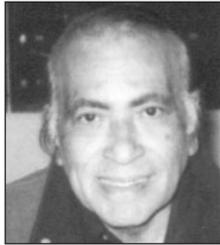


SAMUEL PINEDA
Clift Hotel cook

Samuel Pineda loved many places in San Francisco but no place like the Tenderloin where he returned at age 74 to live out his days.

After a long career as a cook, Mr. Pineda moved into the Ritz Hotel two years ago. He was a quiet respectful man who kept to himself, the staff said. When his sister called him several times recently and the phone wasn't picked up on the first ring, the family suspected something. Mr. Pineda had died in his room of a heart attack. He was 76.

Mr. Pineda was a cook for 20 years at the fancy Clift Hotel on Geary Street. Once, he had his own small restaurant in the Mission District and another one in the 1980s on Eddy Street. And though he lived in other neighborhoods, the Tenderloin was irresistible to the 5-foot-5 man from Nicaragua who seldom spoke English.



"He loved the Tenderloin," said his niece, Marisol Guevara, who attended her uncle's memorial in the Ritz Hotel with her sister, Ethel, and their mother, also Ethel, one of Mr. Pineda's three sisters.

"He always came down here, even when he lived in the Excelsior and in the Mission. We offered to have him live with us, but he preferred his small room here."

Marisol recalled how her uncle had comforted her mother through "bad times" and how grateful the family was.

Mr. Pineda enjoyed having coffee and conversing with his Spanish-speaking pals, often at Carl's Jr. on Market and Seventh. He "never mastered English" in his 40 years in the city, his nieces said. He brought them his mail to read when he visited the family on Shotwell Street twice a week. He never failed to bring a toy for Jacqueline, Ethel's 2-year-old daughter. Then the toddler would steal his cane and try to run away with it.

"He was quite a barber, too," Marisol told the small gathering of family, staff and two residents. "But he was very independent. He would cut hair in his apartment. Word got around how good he was."

The family had brought Mr. Pineda's ashes in a black plastic box and placed them on a table next to flowers and his picture. His sisters, Luz and Argentina, were flying in on the weekend to take the ashes back to Masaya, Nicaragua.

— TOM CARTER

JOHN MACKENZIE
Thumbed his nose at pain

John MacKenzie, a Boston mechanic who became a 10-year resident of the Tenderloin, was remembered by his friends Oct. 7 for his "happy dance," smiling when he could through the unrelenting pain of diabetes.

Tammy "Star" Samento said the city's medical examiner told her that Mr. MacKenzie died at the hospital of "a stroke and a heart attack." He was 52. But at Network Ministries on Eddy Street, in a pastel green room with a 20-foot-high ceiling and white flowers by his photograph, the half-dozen friends commemorating him knew the real killer was diabetes.

For two years, the disease had weakened Mr. MacKenzie and nerve disease had rendered his legs nearly useless. Even so, he was elated around friends. He would stand, shake his hips, move his torso, smile and wave his forefingers in the air, bringing a laugh from everyone.

"He had such a great heart," said Samento, his girlfriend, who took care of him for more than two years. "And then diabetes started attacking his organs. His blood sugar counts went wild."

Close neighbors June Ruggles and daughter Tamara, 19, tearfully recalled when Mr. MacKenzie made the laborious trip last summer all the way out to Ocean Beach to celebrate June's birthday and watch the sunset. "And he liked to tinker with things like watches and stereos," Tamara said. "It was to fix them or find what made them tick."

"He was a mellow guy and very determined to walk, especially at the end," said Dennis McFarland. "He took me under his wing a few years ago when I lost my partner, and he made sure I had food. He tried to not let his physical issues get in the way."

— TOM CARTER

CARL EDWARDS SONES
'Always so upbeat'

Carl Sones had lived at the Franciscan Towers for only three months before he died, but he made an impression on the building manager.

"Carl may have been physically weak, and perhaps lonely and isolated, but he was a really positive person," the manager said. "He was optimistic, a cool person, a great tenant."

Mr. Sones, formerly homeless, had been in and out of the hospital during his short stay at the Franciscan Towers; consequently, few there knew him well enough to attend the Oct. 19 memorial.

One woman who stopped by said, "I knew Carl for 20 years. I just saw him the day before he died. And then he was gone — just like that. I remember his son came to see him when he moved in here. Everyone liked him."

The manager mused, "I know he was in pain but he was always so upbeat — I wonder what his secret was?"

"Too blessed to be stressed," smiled the woman.

Mr. Sones died in his apartment on Oct. 2. He was 54.

— MARJORIE BEGGS

HENRY KELLY
'He never threw salt on anyone'

If you lived in the Senator Hotel and needed a little something from the store or someone to just check on how you were doing, Henry Kelly was your man.

His friends at the Senator, where he lived for 11 years, didn't know much about him. He was in his late 40s, they thought, didn't seem to have any family around and maybe was from the South.

But they knew they would truly miss Mr. Kelly, who died Oct. 15.

"Henry was a really special person," said Michael Fargo, 13-year resident at the Senator. "His death hit me hard. I always saw him serving other people, running errands, working on the tenants' council, and he was the person who knocked on all our doors if there was a fire. But he was really ill — I'm glad he's found peace."

Robert Smith brought a message to the Oct. 25 memorial from one of Mr. Kelly's friends who couldn't attend. "His loss is the greatest loss of my life," that was the message," said Smith, a Senator resident for five years. "For me, all I can say is that the graciousness of his generosity was his greatest asset."

Looking out for his neighbors was a way of life, always checking on them to be sure they were okay and going out of his way if they were sick, said another man. "I even gave him an extra key to my room. You could trust

him with your life — if he ran an errand for you, he'd always come back with the change and the sales receipt."

He was always humble, said yet another. "He never threw salt on anyone."

— MARJORIE BEGGS

HUI SHENG WANG
Deserved respect

Six elderly Chinese residents of Maria Manor gathered to say good-bye to Hui Sheng Wang at a memorial on Oct. 6. None spoke English, so Kin Yee, the SRO's maintenance supervisor, served as interpreter for them.

Hui Sheng Wang came to San Francisco from Nanjing, where she was born in 1935. She lived for many years in the Excelsior district and moved to Maria Manor four years ago. She died, after a long illness, on Sept. 29.



"Tomorrow, Hui Sheng Wang's daughter is coming here," said Patsy Gardner, the Maria's assistant property manager. "She'll take her mother's remains back to China — so she can rest in peace."

As Yee interpreted, Hui Sheng Wang's fellow residents nodded gravely.

The Rev. Glenda Hope usually asks mourners to share their memories of the person who has died or their feelings about the death. When no one responded, she asked if anyone wanted to say why they had come.

The interpretation came back: None of the mourners knew Hui Sheng Wang well, but all wanted to show their respect.

— MARJORIE BEGGS

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