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Robin Williams remembered by fans on Hollywood's Walk of Fame



HOLLYWOOD >> As a wreath of white and yellow flowers was carried down Hollywood Boulevard on Tuesday morning, an uncharacteristic silence came over the usually vibrant Walk of Fame.

The placement of calla lilies and roses over [Robin Williams'](#) pink terrazzo star was a quiet gesture, one in contrast with the entertainer they were intended for, whose range of characters he created seemed to burst from screens big and small, bringing laughter and smiles. But in the end, news of his suicide brought sadness and tears to those very same fans.

"He could take audiences to different levels," said Erlinda Fantauzzi, an Arleta resident who came to Hollywood Boulevard to pay her respects to Williams. The 67-year-old woman said she cried when she heard the news that Williams had taken his own life.

"I feel sad that he made so many people happy but in the end, he died sad and alone," she added.

Based on a preliminary report by the Marin County's coroner's office, Williams died alone in a room of his Tiburon home. The cause of death was asphyxia by hanging, Lt. Keith Boyd with the Marin County Sheriff's Office said during a news conference. Boyd said that Williams, 63, had several cuts on his left wrist and that one end of a belt had been fastened around his neck, while the other end had been secured between the closed closet door and door frame. No foul play was suspected. Williams was found by his personal assistant, in a seated position. Boyd would not say if Williams had left a note for his family.

What was known was that Williams recently had sought help for depression. He had battled cocaine addiction and alcohol before, but it seemed overwhelming sadness still filled him.

"Humor and laughter is a defense mechanism," said Ildiko Tabori, a licensed psychologist in residence at the Laugh Factory in Los Angeles. Depression among comedians is common, she said, especially since many travel frequently and feel lonely on the road.

"I didn't know Williams at all," Tabori said. "But there had to have been some sort of demons inside of him that had gone on for many, many years that were not processed through, and not resolved."

Tabori said everyone experiences a range of emotions every day, including sadness and depression, but if people don't receive help or support, those feelings can fester and become detrimental.

While Williams had the wealth to find exclusive support, money doesn't always help, Tabori said.

"It's about the desire," she said. "Sometimes you can't see past that dark moment."

She said society still needs to remove the stigma of mental illness so that people are not afraid to say, "I am having a really bad time in my life." In addition, people need to learn to recognize signs in others: a change in mood, or too much eating or not eating, change in appearance, and isolation.

"We need to reach out," she said.

Back at the Walk of Fame, media from around the world and tourists crowded around Williams' star near TCL Chinese Theatre, where Leron Gubler, president of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, quietly placed the wreath. The star in the sidewalk already had been covered with daisies, votive candles, notes and drawings.

A card that hung from the wreath read: "You made us laugh, now we cry."

Many fans had the same sentiment.

"I got very teary eyed when I walked up to his star," said Mary-Beth Hempfling of Florida, who was visiting Los Angeles with her husband, Ray. He liked Williams in "Mrs. Doubtfire," while she preferred the actor in "Patch Adams," she said.

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"I think it was his gift of laughter. It was a God-given gift," Hempfling said of why so many people were drawn to Williams. "I think his purpose on this planet was to show his heart."

Puey Quinones, 31, said Williams is a big star in his native Philippines.

"It's like losing a family member," Quinones said. "I love his movies. It's a big loss for us."

Mike Ravizza, 47, said he met Williams once, when the actor was leaving the set of the Jimmy Kimmel show, almost across the street from where the wreath was placed.

"I said, Hey, Robin, I'm a fan!" and he turned to me and said 'You are? You need Botox!'" Ravizza said. "It made me laugh. I'll never forget that."
