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Survived a lot of the blues, but sadly burned by a butt. MA sell "fire-safe" cigs yet? "Weepin" Willie Robinson, blues musician, dies in fire.

BOSTON – "Weepin" Willie Robinson, a blues musician who played with Steven Tyler and Bonnie Raitt but also spent time homeless, died Sunday from a **fire started by a cigarette he was smoking in bed**. He was 81.

Robinson had been a sharecropper, an Army veteran and a friend to performers such as B.B. King.

"He was truly the elder statesman of the (Boston) blues. He was our godfather. He was the most dear man," Holly Harris, host of "Blues on Sunday" on WBOS radio, told The Boston Globe.

When he sang, "you knew he meant it because he had passion," Harris said. Robinson was born in Atlanta and picked cotton and fruit with his family up and down the East Coast. After spending time in the Army in the 1940s, he became a master of ceremonies and doorman at blues clubs in Trenton, N.J., where he met King and other legends. He eventually sang with King's 21-piece orchestra, and his career was born.

Robinson settled in Boston in 1959, and played local clubs until his death. His daughter, Lorraine Robinson, told the Globe her father found his place on stage. "A great smile would come on his face and he would be in his own little world, like he'd tune everything out," she said. "He just, like, felt the music. It was so much in his soul." But as grounded as Robinson was on stage, he never found a stable home life. His wife, Alice, died four decades ago and by 2005, he was living on the street and out of touch with his family. After local blues performers heard the news, they held a benefit concert and made sure he was fed and clothed. Robinson later moved to the Mount Pleasant Home in Boston's Jamaica Plain section, and continued to perform everywhere from local clubs to the rest home's hallways. He worked a benefit concert with Tyler and two Boston Music Awards shows, in 2005 and earlier this month. As he grew increasingly frail, Robinson told friends singing helped numb the arthritis in his knees, recalled Merlin Southwick, executive director at the home.

Smoking was not allowed in his room, but Robinson would forget. Early Sunday morning, after a night out, he walked into his room and lit a cigarette.