

Ex-restaurateur dies at 55

HAYWARD — Harold Lamont James, former owner of two area restaurants and a lifelong resident of Hayward, died of cancer Friday. He was 55.

James opened the Cherryland Cafe, at 22472 Meekland Ave., Hayward, in 1952, and the Fifth Wheel, at 898 San Leandro Blvd., San Leandro, in 1955. He managed both restaurants, which were open 24 hours a day. "We

loved the people," said his wife, Ilene James, who worked at Cherryland Cafe.

The Fifth Wheel was a truck stop, according to Mrs. James, and many people used to stop there after the bars closed for a late-night breakfast. He operated the restaurant until 1969.

The Cherryland Cafe, which he operated till 1977, was a popular place

for chess players to gather, according to Mrs. James. "They came from all over the country," she said, "and would stay up all night playing chess in the restaurant."

James was a cook on the night shift at Cherryland Cafe. "That way he could get a chess game in," said Mrs. James. "He could play blindfolded."

James was also an avid photographer, and many people asked him to teach them how to take photographs, Mrs. James said. Some of his pictures are on display at El Continental Cafe, 22538 Main St.

James was born in Oakland. He graduated from Hayward High School and served as a paratrooper for the Army Air Corps in Germany at the end of World War II.



Harold James

After closing Cherryland Cafe, he worked as a security guard for American Patrol Service in Oakland until 1980.

He is survived by his wife; his mother, Ruth James of Hayward; and two sisters, Doris Lyman-grover and Doral Slate, both of San Leandro.

Services will be held at 11 a.m. Monday at Abundant Life Tabernacle, 670 Sunset Blvd.