

LARRY ENTRIKEN
Lives on in memory

"Community activist, gentle soul, friend to all," is the way a flyer promoted Larry Entri-ken's Jan. 21 memorial at the William Penn Hotel on Eddy Street, where 35 of his friends and family gathered and bore out the claims.

"Helpful," "easy to be around," "smart," "giving," "humorous" and "very, very kind," they called him.

Mr. Entri-ken, who had lived 20 years in the Haight, once had his own Tradesman construction company but fell on hard times, became homeless, then was housed by the city. He was found dead in his William Penn room Dec. 30, apparently from liver problems, his family said. Mr. Entri-ken was 51.

The unusually large turnout was a testament to Mr. Entri-ken's popularity. Speaker after speaker mentioned his wit and his desire to help people. He once volunteered to write fundraising proposals for San Francisco First, a Department of Public Health program to get homeless families and individuals into permanent housing with supportive services. A beneficiary of the program himself, he took a preparation course. But his efforts were snarled in red tape and Mr. Entri-ken never got the grant.

"I was always impressed that he wanted to give back," said Russell Bermann, head of Vocational Services at the South of Market Mental Health Clinic where Mr. Entri-ken was a client. He was also part of the Power Program, where clients are interviewed, then selected for a team where they can choose an area of work to pursue, with the goal of becoming employable and having a higher quality of life, possibly even leaving the mental health system.

"But choosing grant-writing to get money for us wasn't that simple," said Eileen Turner, who worked with Mr.

Entri-ken. "Too many layers and glitches to get through."

Dan Entri-ken, Mr. Entri-ken's father, a professional singer from Manhattan, attended the memorial with his wife, Deegee Brandemour.

"I wanted to see the faces here today," he said. "It gives me a great deal of peace to see them."

His father said Mr. Entri-ken had been "a master of humor" even as a kid, but had nearly drowned at age 6.

"To me, he seemed a happy child," he said, "but we all have struggles with life. Now, he struggles no more."

Mr. Entri-ken came to San Francisco in 1983. His father didn't know what had become of the construction company or how his son became homeless, nor did others. But two years ago, through San Francisco First, Mr. Entri-ken became a William Penn resident. He called his parents regularly. His stepmother said he told her he had felt like "an outcast" when no one contacted him after his grandmother died.

"I talked to him a lot after his father's heart attack," Brandemour said, "and he said he was drinking. I told him he was always welcome (with us) and we appreciated his reports."

Mr. Entri-ken last saw his father in 2004 in Los Angeles. He called his father on birthdays, Father's Day, when the Giants had their World Series victory parade, Thanksgiving and Christmas. The last time he called, no one was home.

"I still have his voice on my answering machine from Christmas," his father said. "He talked about a possible job. I don't know, maybe it was wishful thinking." He paused. "But it's never over while one person remembers you." ■

— TOM CARTER

GARY MAGUIRE
Musician

Gary Maguire narrowly missed his 15 minutes of fame as a musician. The 6-foot-5 drummer once tried out for the Jefferson Starship band and had just about everyone's vote, Stephanie Olson, his wife, said after Mr. Maguire's Jan. 21 memorial at the Coronado Hotel, where he and his wife had lived six months.

"Grace Slick liked him and the others in the band wanted him, too — he could play all the instruments but excelled at the drums — but the execs didn't," she said. "So he didn't get it. If he had, I told him he wouldn't have lived very long, leading that kind of life."

As it was, Mr. Maguire didn't have a long life. He died at the hotel Jan. 6, presumably of liver complications. He was 49.

A half dozen mourners were at the memorial and remembered with affection the tall man with a raspy voice. One elderly woman called him "a beautiful person." Olson sat in the front row sobbing. She could only manage a few statements through her tears.

"As all of you know, I loved him very, very much, and his forgiveness, and most of all his love for me," Olson said of their 10 years together. "He was my dearest friend, among other things. I'd like to say a lot. There is so much I can remember."

But Olson couldn't continue and sat down.

After the memorial, as the social services staff prepared plates of food in the next room for the mourners, she gathered herself and talked more about Mr. Maguire who, she said, "died from alcohol."

His several generations of family were from South San Francisco, she said, and he knew a lot of people. He worked in construction for a while,

and then was homeless with her for several years. Even so, they made the best of it. Once, when they had a little cash, they took bicycles to Woodside and rode around looking at fabulous houses.

"We walked everywhere together and did a lot of talking," she said. "Gary was the only man in my life I could be completely honest with. My best friend."

The city's Homeless Outreach Team got them into the Coronado and Mr. Maguire changed a little. He was cheerful enough indoors but not out in the hood, where danger lurked. He was sensitive about cruelty and injustice.

"If he saw some guy hurting a woman he'd step in and beat the shit out of him," she said. "He was outraged at abuse. And you didn't see as much of his soft side here."

Among her fondest memories is when they were homeless in Burlingame and bought a big six-man tent — Olson, 39, is 6-feet tall herself — and pitched it by the railroad tracks. They had nothing but each other.

"We'd lie there and talk about nothing and everything. He was so happy and generous. There was nothing he wouldn't do for me. And nobody bothered us."

Mr. Maguire's pack of cigarettes went missing one morning. She said squirrels got it. He said rats, then showed her where they were in the bushes, and they laughed over it.

"We had no water or electricity," she said. "But I was so happy to be with him and wake up to the songbirds."

She paused and, growing sorrowful again, looked forlornly toward Mr. Maguire's photograph on the table in front.

"It gets worse every day," she said. ■

— TOM CARTER

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