

CELIA DIOSELINA SALINAS-ROSENBERG Advocate

CELIA Dioselina Salinas-Rosenberg's life was the stuff of heroism. Legally blind from birth, the result of an underdeveloped retina, called macular hypoplasia, she was an accomplished lawyer and gave her time tirelessly to help those in the central city, where she lived and worked.

She died Jan. 5 following a brain hemorrhage. She was 35.

Mrs. Salinas-Rosenberg was a panelist and lead arbitrator for the Tenderloin Community Court and on the board of directors of Adopt-A-Block, a program to improve safety and reduce drug trafficking headed by her husband, Nicholas Rosenberg.

Her student days and professional career also were marked by service. In 1995, she completed a master's degree in Latin American Studies at UCLA, where she was president of the Union of Students with Disabilities, and a student representative of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Disability and the Faculty Committee on Equal Opportunity.

She could read big-print books, but they weren't always available, and much of Mrs. Salinas-Rosenberg's advocacy work focused on changing that.

She graduated from Hastings College of the Law in 1999. While there she received the American Jurisprudence Award for getting the highest grade in her Legal Research and Writing class, and she was an editor for the Hastings Women's Law Journal. She served as volunteer judge for the school's Moot Court since 2000. At these simulated trial competitions, teams of students argue before a judge or panel of judges.

While a law student, she also wrote freelance briefs, many of them on immigration issues. She drafted the winning brief at the Ninth Circuit that established the rule that immigrants could not be deported in absentia while in the courtroom and their cases were being heard. As co-counsel with her father, she also drafted and argued a brief that resulted in a published Ninth Circuit decision vindicating the right to competent translation for immigrants in deportation.

After Hastings, she went to work as a staff attorney at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on Seventh and Mission in the Office of Staff Attorneys, Civil Research Unit, and worked on hundreds of cases



PHOTO BY NICHOLAS ROSENBERG

including prisoner rights, civil rights and immigration.

The last two years had brought new physical challenges, including a stroke that Mrs. Salinas-Rosenberg suffered during an angiogram. She recovered and returned to work.

She was on the job, in court, when she had a brain hemorrhage and went into a coma. She died two days later surrounded by family and friends.

Mrs. Salinas-Rosenberg is survived by her mother, Sally Sanford; father, Simón Salinas; sister, Carla Salinas; brother, Scott Salinas; and husband, Nicholas Rosenberg.

Celia and Nicholas met when they were students at U.C. Berkeley in the mid-1990s. They were married in 2001 at Lalita's Restaurant on McAllister and Leavenworth and lived in an apartment at Hyde and Turk for four years.

"She loved the Tenderloin so much," Rosenberg said. "She felt a strong sense of community all the years we lived there."

He plans to establish a memorial scholarship in Mrs. Salinas-Rosenberg's name at Hastings for disabled students, particularly the visually impaired.

Celia Dioselina Salinas-Rosenberg made a last gift, one that characterized the life she lived: Her corneas, unaffected by her visual condition, were among the organs she donated, which will give life — and sight — to others.

— MARJORIE BEGGS

ROWENA CLARK Good person with a good spirit

The daily pain from a brutal act of anger five years ago that put Rowena Clark in a wheelchair ended last month when the lively Native American desk clerk who grew up on an Arizona reservation died alone in her room at the Iroquois hotel.

According to her caregiver, Isabel Rodriguez, who saw her three times a week over four years, the incident occurred at a nearby Tenderloin hotel where Ms. Clark had been a desk clerk during the late 1990s. A domestic squabble broke out in the lobby.

"The man involved went around the desk and took a telephone (receiver) and hit her hard in the back of the neck," Rodriguez said after a memorial for Ms. Clark Jan. 20 at the Iroquois. "It severed a cord and she spent a year in Laguna Honda (hospital)."

Rodriguez said Ms. Clark had been unable to feed or bathe herself for months. When she moved into the Iroquois four years ago, she was operating a battery-powered wheelchair, sometimes at break-neck speeds. Rodriguez said when she struggled to keep up with her, Ms. Clark would gleefully tell her, "Take a bus!" But a year ago the chair was damaged. The mechanical replacement stymied her travel to the point the two never managed the trip out to the movies that they had been planning for a year.

Friends and staff remembered Ms. Clark as a vivacious lady who loved life, and was smart and humorous and sensitive to the woes of her friends. She was an expert seamstress and meticulously made jewelry. But when she got drunk, she could be feisty and swear like a sailor.

"She was a very spiritual person and had many friends in the hotel," said caseworker Yusef Shakuur, who spoke with her a few times a week over the nine months he knew her. "She was very knowledgeable and had a bond with her own culture and the African American culture."

Ms. Clark was under heavy morphine medication, said Rodriguez, who sometimes went to fill her prescriptions.

Her boyfriend, who lives in the Mission and did not attend the memorial, found Ms. Clark's body on Jan. 6. The medical examiner's office said the official cause of death was "complications from chronic alcoholism." She was 54.

"I loved my friend so much," said Colleen Marie Diserina through her sobs, "and I miss her so much."

Casey Carr said he met Ms. Clark a year ago when he was in stocking feet in the elevator, having locked himself out of his room.

"I gave her some cherry blossoms and we became best friends," Carr told the small gathering. "She was a good person and had a good spirit and was intelligent and loved life. But I think lately life had become too much for her."

They talked daily, Carr said. When she called him, he always answered with "Thomas' Mortuary," then offered her a choice of opulent plans he made up.

"She always said she wanted the \$25,000 crypt with the embossed picture," Carr said behind a smile that quickly faded. "I didn't know this would happen. Every time the phone rings now, I still think it's her. She'll always be with me."

Her friends thought she had Apache blood, maybe Navajo, too. But Rodriguez said it was neither.

"It was a tribe she said no one would recognize," Rodriguez said. "But she spoke the language and used it sometimes when she talked to her daughter."

Ms. Clark told Rodriguez she ran away from the reservation to get married when she was 14. But her parents had it annulled. Friends confirmed that she said she had eight children, all in Arizona. One daughter, Laveda, had come to collect her personal effects and took her ashes back to the reservation.

"They'll put the ashes in a teepee," said Carr, "and a medicine man will chant for her for 24 hours."

It was a plan Carr never thought to offer her.

— TOM CARTER



RAYMOND EVANS A special loved one

Raymond Evans, who died in the hospital Nov. 27 after a long illness, had lived at the Ritz Hotel for 10 years. He was 44 years old.

"He had family nearby, and he was a very happy person, a loving person who'd say hello to everyone," said Teresa Peace, Ritz assistant manager, at

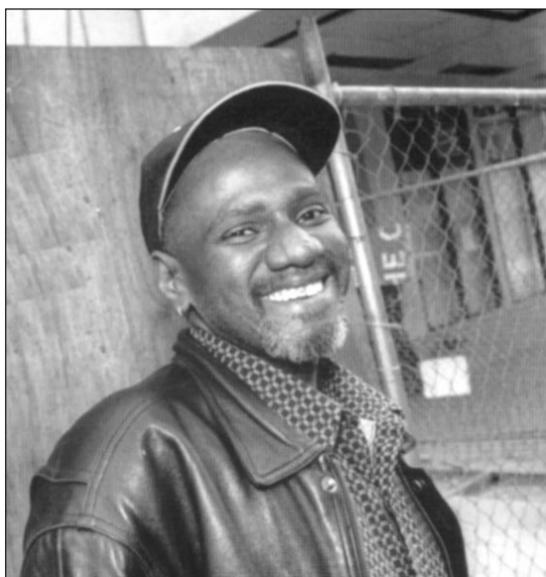


PHOTO COURTESY TNDC, 2005 CALENDAR

Mr. Evans' Dec. 9 memorial. "If he went to stay overnight at his mom's house — which he did often — he'd call and let us know. He loved to cook and often helped prepare food for the hotel's special events."

"It's really hard to imagine Raymond being still," said a Ritz resident, shaking his head. "He was so active and energetic — always."

Another fellow resident, who apparently had been drinking that morning, made a speech about life and how he saw it: "You know, death is as common as the cold, but we never get used to it. I lived here eight years and I loved Raymond — though there were things about him I sometimes didn't like." He turned to the Rev. Glenda Hope, who was officiating at the memorial. "What does the Bible mean?" he asked her, then answered: "B-I-B-L-E: Basic Instruction Before Leaving Early. We're all God's children."

Peace closed the memorial by passing out copies of a poem written by Alexia Gleaves, a friend of Mr. Evans.

FOR A SPECIAL LOVED ONE
To know him, was to love him.
To miss him, is to cherish him.
To lose him, is to remember him.
Yesterday is history, Tomorrow is a mystery.
Today is a gift, that's why it's called the present.

— MARJORIE BEGGS