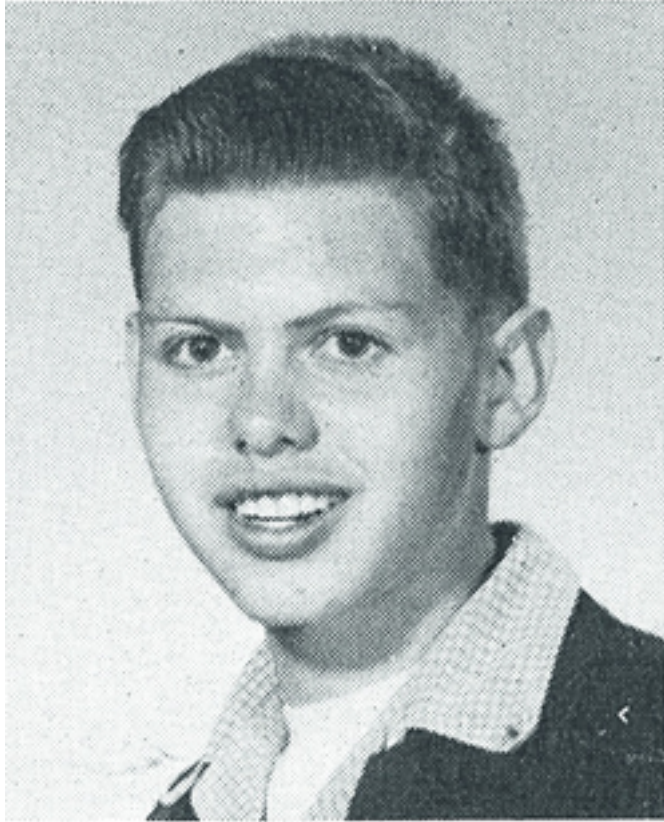


Published August 15th, 2012

Evangeline Cumbe Devera Laid to Rest in Her Native Philippines

Her alleged killer, James Collin, pleads not guilty

Laurie Snyder



James Collin Miramonte yearbook (1966)

Family and friends engaged in a difficult farewell at an East Bay funeral home early last month as they said goodbye to Orinda resident Evangeline Cumbe Devera. Afterward, the remains of the 56-year-old were carried home to her sister by Philippine Airlines.

Born Evangeline Cumbe, she was originally from Barangay Bonifacio, a district in the municipality of San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija Province, which is about a three-hour bus ride from Manila in the Central Luzon Region of the Philippines. Farming is a common occupation in the area.

According to the Philippine Consulate in San Francisco, Devera arrived in the United States approximately 23 years ago on a tourist visa. She had been living with James Collin, a 1967 graduate of Miramonte High School, for roughly 10 years in the home on Moraga Way in Orinda where he had been raised.

They never married and, despite reports in the media that there had been a child or teenager in the home, police state they found no child and also no clothing, toys, or other evidence to confirm that one had been present.

Collin Pleads Not Guilty

On August 2, following two prior Contra Costa Superior Court appearances, 62-year-old James Collin pled not guilty to the June 26 torture and murder of Devera.

The Contra Costa District Attorney's Office added enhancement charges "for personal use of a deadly/dangerous weapon ... a machete," and torture because of additional wounds that Devera was alleged to have suffered to her extremities, including the near severing of one of her hands. The second enhancement may signal the intention of

prosecutors to pursue the death penalty for Collin.

When asked if the not guilty pleas indicated a potential self-defense claim public defender Mike Kelly, who represents Collin, declined to answer, saying he needed more time to complete his review of the documents from Collin's court appearance earlier in the day. Although Kelly's client allegedly made statements to the Orinda Police that he did cause Devera's death, police say Collin claimed that Devera attempted to attack him with a knife and also claimed not to have known the woman or her family well -- even while stating that she had lived in his home since at least 2005 or 2006. No knife was found on or near Devera's body, according to Chief of Police Jeffrey Jennings.

Collin is expected to appear in court again August 20 at 1:30 p.m

Much Additional Speculation

The Lamorinda Weekly recently learned that earlier reports regarding one of Collin's prior alleged acts of violence were incorrect. According to police, the death of Collin's brother - Tim Collin - which occurred in 1986 at the same home on Moraga Way, was officially ruled a suicide by the Contra Costa Sheriff's Office.

Reports that James Collin pled no contest to the misdemeanor domestic battery of Devera in 2006 are true. He received a sentence of probation.

When asked if any other instances of domestic violence (DV) had occurred at the home, Mary Knox, Deputy District Attorney and the case's lead prosecutor, responded that she had read reports by the San Francisco Chronicle in which neighbors alleged that they had heard Devera and Collin fighting but said, "I am not aware of any other calls to the police regarding DV at the residence." Orinda police also reported no domestic violence calls at the residence between the 2006 and 2012 arrests.

Reach the reporter at: laurie@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA