

Obituary

Joseph Bader

By Timothy Cwlok
PGN Contributing Writer

Joseph Bader, a well-known local entertainer, died July 12, 1997, from complications due to AIDS. He was 35 and lived in Olde City.

"Joey was a great stilt walker, a great actor and a great friend," said Ricky Paul, a close friend. "He was a widely sought-after performer. His death is a major loss to the regional entertainment scene."

Bader was born Jan. 8, 1962. He grew up in Drexel Hill, and graduated in 1980 from Upper Darby High School.

In December 1982, he completed a two-year program at the Art Institute of Philadelphia, and received an associate's degree in commercial art.

Friends said he had a successful entertainment career and was well-known in both gay and straight entertainment circles.

Paul, who is also a local entertainer, said Bader served as his mentor.



"He taught me an enormous amount about the entertainment field," Paul said. "He worked for all the big local agencies."

He said Bader also performed entertainment and technical duties for six years for Stages of Imagination, a children's theater company

based in Springfield.

Dale Varga, a Center City gay entertainer, said he was impressed with Bader's vivacious personality.

"Joey was bubbly and effervescent, where other people might be flat," Varga said. "He was everywhere. His main entertainment identity was as a stilt walker, but he was also very accomplished in other areas. He was an excellent visual artist, and he built and designed the theater sets where he and others would perform."

Varga said Bader did the makeup for entertainers who performed at the grand opening of the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Bader later performed with the entertainers at the event, he said.

"He had a great generosity of spirit, and didn't view other entertainers as his competitors," Varga said.

Bader is survived by his mother, Cass Bader of Drexel Hill, and two brothers. A memorial service is planned. ▼

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