

A class of 400 bids farewell to popular teacher

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APTOS — Swaying and clapping to Aretha Franklin's recording of "R.E.S.P.E.C.T." Pounding Native American drums. More laughter than tears.



Matlock

It wasn't a typical memorial service Saturday at Cabrillo College, but Nancy Matlock was not a typical person.

The Cabrillo College trustee, San Lorenzo Valley High School instructor, community activist and trainer of teachers-to-be at UCSC, died Monday at her Santa Cruz home from ovarian cancer. She was 46.

Matlock was a teacher to the end. She left meticulous instruc-

tions for her final tribute, including having part of her favorite book, "The Velveteen Rabbit," read by one of her student-teachers, Amanda Wylie.

She had "a lesson plan for every occasion," said her friend and San Lorenzo Valley High School counselor Ardeth DeVries, who acted as moderator for the memorial.

Matlock requested that the 400 friends, colleagues, relatives and students who attended fill out cards, pledging to do something to make a difference.

"There will be periodic quizzes to know if you have followed through and there will be a chapter test before you move on, as I have done," Matlock wrote.

One of her students at SLV High, Shoshana Wolff, made suggestions for the pledge cards: give money for a scholarship, talk to your family members and be close to them, give someone a pat on the back

once a week, read to a child.

"The most important thing is to walk your talk. Nancy said that often. When you say you are going to help someone, help someone," Wolf said.

Music that Matlock selected, Crosby, Stills and Nash's "Teach Your Children Well," followed by "R.E.S.P.E.C.T.," was played as people filled out their cards.

When Franklin's hit tune was played, people started to clap in rhythm. Some stood and swayed to the beat.

It was perfectly Matlock.

There were pensive moments, too. Jan Landry, chaplain for the Hospice Caring Project, asked all to close their eyes "and continue to invite the spirit of Nancy to touch us and be with us today."

Landry said members of Hospice, a program that helps the terminally ill die with dignity, left the Matlock home "renewed and in-

spired."

DeVries invited all to "talk to her, not about her" while her husband, her two children and friends pounded hand-held drums.

The drum played by her husband, Dale Matlock, and made by Bernadette Fox, was used by Matlock in the last year of her life to help her spiritual healing.

"My meditations with the drum led me to face the fear of my death and accept it," Matlock wrote. "It has been uncanny. From the moment I came to accept the possibility of dying from this terrible illness, I began to heal and recover in my heart."

It was evident where Matlock got her strength as her grieving mother, Ruth Alexander, faced the crowd.

"I can't believe I am doing this, but this, too, is on orders from you-know-who," she said.

Alexander said she had spent

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most of the past year at the Matlock home. She was overwhelmed by the outpouring of cards, telephone calls, flowers and gifts.

Her daughter asked her to write thank-you notes, but she couldn't keep up. One of her daughter's last requests was that she thank everyone at the memorial service, Alexander said.

David Weiss, Matlock's former

principal at SLV High and fellow Cabrillo College trustee, found it hard to control his emotions as he listed his friend's accomplishments.

"To her final breath, Nancy Matlock showed us how to live, and remarkably, she showed us how to die.

"And everyone in this room who knew her knew that was exactly how she'd planned it."