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Murder charges filed after Mayhood death

By Juana E. Duty
Staff Writer

Wilmer Martin, 49, and Charles Desjarlais, 30, were charged Friday with second-degree murder in the death of former state Sen. Ralph L. Mayhood.

Martin and Desjarlais are being held in in the Hennepin County Jail in lieu of \$50,000 bail each, and are scheduled to appear in Hennepin County District Court Monday. An unidentified woman who was arrested with them Thursday was released.

Mayhood, 68, died Wednesday night shortly after being beaten with an iron pipe and a wine bottle in the basement of a rooming house he owned at 1810 Washington Av. S. Martin and Desjarlais lived in the building.

A witness told police that the men attacked Mayhood when he tried to protect a crippled resident they were allegedly trying to rob.

Police said yesterday that the medical examiner was investigating the possibility that Mayhood died of a heart attack shortly after the assault. The cause of death was originally attributed to injuries from the attack.

If the medical examiner finds that a heart attack was the cause of death the charges against Martin and Desjarlais could be reduced, according to police.

Yesterday the city Department of Inspections condemned the rooming house as "unfit for human habitation," said Sol J. Jacobs, director of inspections.

The owners have 10 days to clean up the building or the department will close it, he said.

Seven tenants live in the rooming house, which Jacobs described as "structurally sound but filthy." Jacobs said the inspector who condemned the building said there was "trash on the floor, holes in the walls and tenants sleeping on urine-soaked mattresses."

At the time of his death, witnesses said, Mayhood was dressed in a patched shirt and tattered shoes. But Grace Haynes, the daughter-in-law of former Minneapolis mayor James C. Haynes (mayor from 1902 to 1915), said she had known Mayhood for twelve years and

that his clothes and life style were not a reflection of his financial condition.

"They (the press) represented him as being down and out but he just dressed that way for fun. He had many fine clothes just like a senator would wear," said Mrs. Haynes, who lives in a nursing home in Maple Plain.

Memorial services for Mayhood will be held at 3:30 p.m. today at the Washburn-McReavy Southeast Mortuary at 200 Central Av. SE. with internment at Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery.

Mayhood, who was divorced, is survived by a son, Clifton, Minneapolis; a brother, Ross, and two sisters, Erva Mayhood and Mrs. Evelyn Strickland.