

Paulette Baker, Mr. Barrow's sister, said their family was raised in the Fillmore, and that as a youngster Joe liked music and lifting weights. He'd attended Polytechnic High. His poor eyesight disqualified him from military service, but he worked as a merchant seaman for many years.

"I don't think he liked it very well," his sister said. "He got off that boat and wouldn't even get on a ferry. He was done with boats."

He came ashore for good in the late '90s to help care for his aging parents — his mom and stepfather, the late Christine and Sterling Jones — in the Fillmore. He worked as a janitor at San Francisco General, as he had previously on ships, and as a property manager. Caring for the family became "a bit much" for him, Baker said, and she had little contact with him in recent years. "There's always issues, but you leave the door open, keep the same number. You don't close your heart."

He "liked to watch TV and listen to music," she recalled. "James Brown, that was his guy. He liked soul."

Mr. Barrow was "basically a loner," she said, though he treasured his family. He displayed their pictures prominently in his room, and kept all their letters calling him dad.

She had not heard much from her brother in recent years, Baker said, but figured he was saving his money to visit his family. His middle child, Christine, had recently given birth to his first granddaughter, she said.

"He was getting ready to do something. I think he wanted to see his kids. I'm sure they were the highlight of his being. I think every penny he got on the side he would send them."

"This is where he chose to live,"

she said of the community of friends at the Coast, many of whom had signed cards displayed at the memorial.

"I will miss our little talks," one wrote. "Your smile was so warm," wrote another, and a third wrote how Mr. Barrow was "always very kind."

"I never saw him in anything other than the best moods," Jon, a fellow resident, said. "He was always outgoing and about his business." He saw him frequently sitting in the lobby, typing on his laptop. And more than one resident said he'd had a lot to say about Michael Jackson's death in 2009.

Besides his sister, daughter and granddaughter, Mr. Barrow is survived by his oldest son, Joseph. Baker did not know whether the youngest son, Richard, is still alive. ■

— MARK HEDIN

CARLOS NUNEZ
Sports talk show caller

Boxing fans lost a colorful sports commentator when Carlos Nunez, a regular contributor on the "Into the Night" Tony Bruno radio show and the daytime Gary Radnich program on KNBR, died Feb. 2 after collapsing in front of Boeddeker Park, a block from his Ritz Hotel room.

At Mr. Nunez's Feb. 10 memorial at the Ritz, Craig Martinez said his friend had been in apparent good health but had collapsed during the day at Eddy and Jones in front of the park gate. Paramedics came but couldn't revive the 74-year-old Cuban American after 45 minutes, he said.

His friends said Mr. Nunez frequently called the three-hour, week-night Bruno show and Radnich's KNBR 680 weekday morning show. The talk show hosts always welcomed Mr. Nunez's comments with a hearty,



PHOTO COURTESY LINDA BARR

"Buenos dias, Carlos!"

Mr. Nunez commented on other sports, too, and promoted American sports to Latino youth. But his specialty was boxing.

"He was on (radio) at least once a week," said William Leary, a social worker who formerly worked at the Ritz where Mr. Nunez lived for 13 years. "They dedicated a program to him, talked about him, remembered him. Bruno's show-previews used his voice, too. I heard him hundreds of times."

Mr. Nunez was born in Cuba. His father was a doctor. Linda Barr, a neighbor, said Mr. Nunez was in the Bay of Pigs battle to stop Castro's takeover, but was taken prisoner, "The United States traded a tractor for him and he came to Florida," she said. "But he didn't want to talk much about his past." Mr. Nunez lived in Boston 20 years and his friends thought he came to California in the 1970s but were unsure when he

arrived in San Francisco.

A half dozen friends drew a colorful personality profile of Mr. Nunez, who looked younger than his age, they said. He loved adults and children, Latin music and dancing salsa, singing karaoke, and all sports, including sailing. His press connections got him into Giants' home games. He also wrote movie reviews for newspapers. Someone said he once interviewed Cher in Las Vegas as part of his Sports and Entertainment contribution on the sports channel.

He was "very neat" and insisted his clothes be dry-cleaned. But sometimes he was broke and hit up his friend Martinez for a loan, using a big trophy he had won as collateral. Mr. Nunez won the 20-inch-high, gold-colored trophy topped with a boxing figurine in 2000 for being "Spanish Boxing Broadcaster of the Year," the inscription on the base reads. But the organization giving the prize isn't mentioned. Barr said she thought it came from the American Broadcasting Association.

"He'd leave it as collateral and I'd give him 50 bucks," said Martinez, holding the piece he brought along to show everyone. "We did this over the years, maybe five or six times. He'd always pay me when he got his monthly check."

Mr. Nunez got his check on the third day of each month, Martinez said. But Mr. Nunez died on Feb. 2, when Martinez was still holding the trophy.

Martinez eyed it with admiration and said it "must be worth something," but he was unsure what to do with it.

"I just don't want it to go into mothballs," he said. ■

— TOM CARTER

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