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Social worker Colleen Dier of Milwaukee lights a candle on Tuesday to commemorate a homeless person who died in the past year, during a memorial service for the homeless at St. Benedict the Moor.

# Remembering the forgotten

## Memorial offers humanity for the homeless

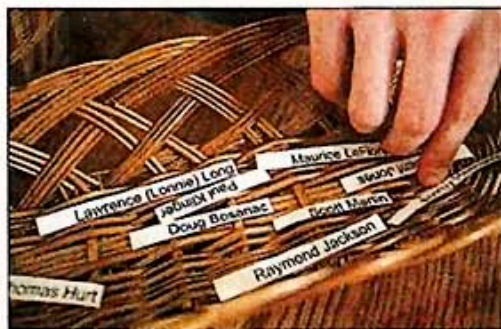
By **TOM HELD**  
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For some, the anonymity of a homeless life carries into death. They become names on slips of paper, drawn at random from a basket. Their memorial tribute is a stranger flicking a lighter, igniting a candle.

There were no glowing eulogies or loving stories for these invisible souls on Tuesday. Instead, they were remembered for a few moments by other homeless people, and those who strive to help them — a group of about 60 who shared smiles and tears Tuesday afternoon in the sun-filled main room of St. Benedict the Moor, a Capuchin ministry at 1015 N. 9th St.

This memorial for the homeless has become an annual service, a way to remember those forgotten by society, often by their families as well.

"People don't see them," said Roz Tornatore, a retired social worker. "When you walk down the street and there is someone sleeping there, you



People attending the memorial service take slips of paper bearing the names of 32 area homeless people who died in the past year. As the names were read, candles were lit in their honor.



Reginald Guard plays a saxophone during the memorial service.

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## MEMORIAL

# Homeless are remembered

walk over them."

When it came time to add names to those printed on the strips of paper, Tornatore stepped forward and lighted a candle for Raheim Patrick. He was a boy she helped when his family sought shelter at the Cathedral Center well over three years ago.

His family was still unsettled, living in and out of shelters, when a group of boys beat him to death in 2006 at a bus stop across from Malcom X Academy on N. 1st St. He was 15.

Others remembered on Tuesday died in similarly harsh fashion, frozen to death in an abandoned truck, run over by a car.

Not all were strangers to

those who mourned them.

Steve Hewitt lighted a candle for Clarence Littlebull Jr., a fellow man of the streets who died just 100 yards away from Hewitt on a cold winter night. The truck Hewitt found for shelter that night, in a junkyard, had windows. Littlebull's did not.

Another of Hewitt's traveling companions, James Pelzik, was killed by a car last year on a Milwaukee street. His life and death were remembered also in the glow of a candle.

"It represents that these people are human," said Hewitt, a poet who hopes to build on five months of sobriety. "They may have had their problems, but they're human."

As the memorial service concluded, several dozen homeless people stood on the steps of the church and waited for the start of the shelter's evening meal program, hoping to keep their names off a slip of paper.