

Councilman Stevenson dies; rites Thursday

City colleagues offer tributes



COUNCILMAN DIES — Robert Stevenson, who had represented the Cypress Park, Highland Park, Glassell Park areas since 1972, died early Tuesday morning. He was 59.

Private funeral rites will be held this Thursday for 13th District Councilman Robert J. Stevenson, who died early Tuesday of cardiac arrest following complications of hepatitis.

Mr. Stevenson, who was 59, had served in the city council since 1969, and had represented Highland Park, Glassell Park and Cypress Park since the council was redistricted in 1972. He spent time in the hospital in November of last year with an eye operation. After leaving the hospital, he was diagnosed in January as having hepatitis, and had been out of council since, remaining at home.

Prior to his city career, Mr. Stevenson served as a radio news reporter for station WHN in New York City and for CBS news. He was also a staff announcer in radio working on the Jack Benny Show among other programs.

He served in the army during World War II, and after the war appeared in numerous motion pictures and television shows as an actor and TV host.

FIELD DEPUTY

He began his city career as a field deputy for Councilman James Potter, and later served as deputy in the 13th District, under Councilman Paul Lamport.

After resigning that post, he ran against Lamport in 1969 and defeated him.

Mr. Stevenson was implicated in a grand jury investigation regarding gambling activities in Chinatown, which was then in his district. After the jury could reach no verdict in the trial, the judge directed acquittal of

the charge against the 13th district councilman.

Mr. Stevenson won reelection in 1973 after placing second in the primary for his seat. During the election he clashed bitterly with Councilman Arthur K. Snyder, who was backing another candidate for the post.

Since his re-election, Mr. Stevenson had been concentrating largely on governmental reorganization measures, with his governmental efficiency committee bringing out city legislation in such areas as conflict of interest and campaign financing.

PERSONNEL

Mr. Stevenson also served on the city personnel committee, and as acting chairman was instrumental in negotiating salary agreements with city workers and averting a possible municipal strike last year.

He is survived by his wife, Peggy; and son, Bruce, a law student at Loyola.

The council adjourned in memory of their late colleague Tuesday, with the adjourning motion offered by Councilman Robert Wilkinson and seconded by Councilman Paul Lamport.

All of the council members present, including Snyder, paid tribute to Mr. Stevenson as a friend and moderating influence on council debates.

Stevenson dies

Mrs. Pat Russell spoke of his "deep sense of compassion", and said the late councilman had been a source of aid to her when she began her city work.

Councilman Robert Farrell said he shared with Snyder and Mr. Stevenson the distinction of having first served as field deputies in the district they represented. He said he felt a "real sense of loss" for "the happy man who represented Hollywood".

GIBSON

Council president John Gibson praised the late councilman as "extremely helpful", and quiet man who was well informed on the problems of his district and the city.

The council president ordered city flags flown at half mast until the funeral.

Snyder, who arrived late from the hospital where his second wife was awaiting the birth of their first child, spoke of the battles with Stevenson, and said, "The thing I admired most about Bob was his professionalism", adding that the two could clash on the floor and remain friends off.

Mrs. Stevenson requested that in lieu of

flowers, contributions be made to the Retired Senior Volunteer Program in Hollywood, which the late councilman founded.

No official word was forthcoming Tuesday on plans to fill the vacancy, but most speculation centered around a special election on May 27, the date of the city runoff election.

The council has until March 14 to decide. The post could be filled by appointment, but the council has been tending to call special elections the past few years.