

Author William Saroyan, 72, dies of cancer

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — William Saroyan, the writer who tried "to express the individuality of people" in such works as the Pulitzer Prize-winning play "The Time of Your Life" and the novel "The Human Comedy," died of cancer Monday. He was 72.

Saroyan's death at the Veterans Administration Hospital was announced by his physician, Dr. Robert Aduan. Funeral arrangements were pending.

Five days before he collapsed

at his home here and was hospitalized April 20, Saroyan called The Associated Press to report that cancer had spread to several organs and that he was dying.

He then gave this final statement for publication after his death:

"Everybody has got to die, but I have always believed an exception would be made in my case. Now what?"

Saroyan's stories told of the wonders experienced by Armenian boys, often himself,

growing up in America. "The Human Comedy," his most famous novel, gave this sample of his philosophy toward humanity:

"Every man in the world is better than someone else. And not as good as someone else."

Saroyan began writing in Fresno at age 17. In his early 20s, he moved to San Francisco, where he wrote many of his major works.

He became famous in 1934, at age 26, by winning the O. Henry Award for his first major short

story, "The Daring Young Man On The Flying Trapeze."

It was the product of a period when Saroyan turned out a short story daily for a month, refining his philosophy that "Speed and brevity is the point out of which comes unified work."

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His prime example of speed was "The Time Of Your Life," the 1940 Pulitzer Prize play which he wrote in six days. Saroyan rejected the \$1,500 prize because he didn't think the arts should be patronized by wealth or commerce.

He once described his writing

as an attempt "to express the individuality of people. Each one is a distinctly separate person. He or she may be intellectual or ignorant, rich or poor in the eyes of others, but each is noble. Each is entitled to happiness."

Saroyan wrote daily all his life, but his greatest fame came for his writings during the Great Depression and World War II.

He was regarded as a recluse during his latter years and admitted to avoiding all but a few close friends on the premise that a writer needs solitude to create.

Born in Fresno on Aug. 31, 1908, Saroyan said he "did time" in an orphanage at age 3 after his father died. His mother later was able to bring the family together again.

He married an 18-year-old New York actress, Carol Marcus, in 1943. They were divorced six years later, remarried in 1951 and divorced again the next year.

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structure to cling to until you figure out what the new structure is," Lobisser says. "Having the artificial structure — peers, people who are credible — it's critical. The New Student Host Program is unique in that sense in providing peer support."

The NSHP, like the administration-advised Student University Relations Council, uses current students as image makers. Where the NSHP works to convince incoming freshmen that the University is a welcome place, so SURC works

on the outside public.

Members staff the University's county fair booths, in part to show Oregonians that University students are civilized again, admits adviser Mary Hudzikiewicz. SURC volunteers also provide "arms and legs" to help out big University functions, including U of O Preview, the admissions office's "open house" for prospective students.

Not that they're mere lackeys for the administration — SURC helped the ASUO organize the recent student rally at the Legislature.

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