

Apple employees celebrate Jobs, stores close

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An Apple store employee hangs white curtains in the front window of a closed store in Washington, Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2011, to obstruct the inside view. Apple closed a number of its stores for a memorial service for co-founder and CEO Steve Jobs. Jobs passed away Oct. 5, 2011, of pancreatic cancer. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

(AP) -- Apple Inc.'s famous penchant for secrecy remained intact Wednesday as the company's retail stores were curtained and employees were close-lipped about a private memorial service to celebrate the life of company co-founder Steve Jobs.

The service, announced to Apple [employees](#) in an email by CEO [Tim Cook](#), took place Wednesday morning at company headquarters in Cupertino. It was also being webcast to employees worldwide.

Apple planned to keep its stores closed for several hours so employees

could watch the service. At stores across Northern California, white curtains were draped across the windows to block the view from outside.

Near the campus before services started at 10 a.m. PDT, sheriff's deputies directed traffic and employees streamed toward the company's outdoor amphitheater. Media handlers kept reporters from getting too close to the scene and tried to prevent them from speaking with employees.

Music drifted across the campus from the service, and employees leaving the service who wouldn't give their names said singer Norah Jones and the British rock band Coldplay performed live. At the end of the service, employees said Coldplay front man Chris Martin told everyone to get back to work because that's what Steve Jobs would have wanted.

The mood at the service was festive, not somber, employees said. Speakers reportedly included Cook, Apple's chief designer Jony Ive and former Vice President [Al Gore](#), who reminisced about their experiences with [Steve Jobs](#) and Apple. Jobs died Oct. 5 at age 56 after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

Outside an Apple store in Manhattan, a sign read, "The [Apple Store](#) is temporarily closed. We'll reopen at 3 p.m." No reason was given. A few people were outside on a rainy and windy afternoon.

Bart Bingham, 36, a tattoo artist who lives in New York, was waiting for his girlfriend so they could shop for a gift for her birthday. He wasn't bothered by the fact that the store was closed and said he likely would find lunch and return.

"This doesn't bother me at all," he said.

Things looked normal inside except for the lack of customers and employees. Lights and laptops were still on. A reporter saw people gathered in an upstairs room, their backs facing the outside.

Analyst Stephen Baker, who tracks consumer electronics sales for research group NPD, said Apple doesn't stand to lose a lot of sales by closing its stores for a few hours. A customer or two might be unhappy when finding the store closed, but most would simply turn to other outlets that sell [Apple](#) products, he said.

Wednesday's service follows a memorial at Stanford University last Sunday for friends and family. That service at Memorial Church reportedly brought out tech titans including Oracle chief Larry Ellison and Microsoft's Bill Gates, as well as politicians including Bill Clinton. U2 frontman Bono and Joan Baez reportedly performed.

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