

"It is a sad day for the city of Key West. We have truly lost a friend of the city. Jeremy was a dedicated public servant who felt strongly about the beautification of Key West. He did his homework and would ask the hard questions of city staff."

— Mayor Jimmy Weekley

JEREMY ANTHONY

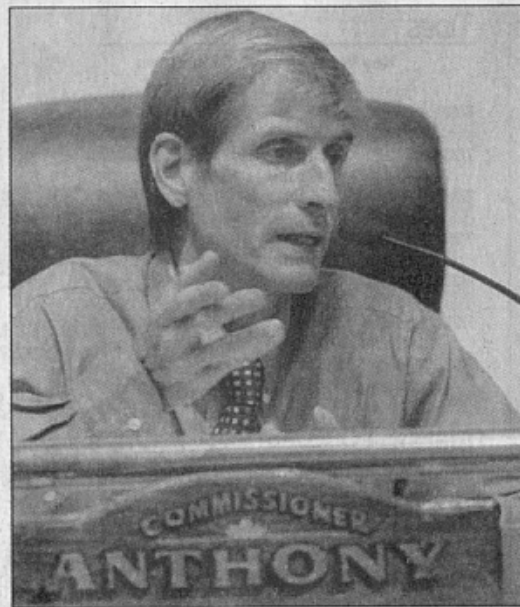
Nov. 10, 1949 — July 21, 2003

"There was his way and the wrong way. I didn't agree with him sometimes, but I would never deny the courage of his convictions."

— Peter Arnow, longtime friend

He sought to beautify his city

City commissioner loses his struggle with AIDS



File photo by ROB O'NEAL/The Citizen

Jeremy Anthony makes a point on the dais during a city commission meeting earlier this year.

BY GINNY HALLER
Citizen Staff Writer

KEY WEST

City Commissioner Jeremy Anthony's passionate pursuit of public service and long struggle with AIDS have come to an end. The 53-year-old landscaper who focused his political energy on beautifying his city was found dead in his home Monday, apparently of natural causes.

According to Key West police, a friend checking on Anthony found his body about 8:25 a.m. at Anthony's home on Washington Street. Police said there

was no evidence of foul play. Steve Torrence, public information officer for the Key West Police Department, said Monday there will be no autopsy and Anthony's doctor plans to sign a death certificate.

Anthony was at the end of his first four-year term as commissioner representing District 5 — a diverse blend of Old Town, mid-town and New Town neighborhoods — when he announced an intention to run for mayor in the upcoming municipal election in October.

That announcement came amid concerns about his health and weight loss, but the com-

missioner insisted he was merely tired and hadn't been eating properly.

Anthony, a 21-year resident of Key West, grew up on a farm in rural Georgia. He told The Citizen in a 2001 interview that he moved to Key West from California because he had dreamed of living in a tropical place where it never got cold.

Before his election to the city commission, Anthony led an active civic life in Key West. His involvement included serving on the city Tree Commission, serving as president of the

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"I have so many special memories of him. I always felt like he did so much for me, but he always said that I did so much for him. Not only was he a close friend, but was also the commissioner who appointed me to the Art in Public Places board, which he so loved."

— Frank Garner, longtime friend

"I felt Jeremy was just a very caring and compassionate person. He had a sweet spirit, and I'm really going to miss him. He was always very kind, warm, gentle and welcoming to me."

— The Rev. Dr. Gwendolyn Magby,
pastor Trinity Presbyterian Church

"His mind and his being are truly at peace right now and that is an important thing."

— Key West police Officer Steve Torrence,
longtime friend and police chaplain

"Jeremy Anthony was one of the most compassionate commissioners in this city. It saddens me and my prayers and heartfelt feelings go out to the family. He will be truly missed."

— Bill Mauldin,
candidate for Anthony's District 5 seat

Jeremy was kind, hard-working, fair, and, above all, extremely conscientious. He conducted himself without regard to politics or favoritism of any type. Jeremy's legacy is that of a fine statesman for our community, and he will surely be missed. I am honored to have served with Jeremy."

— City Commissioner Ed Scales

"Jeremy did it his way. I have a lot of admiration for that."

— City Commissioner Merrill McCoy

Anthony

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Lesbian and Gay Pride Alliance and serving as a board member of the Boys & Girls Club of the Keys.

Peter Arnow met Anthony several years ago, when Anthony was president of Pride Alliance, an organization that eventually became part of the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Key West Inc.

"He was very concerned with gay rights and the city commission," Arnow said, reflecting on Anthony's creation of the Matthew Shepherd Memorial Service and his commitment to the city of Key West.

Anthony loved the outdoors — he created a landscaping business to support himself when he became involved with city politics.

"As a landscaper who loved working outdoors, Jeremy will probably be remembered for his beautification of three areas of his district which had long been neglected," said Tom Oosterhoudt, a fellow city commissioner. "These projects will

"I will always remember Jeremy as a man who carried himself with great dignity. It was extremely difficult to watch that change over the past few weeks of his illness, and harder still to hear the snickers emerge from the very community he served with great dedication. Regardless of that, I'll always remember him as a commissioner who did his homework and represented our city with dignity."

— City Commissioner Carmen Turner

be his legacy."

The projects include his efforts to establish the Mary and John Spottswood Waterfront Park at the end of Seminole Avenue, a White Street landscaping project that involved lining the road with palm trees and an ambitious beautification plan currently under way at the Southernmost Point.

In what became Spottswood Park, the crumbling cement at the end of Seminole Avenue was turned into colorful bright patterns of flowing tropical colors and patterns reminiscent of the beach and ocean. It was the city's first Art in Public Places project.

"He wanted to make sure the park was implemented during his tenure," said Annalise Mannix-Lachner, manager of Engineering Services. "So he showed up almost every day to show how important it was to him."

Although Anthony did not start the project of planting palm trees on White Street from Atlantic Boulevard to Eaton Street, he took it up when he was elected commissioner. He sought a more comprehensive improvement project than the

"I was deeply saddened and surprised at the news about Commissioner Anthony. I have tremendous respect with what he did to improve the quality of life for the residents of District 5 and for the city as a whole. He was a person of integrity and we will all miss him."

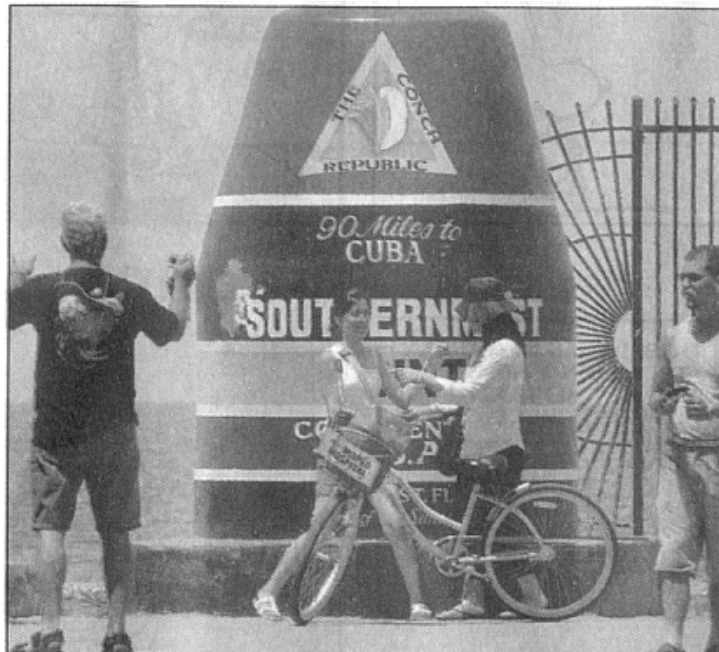
— Heather Carruthers,
candidate for Anthony's District 5 seat

"The whole community is in sorrow now for the death of Commissioner Anthony. Let me tell you my wife went to the hospital to pray with him, and we are all praying for the Almighty to take him in his arms and be surrounded by the angels."

— Jose Menendez,
candidate for Anthony's District 5 seat

"Jeremy was probably one of the most honorable men I've ever met. He was a great friend to me and to Key West, and the few weeks have broken my heart. This is a wake-up call that AIDS is still a killer and there's still no cure."

— Denise Dunbar,
longtime resident



ROB O'NEAL/The Citizen

Visitors line up at the Southernmost Point Monday morning at the corner of Whitehead and South streets. Updating and improving the tourist spot was one of Commissioner Jeremy Anthony's priority projects.

original plan called for.

The Southernmost Point plan involves improvements in traffic flow, landscaping, benches and a historic display. It also will be an Art in a Public Places project — something that was important to Anthony.

"He wanted to tie in the

design of Spottswood Park with the changes on the Southernmost Point," Mannix-Lachner said. "He wanted it to be an area that was beautiful and more parklike than an old sidewalk with a buoy on it."

The commissioner also proposed a plan for a new City Hall.

"As my friend of 20 years and my fellow gay city commissioner, I was always impressed with Jeremy's deep concern for the human condition and his profound respect for all minorities. I always admired his courage for taking on the often thankless job of city commissioner while living with AIDS. Nothing can be more stressful than being a commissioner, and nothing is worse for someone living with AIDS than stress. The fact that he was able to live a full life for 18 years should inspire people living with AIDS everywhere. Certainly he is one of the few people in America who have successfully run for office while living with the disease. He should be remembered as a role model for this achievement as well. Jeremy opened the doors for people today who may live longer lives with the new medications. He should be remembered as a leader in this area."

— City Commissioner Tom Oosterhoudt

"We are all about creating a city that works in the 21st century, not the 19th," Anthony said this spring, describing his concept for city hall. "I have the vision and see things already in existence in my mind's eye."

He was a man of strong convictions, said Arnow of his vegetarian friend who lived with HIV for 18 years using only natural, non-pharmaceutical treatment methods.

When Anthony told Arnow, who lost his partner of 26 years to AIDS several years ago, that he wanted to run for a city commission seat, Arnow worried because he knew that "the worst thing for an AIDS patient is stress."

"But Jeremy said, 'I'd rather do it and drop dead in the middle of

it than not do it at all,'" Arnow said.

Denise Dunbar, who lost her brother to AIDS and watched the disease claim many friends, said she was reminded in the past few weeks of the ravages of the disease.

"This came too close to memories of what it was like for those of us involved with AIDS who lost hundreds of friends in the beginning of the epidemic," she said.

Anthony's brother, Michael McEachin, said the commissioner's body will be taken to Georgia tomorrow. Service is scheduled for 2 p.m. Thursday near Junction City, Ga.

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