

Friends fear **END IS NEAR** for Charles Nelson Reilly

CHARLES NELSON REILLY is ill and bedridden, and friends fear it's the final curtain call for the veteran actor and comedian.

The ailing comic has been receiving somber guests at his Beverly Hills home, which he shares with his companion of 25 years, Patrick Hughes.

"Charles is not good. He's had pneumonia for a year now," a shaky and visibly distraught Patrick told *The ENQUIRER*. "That's him," Patrick told a reporter, referring to the groaning noises coming from Charles' bedroom. "He's bedridden."

Another close friend of the 75-year-old performer explains that although Charles has been struggling with health problems for years, he's always "bounced back, thanks to great medical care and Patrick's caretaking."

"But he's very sick this time," added the friend, "and everyone fears the worst. Charles has always been there for his friends, cheering them up by visiting them at their bedsides when they were sick. Now that it's his turn, his friends are there for him."

The New York native is best known for his quirky role in the 1960s series "The Ghost & Mrs. Muir" and his quick and witty tongue on the early 1970s TV game show "The Match Game" — but he's also an acclaimed actor, Tony-award winning Broadway stage star and director, and drama teacher.

In January, it was reported that Charles nearly succumbed to a



devastating bout of pneumonia and had to be rushed by ambulance to UCLA Medical Center.

"The truth is, Charles has been ill for a long, long time," said another source.

Charles' agent, Robert Malcolm, says there's "nothing wrong" with his client — that he's "recuperating from pneumonia, but he's fine."

But Patrick has confided to friends that his longtime companion is "sinking fast."

Added the source: "Everyone says that Patrick is taking top-notch care of Charles and that they'll fight to the end to keep him out of a convalescent home."

by **ROBIN MIZRAHI** and **ALAN SMITH**