



THEY REMEMBER: Teepee poles frame mourners for Yo Poi Lee.

JIM HUGHES DAILY NEWS

Shantytown family honors one of its own

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Occupants of the shantytown beside the Manhattan Bridge bade farewell to a dead resident yesterday with a memorial as unusual as the place he lived.

The ceremony for fire victim Yo Poi Lee, as he was sometimes known, was staged by an artist and photographer standing on the ashes of the hut where Lee died. Their tribute came as authorities charged a second man in his death.

Lee was celebrated by documentary photographer Margaret Morton as an artist in his own right. She remembered him for building a novel dwelling, "a temple," bedecked with messages in Chinese characters and knotted together with string.

As residents stood in a circle, artist Gabrielle Schafer, one of the builders of a tepee that stands in the shantytown, placed three oranges and a rock from Crazy Horse Mountain on the charred ground.

"We've got to keep family together and we'll all find gold," she urged residents of the area known as The Hill.

Schafer, who calls her tepee a tribute to native Americans and "disenfranchised people," had announced she would commemorate Lee by burning the tepee. Advised that it was part of a crime scene and could not be destroyed, she canceled the plan.

A spokesman for the Manhattan district attorney's office said Gerald Fossett, 31, of Catherine Slip, was



Yo Poi Lee

charged yesterday with murder and arson for allegedly directing another person to torch Lee's dwelling May 29.

On June 1, a convicted drug dealer, Nelson Diaz, 24, of Mott St., was charged with setting the fire. No motive was given.

Residents said Lee was an innocent victim whose home was torched by drug dealers with a grudge against another Hill dweller. Police said the investigation is continuing.

Lee was also remembered at a service in Brooklyn at House of the Lord Pentecostal Church led by the Rev. Dr. Melyin Walker.