NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document



Angel Franco/The New York Times

The coffin of Kathy T. Nguyen, covered with the South Vietnamese flag, was carried yesterday from St. John Chrysostom Roman Catholic Church in the South Bronx. All her known relatives died in Vietnam.

THE FUNERAL

In the Bronx, A Farewell To a Victim

By ALAN FEUER

She lived alone, without a family, but every pew in the church was filled.

Hundreds of people crowded into a Roman Catholic church in the South Bronx yesterday for the funeral of Kathy T. Nguyen, the only New Yorker to die of anthrax. They were black and white, Asian and Latino, the wife of a governor and clerks in a hospital stockroom.

The Rev. Carlos Rodriguez told Ms. Nguyen's friends and neighbors at St. John Chrysostom Roman Catholic Church that the rainbow of faces was a testament to her open nature. "Only in America could a Vietnamese woman learn to eat rice and beans," Father Rodriguez said, "and her Puerto Rican neighbors learn to eat Vietnamese."

Ms. Nguyen, who was 61, was remembered as a kindly and quiet woman who adored fancy hats and cooking for her friends. One man recalled the sweet perfume she wore. Another remembered her Christmas gifts of toys and pajamas.

Libby Pataki, who attended on behalf of her husband, Gov. George E. Pataki, told the congregation that "Kathy has become the unwitting symbol" in a "war on innocent citizens."

More than 20 years ago, Ms. Nguyen fled Vietnam, where all her known relatives were killed, and she settled in the Bronx. For five years, she worked at a clothing store, Eden Fashions, and then she took a job with New York Hospital, her friends said. For the last decade, she had worked in a basement stockroom at the Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital on the Upper East Side until her death on Wednesday.

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