

News**Prolific Film and Literary Critic Dies**Kam Williams, who wrote for dozens of publications including *The Skanner*, passed away May 30*The Skanner News*

Over the past two decades, film and literary critic Kam Williams published nearly ten thousand articles and reviews.

Throughout his nearly 22-year career as a writer, he was most known for his film reviews and celebrity interviews for websites such as RottenTomatoes.com and over 100 publications around the world, ranging from local papers like Princeton, NJ's *Town Topics* to international news chain *Metro*.

A prolific journalist, he also wrote countless book reviews, editorials and a novel that will be published posthumously later this year.



Kam Williams

Mr. Williams, who was a resident of Princeton, NJ, died Thursday, May 30 from prostate cancer. He was 66 years old.

Born Lloyd Joseph Williams in New York City and raised in St. Albans, Queens, Mr. Williams was commonly referred to as "Kam," a nickname short for "Kamau," a name given to him while he was a student

at Brown University, by famed jazz musician Sun Ra.

Mr. Williams' path to a career in writing was circuitous. He was a graduate of Brooklyn Tech High School in New York City and earned his bachelor's degree from Cornell University in Black Literature in 1974. While receiving his master's in English from Brown University in 1975, he first attempted a career in screenwriting at Chicago's WTTW, a PBS affiliate TV station.

However, Mr. Williams had a diverse set of interests and diverted his attention from writing for business and entertainment law, receiving his J.D. from Boston University in 1978 (along with bar membership in MA,

PA, CT, NY and NJ) followed by an M.B.A. from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 1980.

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Mr. Williams' first wife, the late Kristina Barbara Johnson (who had previously been married to sculptor J. Seward Johnson II, the grandson of Johnson & Johnson Co-Founder Robert Wood Johnson I) introduced him to art dealing and the antique business in which he subsequently deployed his corporate and legal knowledge for over a decade.

Mr. Williams had a colorful personality and a commanding presence, according to friends and family. He was a tall African American man with freckles and wore his bright-red hair in a large Afro hairstyle that was immediately noticeable

in a crowd.

His diverse life experiences and base of knowledge (he was a polymath who read a book a week) made him a compelling conversationalist and lead to a brief but recurring guest appearance on the radio show, "The Howard Stern Show."

It was that experience that later sparked his career in journalism when a family friend and writer at the Princeton Packet, a local newspaper in his hometown Princeton, NJ, recommended Mr. Williams write a film review of Howard Stern's 1997 biographical film "Private Parts."

Mr. Williams' intense work ethic and glowing journalistic reputation lead to extensive work interviewing celebrities associated with upcoming film and book releases, including Quentin Tarantino, Jamie Foxx, Mel Brooks, Russell Simmons, LeBron James and former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, among many others.

Mr. Williams was also a staunch supporter of civil rights-related causes, publishing countless op-eds on the topic and later joined the NAACP Image Awards Nominating Committee.

Outside of his writing career, he had a deep passion for music and boasted a large collection of albums. He enjoyed long daily walks in nature, was an avid sports fan and a passionate Little League baseball coach. He was also an enthusiastic participant in weekly trivia nights with a large group of friends at a local bar in Princeton, NJ.

He is survived by many friends, 4 siblings (Lawrence, Daryl, Teresa and Rod) and his 2nd wife of 25 years, Susan, and stepson, Nicholas.

A memorial service will be held at the Princeton Garden Theater on June 29.

"He'd written for us about 15 years and I know a lot of our readers will miss him," said Bernie Foster, publisher of *The Skanner*. "We were very fortunate to get him because of Lisa Loving, our staff writer at the time. He wrote for about 150 papers across the country, one thing he did that was really helpful for us was review the Wake of Vanport series. He'll be greatly missed and I know all the publishers and movie people across the country will miss him."

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Go-Go cont'd from pg 9

live go-go in their youth. "The reason a lot of kids don't know about go-go is that it's been erased," said Angela Byrd, founder of "Made in the DMV" incubator for local artists and activists. She was

speaking at a recent conference organized under the banner of #DontMuteEDC. "I feel like go-go was pushed out, but it's coming back."

This official mistrust has continued. As recently as 2010 the alternative weekly *City Paper* published the Metropolitan Police Department's bi-weekly internal "go-go report" tracking all the shows in the area.

Glover says the attitudes of the police have eased a bit in recent years and Backyard Band and others now play regular shows around the district. But there's still a shortage of the all-ages shows that used to be the main gateway for young new fans. That age gap was evident during one of Backyard Band's recent shows at a bowling alley in Chinatown. The concert drew a healthy crowd of about 150 people — many of whom were obvious hardcores who knew every song by heart. But almost everybody seemed to be at least 35 years old.

Now the renewed attention comes at a time when go-go may organi-

cally be approaching one of its periodic flirtations with mainstream popularity.

Glover has gained personal fame for a memorable recurring role as Slim Charles on the popular TV show "The Wire." Artists as diverse as Snoop Dog and Dave Grohl from Foo Fighters have paid public tribute to the genre. Rare Essence and Backyard Band have both performed at the South by Southwest music festival and Backyard Band recently scored an improbable hit with a go-go cover of Adele's "Hello." Wale, the most famous Washington rapper, pays regular homage to go-go and recorded a song with TCB, purveyors of a neo-go-go sound called bounce-beat.

But local musicians still feel authorities have kept the culture at arm's length. They want to see the District government embrace go-go the way Chicago has done with blues and New Orleans with jazz.

They want a go-go museum, a hall of fame and go-go landmark-themed tours.

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