



The Rising Right

A Crisis in
Gay America

Special Section
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South Carolina loses important AIDS advocate

by Frank Dalrymple
Special to Q-Notes

COLUMBIA—At midnight, November 26, Bill Edens, director of Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services (PALSS) died at age 42. A committed and informed advocate for the rights and support of the HIV/AIDS community in South Carolina, Edens was often remembered for saying, "I want the people in South Carolina who have AIDS to know that if somebody, somewhere steps on their toes, I'm going to holler."

Although Edens' energy seemed boundless, he was actually suffering from the disease himself. He died of full body neuropathy, one of only three such cases nationally, a symptom which usually strikes a small area of the body.

Edens kept the knowledge of his own battle with the disease between himself and a few close friends, not wanting to obscure and distract his more important community service work, challenging state policies, edu-

cating and raising public awareness.

In 1992, Edens was the first recipient of Q-Notes' Mark Drum Memorial Award, given in recognition of outstanding work in the struggle against AIDS.

Born in Allendale, SC to Elise and William Edens, and reared in Columbia, Bill attended Wofford College. From there, he completed Sewanee Military Academy, and became a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army, serving at Fort Benning, GA.

Edens kept Sewanee's honor code framed on his wall at home. "It was his guide for life, and he took it seriously," said his mother.

When PALSS opened its doors in 1985, Edens was not one of its original founders, but was one of its first volunteers. He soon rose to a pivotal leadership role, training and motivating a group of volunteers that currently serves some 15,000 people each year. In addition to outreach services for patients, PALSS conducts a toll-free hot line and family support programs.

Eventually appointed to the director's position, Edens worked without pay for almost a year. Not owning a car at the time, Edens travelled the state on a moped to raise funds for the organization. Very quickly, Bill Edens' name was synonymous with PALSS.

PALSS founder, Columbia attorney Harriet Hancock remembers Edens fondly, "He had a vision of what AIDS was going to mean to the state medically, economically, socially, in human terms, long before anyone else seemed to realize what a serious problem it was going to be for South Carolina... he kept going because he knew that PALSS was providing a service that no one else would. In the end I think he fought for PALSS as hard as he fought for his own life."

Hancock and other attorneys are handling a lawsuit against state insurance officials, and they remain steadfast without Edens. "He was the John Doe in that lawsuit chal-

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Bill Edens and Cynthia Poindexter

Foundation develops AIDS adult day care

by Jonathan Padget
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE—The Brothers Foundation, Charlotte's non-profit organization working to provide low-cost housing for people living with HIV/AIDS, has announced plans to broaden its services by developing Charlotte's first adult day health care program designed to meet the unique needs of HIV/AIDS patients and caregivers. Projected to serve up to 25 participants per day when it opens in 1994, the day care program will provide a variety of services Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Under the leadership of Program Director Lyndall Hare, a six-year veteran of the adult day care field, The Brothers Foundation project will focus on several areas and activities for its participants—including health education, art therapy, massage therapy, nutritional counseling, exercise, off-site educational and cultural excursions, individual counseling and group therapy. A registered nurse on staff will provide daily on-site medical support, and daily transportation will be provided for participants to and from the center as well as off-site medical appointments.

A crucial goal of the adult day care program will be met by providing respite care

for caregivers who must meet the challenge of working full-time and seeing that daily health care needs are met when the person for whom they are care at home is HIV-positive or has AIDS. Dealing with that particular issue also helps the day care program meet an ultimate purpose of preventing homeless situations for people living with HIV/AIDS. The proposed program will also create an outlet and forum for other organizations to volunteer time and services.

With the receipt of a \$70,000 start-up grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's "Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program," The Brothers Foundation is able to make its adult day health care program a top priority for the new year. At the close of 1993, The Brothers Foundation also confirmed significant financial commitments for the day care project that included a three-year allocation of \$191,244 from the Kate B. Reynolds Health Care Trust, \$10,000 from the regional HIV/AIDS Consortium, and \$2,000 in start-up funds from Lutherans Concerned—a group that has also pledged an undetermined amount for any necessary facility renovations.

However, the promise of financial progress has been tempered by the insistent

voice of community fear and misgivings. Originally intended to be open in early 1994 and designed with the cooperation of leaders of an unnamed church who committed the donated use of a church building, the adult day care program is facing a reevaluation of its financial structure and time frame since the original commitment of church leaders—under pressure from congregational members uneasy with the idea of an AIDS program supported by their church—has been withdrawn. The Brothers Foundation is currently pursuing rental options for the day care program, and the foundation foresees a realistic opening date no earlier than March.

Fortunately, gaps in community support, such as the church incident or the City of Charlotte's recent zoning ordinances blocking progress on Taylor Home—another Brothers Foundation project—are met with a dogged determination from the foundation and its supporters. Betsy West, Executive Director of the Brothers Foundation, faces the daily challenge of educating the public about the issues of HIV/AIDS and advocating the needs of a local population affected by the HIV/AIDS crisis in a community that has proven itself frighteningly reluctant to deal with this crisis on a widely effective

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MAP treasurer arrested, charged

by David Prybylo
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—Officials at Metrolina AIDS Project (MAP) announced that Stephen O'Shields, their former treasurer, had been arrested and charged with two counts of embezzlement. The arrest came three weeks after MAP's discovery that more than \$120,000 was missing from their coffers.

O'Shields turned himself into police on Thursday, December 16 and was released after posting a \$3,750 bond. He has been charged with embezzling money from MAP as well as taking \$35,000 from the Hackberry Court Homeowners Association, where he was also treasurer.

According to MAP board member Mary Hopper, the agency has been working with the accounting firm of Greer & Walker to evaluate the financial safeguards in place at the agency. "For an agency of its size, MAP had an acceptable system of internal accounting controls in place," said Kevin Walker, a principal of the firm. "The agency was defrauded by a criminal act that violated and bypassed those controls on a temporary basis."

Despite the lay-offs of the agency's Senior Case Manager and one of two administrative aides, Chapple said he did not foresee an interruption in services. And, despite reports in the Charlotte Observer to the contrary, he said the agency will continue to provide direct financial support to its clients. "We're going to be providing direct client assistance when we have the money," he said, noting that the money taken by O'Shields included the Dennis Fund, approximately \$40,000 set aside to be used exclusively for direct financial aid. He also said that Lutherans Concerned allocated \$5,000 for MAP clients for the month of December, which was dispersed through referrals from MAP.

Still, MAP needs to raise money quickly, and is looking to its individual donors for help. "The loss of \$118,000 in reserve funds has temporarily taken away the financial flexibility we need to fund current expenses," said Rein. "We anticipate continued funding from our traditional sources of grants and

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NC Governor presents AIDS volunteer awards

by David Jones
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—World AIDS Day, December 1, brought nine volunteers from around the state to Raleigh to be honored by Governor Jim Hunt and Secretary of Environment, Health and Natural Resources (DEHNR), Jonathan Howes. Several hundred people, most holding candles, attended the evening ceremony on the grounds of the capitol.

"We're honoring tonight nine people who are living examples of action and living examples of the courage it takes to fight AIDS," Governor Hunt said during the ceremony.

The volunteers were nominated by local groups and chosen by members of the state-wide AIDS Advisory Council and staff of DEHNR. Those recognized were presented to the audience with the following introductions

Dr. David Citron of Charlotte, a family doctor who served as the chair of the first AIDS study in Mecklenburg County and the first chair of the Regional HIV/AIDS Consortium. The director of the Mecklenburg County Consortium says that Dr. Citron is propelled by "his sense of moral obligation and his courageous vision."

Willie Hamilton of Rocky Mount. Hamilton went to the Rocky Mount Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) in search of 72-hours of community service work. Hamilton was struggling with bouts of substance abuse at the time. He has become a key volunteer AIDS outreach worker, especially for those with substance abuse problems. He is now a "buddy" for four men living with HIV and substance abuse, two of whom have joined him in recovery. The OIC director describes him as "one of a kind," and says "we are all better because our paths

have crossed."

Nan Hawkins of Greenville has worked tirelessly with African-American women with HIV/AIDS. In Pitt County, Hawkins' advocacy moved community leaders to initiate an AIDS support group. She provides transportation, serves as a volunteer counselor to HIV positive women and has been instrumental in helping get people into substance abuse treatment. "She has taught many in Pitt County that happiness is what you are, not what you have; what you give, not what you get; not what somebody does for you, but what you do for someone else," says one of her co-workers.

Ray Henderson of Thomasville has helped support the Triad Health Project since its beginning in 1989. He was often the only person keeping the office open. In spite of living with AIDS, he puts in as many hours

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