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Brian Soto, General Services Leader Who Died Sunday, Leaves Gateway Legacy

- Services are planned for Friday, at 10:30 a.m., at the Guerra Gutierrez Mortuary, 5800 E. Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles.
- Friends, co-workers remember a friend, good boss
- [Remembering Brian Soto](#) - Share your memories here.

By LAURA KLOTH
Staff Writer

(March 31, 2009) Brian Soto, 46, Deputy Executive Officer of General Services, is being remembered by friends and colleagues as a good friend and a fair boss who had a "get the job done" attitude.



Brian Soto
1962 - 2009

Mr. Soto died March 29 following a 10-month battle with cancer. Mr. Soto is survived by his mother, Lolita Soto of Long Beach.

Irma Licea, General Services Manager, General Services Administration, said the outpouring of calls and emails are a testament of "how well-loved Brian was" by co-workers and friends.

"He was my best friend. He was my champion. He was my biggest supporter," she said, "He was an amazing, caring, wonderful presence on this earth who changed my life forever, and he will be a part of me always."

Mr. Soto's legacy points to his unrelenting efforts and leadership in helping to coordinate the transition of Metro employees into the Gateway building.

"He loved this building as if this was his own home. This building was really the Brian Soto building in so many ways," Licea said.

As the head of general services, Mr. Soto played a major role in the construction and later the upkeep and maintenance of the 26-story building after employees moved into it in 1995, following the merger of the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) and the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) in 1993.



Brian Soto introduces speakers at program he coordinated to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Metro Headquarters building in October 2005.

Gary Spivack, East Valley Transportation Division Manager, remembers that Mr. Soto was a “nuts and bolts” employee, who took charge despite Gateway’s challenges. Spivack was head of General Services after the merge, when the construction of Gateway was first proposed, and Mr. Soto worked directly under him.

Spivack recalled how Mr. Soto persevered despite a busy and quick-changing environment, like dealing with the changing CEOs, handling other Metro facility leases, and at the same time dealing with new building issues like office space allocation, and a cooling system that didn’t work properly.

“He basically accepted any assignment I gave him. He saw his duty and he did it,” Spivack said. As a friend, Mr. Soto was gregarious and easygoing with a good sense of humor, he noted.

Don Ott, Executive Office, Administration lauded Mr. Soto’s efforts as well.

“Brian managed the Headquarters building from the day it opened. Every person who has worked here, and people who visited, benefited from Brian’s knowledge of facilities management, the pride he took in running the building, and his friendly and helpful demeanor. He touched all our lives in one way or another. His passing was a great loss for us,” Ott said.

At a 10-year anniversary party coordinated by Mr. Soto in 2005 for Gateway, Mr. Soto touted the building as “holding up great” and he said, “employees seemed to really enjoy it.” When Gateway was first proposed, the \$145 million project brought out many critics who challenged the cost and its location.

Kelly Patton, Network Support Supervisor, Operations and Service Delivery, worked for Mr. Soto when he became head of general services following the merger of the LACTC and SCRTD.

“It was just so much between the architect’s office, the contractors, all the different things coming together, pulling it all together And then when the first truck rolled here to start moving people in, it was very cool,” Patton said. “I would say it’s probably a once in a lifetime thing he did,” she said.

“This was going to be our home. This is where everyone was coming together for the very first time under one roof which was a big deal between the two agencies,” she said.

"A lot of people, when they think of this building, think of Brian because he pulled it all together," said Dan Colonello, General Services Supervisor, Mail Services.

Colonello said Mr. Soto was looking forward to going on a chartered fishing trip with him and his family in September. "He liked to go saltwater, but he used to get seasick," he said.



Program marking the 10 anniversary of the Gateway Building was attended by individuals instrumental in accomplishing the construction of the region's foremost transit center. From left, Laurie Fox and Tony Gonzales, the interior design team from ACG Environments, now HNTB; Thomas Verti, President of Charles Pankow Builders, Ltd., the building's construction contractor; Marvin Holen, chairman of the SCRTD Board that authorized construction, former SCRTD Board Member Gordana Swanson; Brian Soto, director of General Services, and Nick Patsaouras, former chairman of the SCRTD Board and president of the building project corporation.

Colonello said he first worked for Mr. Soto in 1993 and remembers him as "a good boss" who rose through the ranks and maintained a likeable spirit.

"He was fair, knowledgeable and if you did something wrong, he told you," Colonello said. And then, as an employee, you would correct the problem because "you didn't want to disappoint him."

A resident of Long Beach, Mr. Soto graduated from Montebello High School and later from California State University, Los Angeles. He was a board member of the Plaza De La Raza Cultural Center and the Northrop Grumman Credit Union.

Mr. Soto began his career as a mail services supervisor for SCRTD on Nov. 30, 1987.

He spent eight years working in General Services, first as supervisor, and then as a manager in 1990 and remained through the 1993 merger until he was named director in 1997. Mr. Soto was named deputy executive officer on Dec. 7, 2006.

A memorial is planned for Friday, April 3, at 10:30 a.m. at the Guerra

Gutierrez Mortuary, 5800 E. Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. A Metro caravan is not planned, due to the limited size of the facility.

In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made in Mr. Soto's name to the USC Norris Cancer Center.

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- Portrait of Brian Soto, top, was composed by Metro Design Studio, Oct. 4, 2007.