



Former DC First Lady Effi Barry to Lie in Repose at Wilson Building



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The body of former District First Lady Effi Barry will lie in repose next week in the John A. Wilson Building, an honor generally reserved for elected officials but called "a fitting tribute" by Mayor Adrian M. Fenty yesterday.

Barry, 63, who had acute myeloid leukemia, died Thursday at Anne Arundel Medical Center in Annapolis.

Viewing hours will be from 10 a.m. to midnight Thursday and 6 to 9 a.m. Friday, followed by a funeral at 11 a.m. at Washington National Cathedral. A repast will be at 1 p.m. at the old City Museum building.

Fenty (D) said that he will proclaim Friday "Effi Barry Day" and that all costs related to her viewing will be absorbed by city government.

"We will certainly roll out all of the resources of the city in recognition," he said. "This administration will do whatever is necessary to have a fitting tribute."



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Fenty made the announcement at a news conference at the Wilson building yesterday. The last person to lie in repose there was former mayor Walter E. Washington in 2003.

D.C. Council Chairman Vincent C. Gray (D) said he contacted all council members to get their approval and was met with overwhelming consent. "They said, 'What? Are you kidding? Of course,'" Gray said. "She was the prototype of what it means to be first lady of the District of Columbia."

A onetime model, Barry evoked comparisons to Jacqueline Kennedy and Princess Diana during her years as the city's first lady. She was married to former mayor and current council member Marion Barry (D-Ward 8) for 14 years. The couple divorced in 1993.

Barry worked with several charities in the city before leaving to teach health and sex education at Hampton University for 12 years. She moved back to the District and in recent years worked as a consultant for a nonprofit organization and as a program director for the city's HIV/AIDS Administration.

Part of her job was to coordinate groups of patients east of the Anacostia River. Gray said he received a call from Barry about a month ago. She was in the hospital. "She said, 'I want to talk to you about these grants,'" he recalled. "I said, 'Why don't we think about Effi for a minute?'"



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Gray said he wants to rename the patient program the Effi Barry Initiative in recognition of the former first lady, whose death spurred public-health pleas yesterday.

The Friends of Effi Barry will sponsor a bone marrow typing drive in her honor from 3 to 8 p.m. today at the Black Family Reunion on the Mall. During the news conference, council member David A. Catania (I-At Large) asked members of the public to become organ and tissue donors. Catania, who was close to Barry, said he had admired "the beautiful woman" and "special person" for years.

Yesterday, he turned to Marion Barry and said: "We wondered how you were able to land such a woman."

Barry laughed. Minutes later, he was somber and reflective as he ended the news conference.

"It's no secret how much I loved Effi," he said.

