant paralysis (polio) as a baby, doctors predicted Shelly would spend his life in a wheelchair by the time he was in his 40s. But Shelly had other plans. Despite the challenges of a permanently disfigured leg, he became an extraordinary athlete, excelling in punchball, handball, and roller skating. On the block, he was known as "Peewee," a name he embraced not just because of his stature, but in homage to the famous Brooklyn Dodger, Peewee Reese. By the time he was 13, Shelly's legendary punchball prowess earned him the title of the "2 Sewer Kid", no small feat for a kid named Peewee.

Shelly's competitive spirit was matched only by his knack for mischief. On his Bar Mitzvah day in 1945, he and his cousin Sam Kaplan snuck out of a lackluster party and ventured into midtown Manhattan. There, they saw the movie *Pride of the Marines* and were treated to a live jazz performance by the legendary Lionel Hampton. That night also marked the beginning of Shelly's lifelong love for billiards, a passion that saw him rise to a level so impressive that he even defeated the Mexican billiards champion.

Nathan Bass, an immigrant from Belarus, was far from pleased with his son's habit of hanging out in pool halls. Although Nathan had made an honest living working a range of jobs as a young man, he couldn't fathom why his son wouldn't just settle down, stop wasting time on billiards, and quit acting like a "trombenik", a layabout. Frustrated and curious, one night Nathan decided to follow his son, sneaking into one of the local pool halls where his son spent most of his evenings. Unseen, Nathan hunkered down in a shadowy corner, quietly watching the scene unfold.



As the night wore on, players came and went, each one bested by his son, who never lost his cool. His son, known around the pool hall as "Sam Bass," a nod to the notorious 19th-century outlaw, dismantled his opponents with ease, his skill at the table undeniable. As the stakes grew and the crowd swelled, the room buzzed with excitement, chants of "Go, Sam Bass!" echoing as he took down challenger after challenger.

By the end of the night, Nathan had seen enough. He stepped out of the shadows, catching his son completely off guard. His son, embarrassed at being caught in the act, braced for a reprimand. But instead, Nathan, a grin forming on his usually stern face, simply said, "Now I understand why you come here."

Shelly lived life with a fierce independence that extended well beyond the pool table. Despite doctors' warnings, he defied all odds, playing racquetball, paddle tennis, and pickleball into his 80s, long after most would have succumbed to physical limitations. Even after breaking both hips several times in his 90s, Shelly's relentless spirit pulled him through. Nothing, not even time, could slow him down.

A man of many talents, Shelly worked hard all his life, often juggling multiple jobs, sometimes clocking more than 100 hours in a week. His career was as diverse as it was impressive, with roles ranging from postal worker, hairdresser, and wig salesman, to health department administrator and clothing store manager. Remarkably, in all his years of work, Shelly never took a single sick day.

In the 1950s and 60s, one of Shelly's favorite spots was the iconic barbershop in East New York, located near the corner of Livonia and Williams Avenue, across from Fortunoff. It was a place where stories were shared and characters came to life: Harry "the Lammer" Pickman, Julie Needlenose, Sweet Ed Yudel, Joe "One Leg" Z, Whitey Kessler Rubirosa, and many more. It wasn't just a barbershop; it was a community of laughter, hijinks, and camaraderie.

In 1966, at the age of 34, Shelly's life changed forever when he met the love of his life, Sally, a beautiful, intelligent schoolteacher and Holocaust survivor. From the moment they met, Shelly knew she was the one, and four months later, they were married. Together, they built a life filled with love, laughter, and family, remaining married for 56 years until Mom's passing in 2023.



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In 1975, in a remarkable show of love and devotion, Shelly quit his 3 to 4-pack-a-day cigarette habit as an anniversary gift to Mom. Shortly after, he fulfilled his dream of owning his own business, Elmora Stationery, a greeting card and gift store in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Owning and running the store was never just about the work, it was about the connections he made, the stories he shared, and the community he helped build.

After raising his family in the Bronx and New Jersey, Shelly retired to Florida in 1996, but his energy and love for life never dimmed. His wit and charm made him the center of attention at every family gathering, where his quick jokes and stand-up routines were always a highlight.

Shelly's life was a testament to perseverance, love, and resilience. He defied the odds, broke the mold, and made his mark in a way only he could. His legacy will live on in the hearts of those who knew him, loved him, and laughed with him.

Rest in peace, Shelly. You ran the race your way, and what a race it was.



Events

Sheldon Bass

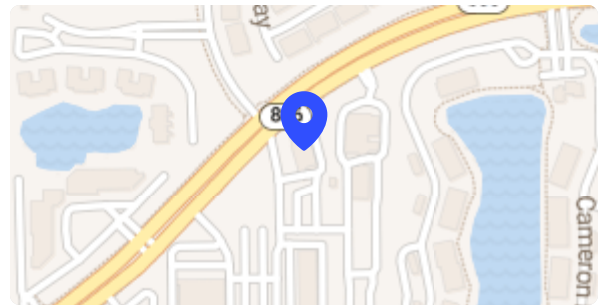
AUG 25, 1932 - MAR 17, 2026

Chapel Service

Friday, March 20, 2026

10:15 AM ET

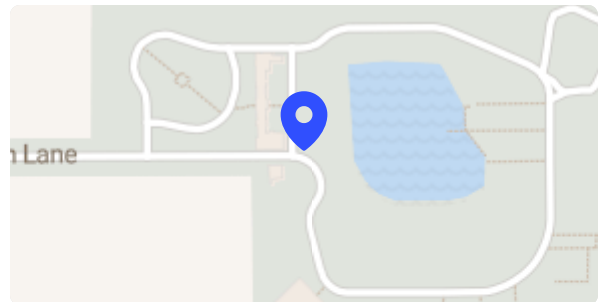
Beth Israel Memorial Chapel Delray Beach
5808 W. Atlantic Avenue, Delray Beach FL 33484



Cemetery Details

Eternal Light Memorial Gardens
11520 State Road 7, Boynton Beach FL 33473

(561) 600-9218





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Join us in honoring Sheldon by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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