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rial. He was in Nigeria when she died, and just returned. "She was a true mother at heart and a no-nonsense person."

At some point she left the Ibangi family and moved to Oakland. It wasn't known when she married a Chinese man and changed her name, but she took a job waitressing in Sukhi's Indian restaurant for several years. She became good friends with the woman owner who often gave her Indian clothes. Somewhere, Ms. Yepiz lost her green card.

Marni Temple, a Richmond woman, met her at Sukhi's 11 years ago and struck up a friendship. When Temple had a hip replacement, she asked Ms. Yepiz to take care of her.

"It was a great gift," said Temple, who was wearing a dark Indian dress to honor Ms. Yepiz. "She helped me from bed to the walker to the cane. She could be stubborn, too. But without that she wouldn't have survived. Then I lost track of her. Thank all of you who helped her."

Ms. Yepiz apparently got sick and moved to San Francisco. Her husband died eight months ago, someone said.

A Zimbabwean woman stood and said she had roomed with Ms. Yepiz in San Francisco — but it wasn't clear if that was in a shelter or elsewhere — and she had been "like a mother to me." Ms. Yepiz had admonished her for fighting with her employer, reminding her she was "here illegally," and to be careful.

"She said to me, 'San Francisco is the only place that will take care of me — I have nothing now and I can't work.'" The woman added, "Thank you — she could die in a beautiful room."

When the woman moved out, Ms. Yepiz was praying, she said, and she never saw her again.

Entering the welfare system put "a very complex burden" on Ms. Yepiz because she was not a citizen and had no green card, a social worker said. As her shelter time drew near an end, and the worker tried desperately to get her housing, Ms. Yepiz was calm and cheerful.

"She was always reassuring us," said the social worker. "She was never down and had the most peace of mind of any of us. She respected the system."

Despite Ms. Yepiz' troubles, she received the city's full treatment.

The public administrator's office handles

estates of deceased indigents and others who have no relatives here. In handling Ms. Yepiz's case, it worked through the Zimbabwe Embassy in Washington, D.C., because San Francisco doesn't have one. It located her son Kelvin Shekede in the town of Gweru to send him the death certificate. Her daughter died years ago.

The public administrator planned to ship Ms. Yepiz's remains home but Lufthansa, the only airline flying to Zimbabwe, wanted \$4,000. With the casket, fees and other costs, the total would be \$11,000. But estate investigator Andres Garcia talked to the son and he gave permission to cremate the body instead and send on the ashes. That \$2,260 cost is paid from Ms. Yepiz' small estate, Garcia said. Anything left goes to her son.

"Ms. Yepiz was lucky to have friends who cared about her," Garcia said. "They called us with information. It's nice to see that bonding, and it helps put a face on the people we deal with. I got to talk to the son, too."

"I'm glad this worked out. So many times we go into an apartment in the Tenderloin of someone young or old and there are no leads to find relatives."

Upon the arrival of the ashes, and after a proper ceremony, it is said in Zimbabwe's Shona tradition that Ms. Yepiz's spirit will become part of her ancestral tree. ■

—TOM CARTER

**GREGORY DAVID HIGGS**  
SOMPAC member

Gregory David Higgs, a security guard who served on the South of Market Project Area Committee, died March 8 of heart disease in his Park Hotel room on Folsom Street, a family member said.

Mr. Higgs was on SOMPAC's Crime & Safety Committee from August 1999 to September 2001 when he had to quit for health reasons.

A native of Long Island, Mr. Higgs spent most of his adult life in the Bay Area. He is survived by a sister, Dr. Maggie Higgs Blackburn of Tallahassee, her husband, Doug Blackburn, and their son, Max Blackburn. The family asks that any contributions in Greg's name be made to SF Connect ([www.projecthomeless.org](http://www.projecthomeless.org)) or Glide Foundation ([www.glide.org](http://www.glide.org)). ■

—DOUG BLACKBURN

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**STATEWIDE DIRECT  
PRIMARY  
ELECTION  
TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2008**

**REGISTER  
AND VOTE**

**Polling places are open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.**

**Early voting at City Hall begins May 5, 2008.**

**Last day to register to vote is May 19, 2008.**

**You must re-register if you have moved, changed your name, or want to change your party affiliation.**

**Last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot is May 27, 2008.**



**Party Affiliation & "Decline-To-State" Voters**

The June 3, 2008 election is a "modified" closed primary. If you registered to vote with a qualified political party, you can only vote for candidates from that party.

If you declined to state a political party when you registered, you can vote for candidates from one of the following two parties:

- The Democratic Party
- The Republican Party

Decline-to-state voters will not be able to vote in party county central committee contests.

*All registered voters may vote on ballot measures.*

**Be a Pollworker on Election Day!**

The Department of Elections is looking for pollworkers to help on Election Day. Pollworkers can earn up to \$170! To sign up, visit [www.sfgov.org/elections](http://www.sfgov.org/elections) or call (415) 554-4395.

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Para información electoral en español, visite [www.sfgov.org/elections](http://www.sfgov.org/elections) o llame al (415) 554-4366.



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