



## Bethlie Paul

December 4, 1999 - October 12, 2025

I come from a place where breath, eyes and memory are one, a place from which you carry your past like the hair on your head. Where women return to their children as butterflies or as tears in the eyes of the statues that their daughters pray to.

- Haitian American author Edwidge Danticat  
From "Breath, Eyes, Memory"

It is with broken hearts that we mourn the passing of Bethlie Paul, 25, who passed away at University Hospital on Sun., Oct. 12 surrounded by family and friends. She was the Great Connector, the Sun and the Moon, the Straddler of Nations, the Diligent Daughter, the Most Loyal of Friends, the Most Caring Sister and the overall Enthusiastic Embracer of Life. Bethlie lived a sacred paradox : her years of suffering with the autoimmune disease lupus, plus injuries and trauma from the Haitian earthquake, did not hold her back from living a vibrant life marked by deep relationships, great joy and an ever-present quest for adventure. She spoke about her health with remarkable optimism, treating it like another challenge she was determined to overcome.

Bethlie's two most treasured relationships were with her mother Roselie and her now-11-year-old brother Leo. She referred to Roselie as her "hero and best friend" and was always checking in on her, bringing her flowers if she

sensed she needed cheering up. A family friend said she had never met anyone more devoted to her mother than Bethlie. Bethlie called Leo her “favorite person in the world.” She doted on him, planned his birthday celebrations, picked him up from school and encouraged him to be a diligent student and a thoughtful friend. She loved taking him to playdates and watching him play soccer, basketball and football.

To those who loved her, Bethlie was the embodiment of kindness and strength. She took pride in being her friends’ biggest cheerleader and defender. Bethlie graduated from Alamo Heights High School in 2018 and had been a longtime member of the AHHS Spurs Dance Team. In 2021, she graduated with honors with her associate’s degree in psychology from San Antonio College. She liked to hike, travel and learn about cultures of the world. Her dream was to help others heal from trauma and suffering and maybe one day write a book about her life that might uplift others.

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From a young age, Bethlie carried two homes in her heart. Born in Léogâne, Haiti, she grew up at Roselie’s side amid lush coconut palms and mango trees. Extended family lived together, and the generations of women in the household would shape her for years to come.

Bethlie’s life changed forever at age 10, when the January 2010 Haitian earthquake hit while she was at school. The quake, with its epicenter just a few miles from Léogâne, caused the concrete structure to collapse, trapping Bethlie and other students under the rubble.

Her uncle and others spent seven hours trying to dig her and others out. Once free, her family drove hours to find a hospital open to treat her severe leg injuries. For over a month, her family lived on site as doctors worked to save

her life. But sepsis was setting in, and they said amputation was likely.

In what her family counts as one miracle among countless others that would unfold in Bethlie's life: American paramedics working on relief efforts in the area approached Bethlie's family and another family from Port-au-Prince with a proposition: Bethlie and the other girl, Naika Etienne, also 10, could be flown on humanitarian parole to the United States for better medical treatment. But their families would have to stay behind.

Believing it was the girls' only chance to stay alive, both families said a heart-wrenching yes.

The decision would launch a trajectory where Christus Santa Rosa Children's Hospital helped heal Bethlie and Naika's injuries over many surgeries, much pain and many months. The two girls, strangers to begin with, grew as close as sisters. And what was predicted to be a 2-3 week ordeal before Bethlie was meant to return to Haiti in fact turned into several years of living with her U.S. host family, Steve Spriester, Nicole Foy and daughters Peyton, Tatum and Sloane. Now with four "sisters," Bethlie quickly began learning English through games, Hannah Montana marathons and late nights staying up giggling and trading stories.

But Bethlie was healing slowly and having several confounding and systemic health issues. She was soon diagnosed with lupus, which her mom said she'd been battling with even before the earthquake, from as early as age 6. Doctors determined that sending her back to Haiti could mean almost certain death. So the Foy-Spriesters successfully worked with many others to obtain permanent legal residency status for Bethlie and then to bring Roselie from Haiti to San Antonio in order to care for her.

Over the next 15 years in San Antonio and beyond, Bethlie achieved many of her lifelong dreams: including becoming an American citizen, working with children and traveling the world. Importantly, she returned to Haiti after helping raise funds to rebuild her family home there and to support students at her former school.

In her career, she worked as a flight attendant, a bookkeeper and a nonprofit children's care specialist, among other things. She lived with lupus but didn't let the illness define her. She had a passion for life that was boundless, and the strong morals and sense of adventure instilled in her as a child in Haiti motivated her as an adult.

Many who knew her were in awe of her ability to chase her goals while keeping a large circle of family and friends close. She was based in Denver while working with SkyWest Airlines and quickly formed another circle of friends there, all while keeping up with her friends at home and from high school and leaving a positive impact on coworkers and customers in each city she visited.

Bethlie often spoke about her main sources of strength amid so much struggle. They mostly came from staying grateful and connecting in a spiritual and a highly personal way to those who came before her. Bethlie knew and felt her ancestors were always near, rooting for her and helping make possible the many miracles in her life that changed the course of her family's history.

She modeled what it can mean to accept many seemingly opposing truths at once: like the ache of leaving one's homeland and the beauty of building a life in the United States; or the pain of enduring suffering while encouraging others to keep going. We will forever remember her smile, her spirit and the way she showed us that it's possible to hold sorrow and joy in the same hand while still reaching out to help others.

You will remain forever with us, Queen B.

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Bethlie was preceded in death by Cilius Louissaint, Ciannie Simon and Miracle Simon.

She is survived by William Louissaint, Jacques Louissaint, Roselene Louissaint, Varda Louissaint, Cianeze Louissaint, Fritz Paul, Lucie Simon, Maxime Simon, Carline Simon, Bettina Simon, Vanessa Simon and Claude Simon

The family is deeply grateful for the organizations and individuals below, as well as countless others:

University Health and UT San Antonio

University Presbyterian Church and its Children's Center

Bernadette Williams, St Fleur Cetoute, Ben and Florr

Richard Cimilien

Best friend Mariessa Nelson

David De La Rosa

Ausanka Dary and family

Nicole Foy and Steve, Peyton, Tatum and Sloane Spriester

Fred, Lori, Quatro, Natalie and Rocky Tips and Naika Etienne  
Mission Park Funeral Home  
Dick and Kristin Tips  
Drs. Ruth Berggren, Tyler Curiel and family Megan and Alex  
Nancy and Jed Maebius  
Healing the Children  
Medical Teams International  
Christus Health/Christus Santa Rosa  
Gordon Hartman and Marie Ferdinand  
Josh Gerstner, Mark Lewis and Larry Mahan  
The immigration firm of De Mott, Curtright and Armendariz  
Former U.S. Rep. Charlie Gonzalez and Susana Benavidez  
Many other mentors and friends

# Cemetery Details

## Mission Burial Park South

1700 SE Military Dr.  
San Antonio, TX 78214  
<http://www.missionparks.com>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **20**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels South  
1700 SE. Military Dr.  
San Antonio, TX 78214

## Funeral Service

OCT **21**. 11:00 AM (CT)

University Presbyterian Church  
300 Bushnell Ave  
San Antonio, TX

# Tribute Wall

SS

“ I lived down the street from the Spriester's growing up, and I attend UPC as well. I remember the day Bethlie first got here. I was about 10 years old and was learning French, so I attempted to talk to her in French because she spoke Haitian Creole 🙄♀️😭 I will never forget her infectious smile. We will miss you always, Bethlie.



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**Sarah Strybos** - October 20, 2025 at 10:03 PM

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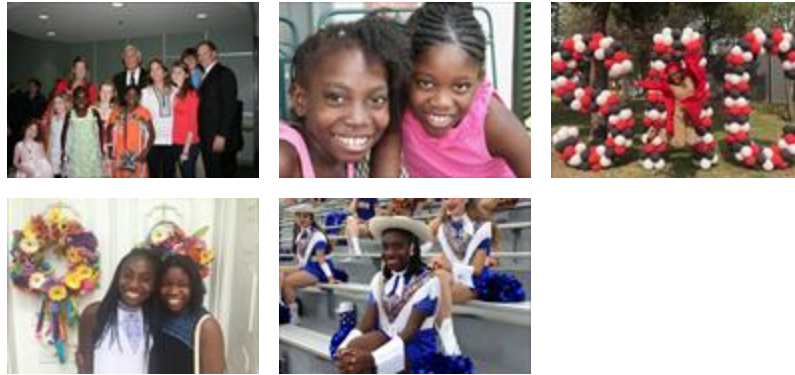
“ What a BEAUTIFUL STORY LORI!! What a TRUE BLESSING YOU ALL WERE TO EACH OTHER!! I am SOOOOOO SORRY for your tremendous loss, but sending love and prayers that the treasured memories will provide comfort.

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**Kim Brusenhan (Youngblood)** - October 20, 2025 at 09:10 PM

LT

“Bethlie lit up a room with her smile. We were lucky to be a part of her life. God blessed us with our time with Bethlie. Those memories will last our lifetime and beyond.



Lori Tips - October 19, 2025 at 09:44 PM



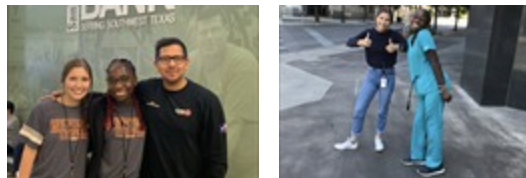
“Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bethlie Paul.



October 18, 2025 at 05:57 PM

CS

“I had the pleasure of working with Bethlie during our internship one summer at CPS Energy. From the moment we met, we instantly connected and became friends. She was such a positive, funny, and vibrant person—truly a bright light to everyone around her. She will be deeply missed.



Camryn Snoga - October 15, 2025 at 07:28 PM