

WILLIE LEACH
101 years old, 'a classy person'

Curry Senior Center nurse Linda Muller recalled hearing a loud squawk when she went to care for Willie Leach at the Dalt Hotel. "I



Willie Leach, born in Rosebud, Texas, in 1903, lived at the Dalt for 10 years.

turned around and there was a seagull outside his window," she said. "Willie fed a little of his lunch every day to that gull." Hers was one of many memories shared at Mr. Leach's May 27 memorial at the Dalt, where he had lived for about 10 years.

Born in Rosebud, Texas, in 1903, Mr. Leach was orphaned at five, worked as a cook's assistant in Houston when he was nine, as a Pullman cook in the 1930s, in the Bay Area shipyards in the 1940s. When he died in May, at 101, the centenarian had slowed down. "But he was still alert, had good mother wit, was still a gentleman," said Liz Waddell, his friend of 30 years.

Suzanne, a fellow resident, called Leach "a unique person. He dressed sharp — I can just imagine how he broke hearts back in the '30s and '40s." Added retired nurse Karen Hagen, "I admired his independence. He took great pride

in his accomplishments, and he'd always show me his newest outfit. He was a classy person."

Mr. Leach also was admired by a Dalt construction worker who attended the memorial, hard hat in hand: "I just knew him a very short time, when I worked on his floor, but he was the most kindly gentleman I've ever met."

RICHARD ALLEN WEAVER
lived in Tenderloin over 20 years

"Richard's [death] has been like a family affair," said Father Louis Vitale at the May 19 memorial Mass at St. Boniface Church for Richard Allen Weaver, who lived in the Tenderloin for more than 20 years with his wife, Eleanor. "People have been stopping in to say how we have lost a neighbor who shared life with us, who was part of our loving relationships."

Mr. Weaver died unexpectedly May 13 at age 44. He was born in Waynesboro, Pa., moved to San Francisco in 1972 and married Eleanor in 1978. He was employed at Pitney Bowes and later was a security guard, a job that reflected his character, Father Vitale said. "He was a good friend. He made people feel cared for."

Two dozen friends and relatives attended the memorial, which concluded with a haunting 12th century chant of "Ave Maria," sung a cappella by Pat Groves, a St. Anthony's Foundation social worker and musician who sings regularly at St. Boniface.

GILBERT GONZALES
last home was the Lyric

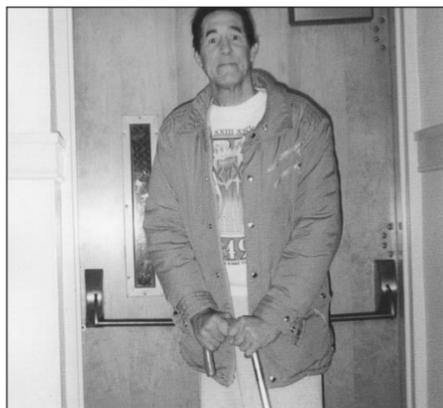
A side table at the Lyric Hotel held flowers and a candle for resident Gilbert Gonzales, who died in early May at age 67. The Rev. Glenda Hope officiated at a May 12 memorial at the Lyric, which had been Mr. Gonzales' home for about nine months.

PATRICK MANN
marched to his own drummer

Patrick Mann had only lived at the Bristol Hotel for two months before he died May 9, but one of the hotel's social workers said that for at least five years before that Mr. Mann was homeless and had many friends on the street "where he loved to play cribbage, had a soft heart for others, and was well-liked and well-known."

Originally from the Oklahoma area, Mr. Mann, who was 56, had nine siblings. One of his sisters, Karen Johnston, traveled from Sacramento to attend the May 27 memorial, which was held in an empty hotel room on the Bristol's third floor. On a table were flowers, pictures and Mr. Mann's cremains.

Several people mentioned Mr. Mann's love of animals, even hotel cats.



Bristol resident Patrick Mann was "well-liked and well-known."

"I remember he once brought home a bobcat when we were young," Johnston said. Mostly, she said candidly, she had few pleasant memories of her brother, who had been "in prison or on the streets, and out of my life. I came today because he was sick and alone, and I believe family have a responsibility to each other. [This] has given me the opportunity for the healing I needed."

She thanked the people in the room for coming. "I might not be grieving for him, but I feel profound sadness," she said. "He chose his life as he wanted it to be — he's always been colorful, and marched to his own drummer early on."

— MARJORIE BEGGS

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