

MARK MATTHEWS
Full house at his memorial

About two dozen chairs were set up in the meeting room at Tenderloin Health. On a white board at the front of the room, friends had left messages under the heading "Remembering Mark."

"We'll miss Mark's stories," wrote one. "Rest awake in peace," wrote another.

Before the July 24 memorial for Mark Matthews even started, people were crying and comforting each other. By the time it was in progress, there was standing room only.

"Mark was a humble, sweet, somewhat withdrawn man," said a Tenderloin Health case manager. "It made you want to help him. He had pain and stress — and now he has none anymore."



Two clients who knew Mr. Matthews spoke about his physical addictions and how they felt about his passing.

"Some of us who are users tend to withdraw and spiral down," said James. "Mark did that, but he's in peace now."

"Mark fed me — and he encouraged me to get off drugs," David told the mourners.

After the memorial, Mr. Matthews' former wife, Desiree Buckley, said he had been a security guard for a while in San Francisco, but she shared few other details of his life.

"I just loved him very much," she said tearfully. "He had a heart of gold and would give you the shirt off his back."

Mr. Matthews died July 1. He was 42 years old.

The memorial also honored the lives of two other Tenderloin Health clients who died in July, **Vincent Ricca** and **Edward Howell**. ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS

TESSA MCCAULLEY
Suicide at age 26

Tessa McCaulley had friends of all ages, and a handful of them came to remember the sweet but troubled young woman who took her own life Aug. 17. She was 26.

"I was blessed to know her and to have the opportunity to see her happy," said Theresa Brooks at the Aug. 26 memorial. "I didn't kick it with her, but we talked and, despite our age difference, I could say things to her I couldn't say to anyone else."

Ms. McCaulley and Brooks, gray-haired and attractive, both had lived in TNDC's Eighth and Howard apartment building for three years, site of the memorial.

Larry Freeman, Ms. McCaulley's next-door neighbor, said, "I didn't kick it with her either, but she had a sweetness that many of us have lost. And that's how I'll remember her."

Another friend, Kimberly Bowen, said she was honored to have known Ms. McCaulley.

Throughout the memorial, her parents sat in stunned grief, her father's shoulders heaving with silent sobs. When he was able to speak, Bill McCaulley, who lives in San Francisco, thanked people for coming. "And thanks for being good friends to Tessa," he said. "She was a great daughter — we had good times together and good vacations. She was troubled, but she really loved the world. I'll always think I could have done one more thing for her."

McCaulley said he'd seen his daughter shortly before she took an overdose of prescription drugs. Though she had attempted suicide other times, he said he felt guilty. "We missed the signs," he said.

After the memorial, Ms. McCaulley's mother, Robin McCaulley, who lives in Florida, said her daughter was born in Ft. Lauderdale and came to San Francisco in 2002. She worked for a while at the Clay Theater, but had "emotional disabilities from two serious accidents. She just couldn't take the pain. But she always expressed the pain in her life."



MCCAULLEY FAMILY PHOTO

Ms. McCaulley was an amateur artist, her mother said. She appeared online in creative YouTube videos, and several years ago was one of the early models on SuicideGirls, the edgy and provocative burlesque Website, which is not about suicide. It was begun in 2001 by a young woman in Oregon as part of a photography class project.

On Aug. 20, Ms. McCaulley's sister posted an announcement of her sister's passing on the Website. ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS

TERRY DILLARD
Survived '90s at Ambassador

In its wildest days, the Ambassador Hotel was an important way station in the troubled life of Terry Dillard. And whatever his shortcomings, Mr. Dillard made faithful, lifelong friends there.

Eight of them gathered July 22 at Mr. Dillard's memorial at the Ambassador and remembered him as a "kind, caring person" who survived the ravages of the hotel's sex and drug era of the 1990s. TNDC bought the rundown hotel in 1999 when it was reeling from an AIDS epidemic, renovated it and changed the milieu.

"I remember the great card he made for me," said Mary Monihan, a nurse who worked with the hotel's residents during that time. "It was like a kaleidoscope, the colors, and very beautiful. I've thought of it ever since I heard of his passing."

"He worked on it all night," said his good friend Cecil Baker.

Mr. Dillard died July 4 at St. Francis Hospital where he was being treated for kidney problems. He was 45. "All his organs shut down," said Baker who had seen Mr. Dillard through a battle with pneumocystis in the 1990s.

Mr. Dillard came from a family of 14 in Arkansas. He left home when he was 14 and never learned to read or write very well. He worked for a while in a chicken processing plant before his wanderings took him through New Orleans and into California. Eventually, he landed in the Tenderloin. He was 6-foot-2, had black hair and lived off and on at the Ambassador with friends, but was basically homeless.

"I knew him here since 1990," Baker said, "He was nice-looking — of course he was god to me. It was the first time I felt love, and I couldn't handle it. I ran away (to Fresno)."

But longtime residents say Ambassador tenants never stay away very long.

"Everybody comes back to their master, the Ambassador," Baker said. "It wasn't just the drugs and sex, it was family."

Baker brought a tray of brownies to share.

"Terry once said, 'I don't want you to ever say, I can't live without you.' And I said, 'I'll never say that. I'll say I don't know how to live without you.'" ■

—TOM CARTER



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JEOFILIN ROH
Community Activist
1951-2008