

DEWAYNE BISHOP
Member, Black Brothers Esteem

The death of Dewayne Bishop was discovered Feb. 15 when police found him on the floor of his room at the Ambassador Hotel. At a service Feb. 24 in the hotel's Listening Post, about a dozen friends and fellow residents gathered to remember him.

Mr. Bishop was born April 12, 1969, perhaps the only certainty about his past. His social worker will say nothing about his roots; the medical examiner says his birth certificate will reveal nothing. At his memorial, a vase of flowers — provided by social workers, as is traditional at the TNDC-run Ambassador — sat on the windowsill. On the floor, encircled by the chairs of those who came to remember, lay a lone blossom broken from its stem.

Mr. Bishop, with diabetes and kidney failure, had been on a transplant list, but prospects were bleak. He had missed his last six or so dialysis appointments, said his friend, Cecil Baker. Dialysis "can be painful and unpleasant," said the Rev. Glenda Hope, who presided over the gather-

ing. "I don't think anyone could judge Dewayne's choice."

Billie Cooper, who'd known Mr. Bishop for five or six years and had brought him home to the Ambassador after a recent hospitalization, said Mr. Bishop's medical problems were many, including blindness in one eye. "He wasn't taking care of himself," said Cooper, and over the past few months, physical weakening may have caused him to appear "a little standoffish. He was a troubled soul. Like most of us, he was confused."

"When a person is sick," said Henry Banks Ladd, who honored Mr. Bishop by singing a powerful version of "His Eyes Are on the Sparrow," "you think that they can do things. But they can't." Ladd had met Mr. Bishop at a group meeting. But when they played tennis together in Golden Gate Park, "He allowed me to see another side of him: vibrant and healthy."

"Some people said he was withdrawn," said Tom Laurent, "but we had lively conversations. Before Christmas, he knocked on my door and handed me a stocking filled with

various items he had hand-picked for me.... He showed great respect for other people. We enjoyed talking for long periods of time."

Several of those gathered identified themselves as "fraternity brothers," fellow members of Black Brothers Esteem, a group that is part of the S.F. AIDS Foundation. Mr. Bishop had been a client, then volunteered in a variety of events around the city to help promote health. Black Brothers' Tony Bradford called Mr. Bishop "a great spirit," and the group's Micah Lubensky said Mr. Bishop had done "a lot of speaking, talking about how important HIV prevention was. He was very passionate about making a difference in the community."

When Mr. Bishop worked at a Starbucks, said Lubensky, he was "very well-organized, very clear on deadlines, on making sure he'd stay on track at work. And that's one of the reasons he was a very good volunteer for me. I asked him to speak publicly; he was very happy to do so. And he was a very sweet person, a very sweet individual."

Edmund Juicye recalled that Mr. Bishop had been working at a 7-Eleven when he was recruited by Black Brothers Esteem. "Coming to BBE was really great for him." Juicye described him dressing as a bishop — reflecting his name — at a Halloween party, and the great appetite he had for chicken pizza from Trader Joe's. "He would always eat with great appetite. ... He liked to listen close. He had people he bonded with and cared about."

"To Dewayne," said Cecil Baker, "everybody was special. He related to each of them differently." ■

— LEAH GARCHIK

JOSEPH BARROW
A well-regarded man

On a brisk mid-February afternoon, a small group of friends and relatives gathered to mark the passing of San Francisco native Joseph Barrow, a former merchant seaman who is survived by his wife and three children, who live in the Philippines.

Mr. Barrow collapsed Feb. 8 in the elevator on the sixth floor of the Coast Hotel, where he'd lived quietly for the past six or seven years. Emergency medical staff were unable to revive him. "He didn't suffer," Shelly Brown, the hotel's assistant support services manager, said. Mr. Barrow was 62.

Case workers and fellow residents recalled a genial man held in warm regard by those who knew him. Resident Larry Taylor, called him "a good guy, one of the nicest, pleasantest residents. I miss seeing him getting off the elevator every morning to get his coffee. I called him my coffee-drinking buddy."

Anita, a housekeeper at the hotel for the past four years, fought back tears as she remembered how Mr. Barrow would give her a box of candies every month for her kids. "He was very nice, he was very appreciative."

Fellow resident Robert Majitt commented that life in their Tenderloin hotel "is a stressful environment sometimes, but I never saw it get to him. Here, it's easy to lose your temper, but I never saw Joe lose his."

Brown called Mr. Barrow "a very sweet guy. He was very well-mannered, didn't seem like he belonged here. We talked about going to the doctor, and he told me, 'Don't hold me to that yet, we'll talk about it at our next meeting.' But our next meeting never came."



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