

**EMILE LLEWELLYN**  
Skateboarder

Stunned mourners filled the community room of the Coast Hotel to pay final respects to the hotel's youngest adult resident, and one of its most likeable, Emile Llewellyn, found dead May 27 at 4 a.m. on the Octavia median strip near Market Street. His trusty skateboard lay nearby.

Mr. Llewellyn had turned 24 just 11 days before. A police spokeswoman said the department's hit and run unit was investigating, but cause of death wasn't known yet.

At the memorial, Mr. Llewellyn's backup skateboard, a battered wooden piece with its color images nicked, marred and faded beyond recognition, lay on a table in front next to a floral spray and a one-foot-square, handmade sympathy card.

Scott Caswell, 23, a tall, lanky skateboard buddy, told the 25 mourners he took the loss of his friend hard and indirectly felt responsible for his death. They had skateboarded together for three months until Caswell got a job, ending their adventures.

"There wasn't a road in the city we didn't touch — that's the sport. It's also very dangerous," Caswell said, eyes red and bleary. "Then I got a job. And I just wasn't there with him."

The year before, Mr. Llewellyn, who insisted on being called Stanley for reasons no one knew, had finished the Episcopal Community Services' free CHEFS (Conquering Homelessness through Employment in Food Service) program. Sandra Marilyn, employment and training manager, said he had overcome several obstacles to "conquer" the cooking lessons and complete the six-month course.

"I was proud of him," Marilyn said. "It takes a lot of concentration and it's physically demanding."

Mr. Llewellyn was born in Jamaica and came to San Francisco in 2006. Homeless, he moved into the hotel more than three years ago and became a favorite of many residents. The rail-thin, 5-foot-5 young man was unfailingly polite and congenial.

His mother, Esllyn Smith, and his older brother, Orlando Bell, 32, attended the service but left the speaking to others.

"He was cool," a middle-aged man told them. "I mean really cool. I'm a good judge of character and

he had real nice manners and was really good. I could tell he was raised right."

Others who spoke during the memorial seemed to feel a personal attachment to Mr. Llewellyn.

One young woman said she skateboarded with him down Mission Street and he was "like a brother to me and a good friend of my husband's." Another young woman said she and a girlfriend had met him at a Dolores Park concert. He was so engaging they talked for five hours.

"He had a wonderful smile and was considerate and kind," said a woman. "He always asked how I was and offered to help me with groceries."

"He was like my son," said an older black woman who kept her head bowed as she talked. "He knocked on my door every day. He called me 'Mom.' We watched movies together and we ate together. He's my loved one. I miss him every day."

Mr. Llewellyn's neighbor, Roman Sanchez, told how he accepted his Saturday night invitations to go out, have a beer and "meet some girls."

"We'd take the F-car to I dunno where, and he was funny. If I said, 'You're retarded,' he'd say, 'You're retarded,' you know, say it back. 'You're a Republican.' 'No, you're a Republican.'"

Sanchez created the card that was on the table. AYE HOMES was in big, slanted blue letters in one top corner and two checkered cards in the other. The checkered pattern resembled a city seen from very high in the sky. The rest of the card was filled with a blue and black drawing of a dog with red spots on a skateboard, ears flying as he soared along his way. Sanchez gave the card to the family. ■

— TOM CARTER

**ROBERTA CRONIN**  
A graduation too far

Roberta Cronin had a date she was sure to keep this time: her daughter's graduation from nursing school May 21 at the Hilton Hotel in San Jose.

"She wanted to buy me a present, but I said no," said her daughter, Terri Moore, 32. "I said just her being there was enough. She had missed a lot of stuff in the past because of drugs."

Ms. Cronin died March 6 in her Lyric Hotel room of unknown causes, 13 days before Moore's gradu-

ation. She was 53 and had stomach problems.

May 20, the day before the graduation, two dozen mourners including Ms. Cronin's two children — son Francisco Cronin, 31, of Corona in Southern California, and Moore of Sunnyvale — plus other family members, Lyric residents and staff, bade farewell in a memorial to a woman they said was strong, loving and helpful despite her weakness for drugs. Her nickname was Bobbi.

"I couldn't believe her strength and energy," her case worker said. "She was one of the most kind, open and happy persons."

"She loved her children and talked about them all the time," said another woman near a table laden with six bouquets and three color photos of Ms. Cronin. The woman read aloud a poem, "Miss Me, But Let Me Go," by an anonymous author, that was printed in the program with Ms. Cronin's likeness on it.

"Life wasn't easy for her, but she brought so much joy to things," one man said. Another man recalled Ms. Cronin in the lobby every morning wearing a different bright outfit. Others nodded agreement: She always looked nice.

Geraldine Williams sang "Jesus Promise Me a Home Over There," and a man played a guitar and sang a song he wrote.

"She was so excited to come to my graduation," said Moore, beautiful and smart in a black suit and white blouse. "We talked all the time. And I forgave her for everything. I'm glad you guys loved her as much as I did." Moore sat down and family members held her and stroked her hair.

Ms. Cronin was born and raised in the Mission with seven brothers and sisters. She didn't attend high school and just recently started to learn to read, her daughter said after the memorial.

Moore, married with a daughter, said she "cried all weekend" after getting the devastating news just when things seemed to be going so well. The last time she saw her mother was six months ago, she said, and Ms. Cronin weighed 80 pounds. In May, she was back up to 120.

"She liked it here a lot, too," Moore said. "And this time when she said she'd stay clean, I believed her. I just thought she was getting tired." ■

— TOM CARTER

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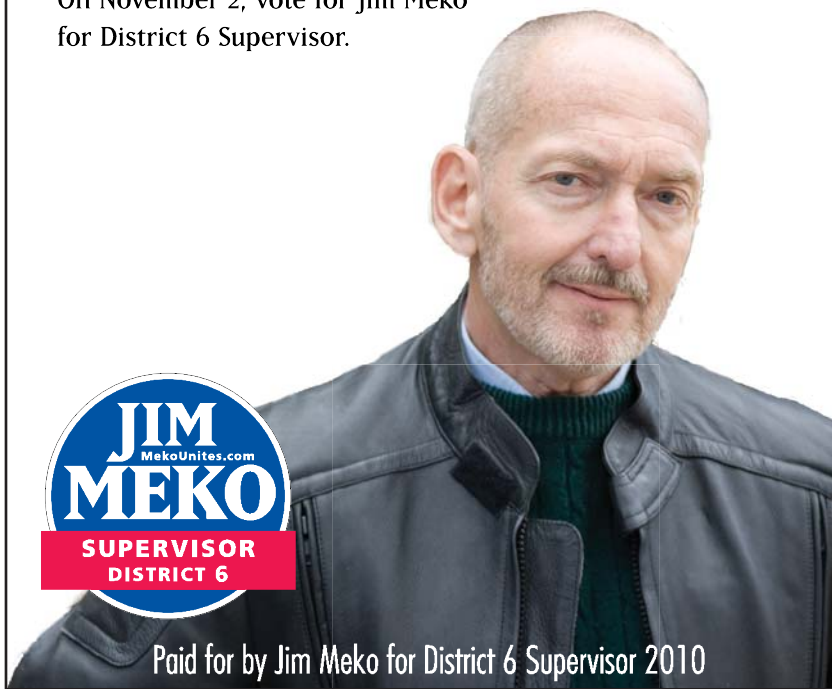
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