

**JACK SNOOK**  
Community activist



PHOTO ALISON L. MOY

With live guitar music playing almost imperceptibly in the background, more than two dozen people, including Supervisor Jane Kim, gathered in the Jefferson Hotel's community room to remember resident Jack Snook. He was, said a friend, a "cool, interesting, sweet, genuine guy," and many of the mourners were openly emotional during the April 7 memorial.

Mr. Snook had lived at the Jefferson for six years before his March 30 death at age 52, and he was an integral part of the hotel community. But his friendships extended throughout the neighborhood because of his activism.

"I was introduced to Jack when I started my campaign for supervisor in 2010," Kim said. "He asked a lot of really good questions about why I thought I

could be a good supervisor for the Tenderloin, and he worked with our office for the last four years." Issues included bedbug abatement and legislation to make landlords accountable, tenants' rights and Safe Passage, the program to help Tenderloin kids navigate their neighborhood safely.

Kim added that when someone passes, we learn to cherish those who are still with us. We remember once more "how precious life is," she said.

Mr. Snook was part of the successful 2012 campaign to pass Proposition C, which established a city-financed trust fund to increase affordable housing. He also participated in the community coalition organized to force California Pacific Medical Center to be more responsive to citywide and neighborhood needs in its bid to construct a new hospital and medical center on the edge of the Tenderloin at Van Ness and Geary.

"Jack had a deep intellect and political activism, always asking about the best systems, the best laws for getting things accomplished," said James Tracy, Community Housing Partnership organizer. "He also did everything with grace and humor. He fought for housing for everyone, not just for himself, and he always worked to get people off the street."

Zen Buddhist priestess Jana Drakka, who officiated at Mr. Snook's memorial, began the service by inviting mourners, one at a time, to approach a table serving as an altar at the front of the room. It held a large bouquet of spring flowers, a candle and two small, shallow bowls. Mourners, she said, could remember Mr. Snook by taking a tiny pinch of incense from one bowl and putting it on burning charcoal in the other, a symbol that life is ephemeral.

Drakka performed the ritual first, facing the altar, bowing slightly, gently

putting the incense on the charcoal. A dozen mourners, including Supervisor Kim, solemnly followed her.

Afterward, guitarist Nathaniel Tuli-ao led the group in three choruses of "Amazing Grace" and sang solo "Because He Lives." Drakka then asked people to share their memories of Mr. Snook.

"We were both from Chicago, so we had that in common," said one neighbor. "He'd had a tough life, a lot of struggles, but he was still a fun guy and he did great organizing work, especially for Prop. C. One of his jobs was to knock on doors of everyone here at the Jefferson and make sure they voted."

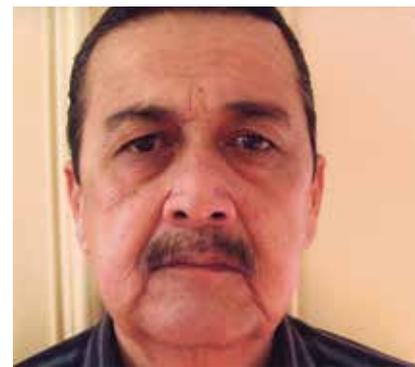
Another said Mr. Snook was "a funny, perky, most humble guy, and such a gentleman." A third said he and Mr. Snook came to the Jefferson at the same time, six years ago. "We grew together in this place. This hotel is no. 1 in the Tenderloin — it's where I learned to be a part [of the community]."

Mr. Snook, who grew up in Chicago, was one of four children and his family still lives there. His parents were by his side when he died, said Marla Smoot, Jefferson case manager. She had few other details of his life but knew that he had attended San Francisco State University and worked in the city's public school classrooms in some capacity.

His art was a source of joy, Smoot wrote in an email after the memorial. "He made collages out of magazine clippings and pictures and made them on anything he could find, backs of posters, wooden surfaces, his walls, anywhere."

Drakka concluded the memorial, reminding everyone to remember Mr. Snook and "his joyous, beautiful smile that was like a light, shining." ■

— Marjorie Beggs



COURTESY ARLINGTON RESIDENCE

Golden knew him from the times Mr. Perez would knock on his door to say he was leaving the building.

"And he'd knock on my door when he got back and I'd look over there later — he kept his room clean and neat — and he'd be asleep in his chair with the door open," Golden said. "I said, 'Better shut your door or people will take things.' He said, 'They're welcome to it.'"

Mr. Perez had terrible back pain, both men said, and he used a cane.

"But he didn't want to talk about his personal life," Golden said, or much of anything. Golden knew that he had girlfriends, but they didn't visit. Mr. Perez was planning to go to San Jose, but when Golden hadn't heard from him for several days he got worried and notified Clarke, who then went to Mr. Perez's room and found him dead.

"I miss him for not checking in with me," Golden concluded. "It was (our) ritual."

It was nearing time for Rev. Paul Trudeau, who conducted the memorial, to say final prayers when Bret Mossteller arrived late. In no time, Mossteller was on his feet giving depth to Mr. Perez's life, telling how he had been a neighborhood activist all his life, fighting the good fight against injustice, getting arrested at demonstrations, spending a lifetime in and out of jail since he was 16, and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder ("everybody in prison got it").

"He just kept getting arrested," Mossteller continued, speaking fast and sometimes waving his arms emotionally. "But Jan. 21st, he was notified he'd get his certificate of discharge from the government in 90 days and he'd no longer be on parole, man. You can say there's no such thing as freedom, but there is. He was really happy, man."

Mossteller said Mr. Perez came down to his second-floor room five days a week to watch movies with him. He liked Mossteller's cat, never complained about anything, was "caring and giving," and "walked with an air of 'you're not going to push me around, man.'"

"He's a great guy who did a lot of good for a lot of people," Mossteller said, and sat down, having bestowed the last credits when they were due. ■

— Tom Carter

**RICHARD PEREZ**  
Died in his room

Nobody seemed to know Richard Perez very well. He had been at Arlington Residence a year and kept to himself. That's pretty much what his sketchy obituary was going to say, until near the end of his memorial when it all changed and Mr. Perez, for better or for worse, sprang to life.

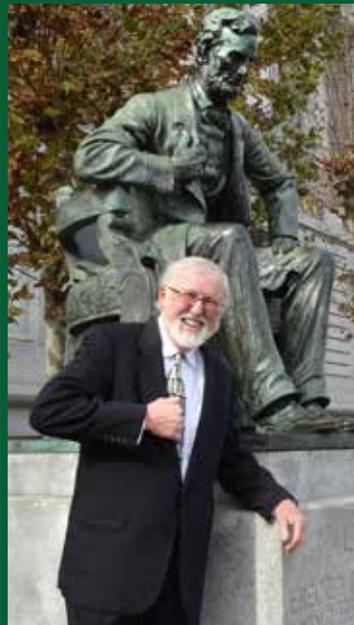
His social worker, Clarke Martin, and his across-the-hall fourth-floor neighbor, George Golden, were two among seven mourners who spoke early at Mr. Perez's April 1 memorial in the hotel's upper lobby. Mr. Perez died in his room March 28 of unknown causes. He was 61.

"He kept things close to the vest," Martin said, "and never caused problems. I was impressed he was sober. He came from Walden House and he had a parole officer. He would wait for her, but she never showed up for appointments. He was very anxious about it, but I told him not to worry. He had some family in San Jose, a brother, and he had been happy they had reconciled and I was touched deeply about that."

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The North of Market / Tenderloin Community Benefit District (NOMTLCBD) exists to facilitate the transformation of the Tenderloin into a cleaner, safer, more vibrant neighborhood. [nom-tlcbd.org](http://nom-tlcbd.org)