

A Tribute to Bill Hanna

By Assistant Professor Willow Lung-Amam

I first met Bill when I was a Master's student in the Urban Studies and Planning Program, where I worked with him as a graduate assistant to produce a community guide for local businesses in Langley Park, the place that Bill spent a great portion of his life as a neighborhood activist. Back then, I would sit in his office listening to his heated synopsis of the latest political drama while scanning the office walls for the latest cultural artifact from his travels. His office, as his life, was filled with things he cared deeply about.

Bill was also one of the first people that I reconnected with when I came back to the University of Maryland to teach. Rather than meet on campus, Bill suggested he would take me to lunch at Irene's Pupuseria in Langley Park—where he introduced me to the staff—before catching me up on the latest neighborhood politics—and in his broken Spanish—his favorite selections. His love of the culinary delights, friendly manner, and political passions had not changed a bit during those six years.

Though he officially retired, Bill never stopped working. He continued writing for *Barrio de Langley Park*, the newsletter he founded that served as both a local community newsletter and Bill's own commentary on immigration politics in the county, the region and the U.S. I received issue number 376 in late August entitled "What's up with new school, Purple Line, scary Republicans?" just weeks before his passing. He was also an active teacher, mentor, community activist and advocate for faculty across campus through his editorship of the *Faculty Voice*, an independent newsletter for and by UMD faculty. His towering presence remained a staple in the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.

Bill had an infectious passion for life and an eternal wellspring of compassion and concern for disadvantaged communities, whoever and wherever they might be. The many years he spent using a walker never slowed him down one bit. He continued to travel, write, teach and raise hell until the very end. Bill was a community-engaged scholar and advocacy planner in every sense of the word. He was committed to making and seeing real social change and justice in the world, starting in his own back yard. Bill left an important imprint on the communities in which he worked and on the lives of his students and colleagues. He will be deeply missed.