



## A FOND FAREWELL TO ELYSIUM'S "MITCH"

3/16/1926 - 8/13/2006

William G. "Mitch" Mitchell, who lived at Elysium Fields for many years died last month peacefully in his sleep. Mitch was 80 years old and he had been in declining health for some time.

Born in Jeanerette, Louisiana, Mitch was known for over 30 years as the Field's most popular massage therapist. But to those who knew him Mitch was more than that. He was a gentle friend and confidant to those who needed a moment's comfort and advice.

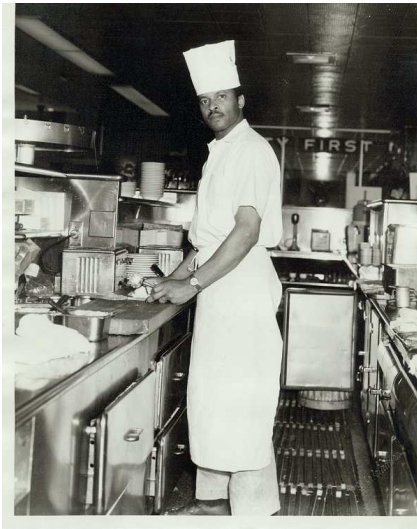
Lesley H. wrote us to say "he had a comfortable, elegant demise...He was delighted with his hospice care, it brought him much contentment and solace in the last few weeks...The hospice people dressed him all in white, and he looked gorgeous."

It was Mitch's wish to be cremated and his son, Gregory, received the ashes and an American flag (yes, Mitch was a WWII veteran, US Navy).

Before making Elysium his home, Mitch worked as a fundraiser in 1968 for Robert Kennedy's Presidential campaign. (*Note: that is where he first met SCNA President Gary M, who also worked on the RFK campaign staff – Ed.*) Also, Mitch was quite a cook! For years he was a short order cook at Dolores Restaurant in Los Angeles, and in 1975, he won the chili cook-off at the Los Angeles County Fair.

Mitch was also a Free Beach Activist in those heady days of the 1960's and 70's when we were trying to get legal nude beaches approved at Venice Beach, Topanga Beach, and Malibu's Pirates Cove.

Mitch didn't want any fuss over him after his death, so there was no memorial service.



### A PERSONAL GOODBYE TO MITCH FROM VIVIAN

"MITCH-Y!!" --- I used to yell every Saturday morning as I came on to the Fields, and skipped into the "Zen Garden" where Mitch had his trailer.

Hello, Mama," he'd bellow from his bed inside. He'd slide his lithe body out of the trailer, packed away the vanilla ice cream and cigarettes I brought him every week, picked up his towel and we'd go, arms around each other, up the steps to the Jacuzzi for what was to be at least a 90 minute Watsu. I so very much enjoyed those days, every

Saturday and every Sunday for years, my body getting stronger and more muscular and more relaxed under those great guiding hands and energy.

His smile and his light, sitting behind the bar in back of the pool, or running after a gate crasher or feeding the flames of the Massage Magic fireplace, or any other seminar fire, made it seem like home, no matter what mood I was in, or how my week went, that ebony angel would grin at me, and the world was ok again.

My greatest honor was that he actually left the Fields in order to come to my going-away party when I left for Seattle. It was a very rare occasion indeed that he would deem important enough for him to leave his nest at Elysium. He'd always have someone fetch him things or just do without, so he wouldn't have to abandon his peace. So, for him to come to see me off and say goodbye, was very important to me.

In the last few weeks, I talked to him often on the phone and then got to see him, make him dinner and give him a massage for a change. He'd only asked me for a massage one time before, and it was during a sad period of time for him. I was happy to do it then and just recently, to say goodbye to him, and to get to tell him how important he was in my life. He again grinned at me, and said "you too in my life, Mama."

Mitch was one of the souls, the guiding forces, the nuance of what Elysium was to all of us, the goodness and the power behind what made us all feel a little saner at the end of the week.

I will miss you, my dear Mitch.

*Vivian*