

OBITUARY

Michael Greenberg

By Steven Caines
Special to PGN

Michael Greenberg, 42, whose efforts led to the formation of the Philadelphia Attorneys for Human Rights and who was a tireless advocate for the rights of people living with HIV, died June 13, 1996, at St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City from complications due to AIDS.

A resident of New York City for the past two years, Greenberg had lived in Philadelphia most of his life, where he practiced domestic relations and family law, was an attorney with Whatley & Greenberg in Philadelphia from 1988 to 1992 and had worked as a clerk with the Family Courts in Philadelphia.

In 1986, Greenberg was instrumental in the founding

of PAHR, and he served as the organization's first chair. Later, the group would be renamed the Gay and Lesbian Lawyers of Philadelphia.

"It was his vision, basically," said David J.A. Facciolo, a longtime friend and attorney. For the first year or two, "Michael was Philadelphia Attorneys for Human Rights ... and was one of the city's most prominent gay attorneys."

Greenberg's role extended in a far more personal way to aiding other attorneys in coming out, Facciolo said. When PAHR was founded, it initially was an informal networking of gay attorneys, including those who were closeted for professional reasons. Greenberg was sensitive to these issues and needs of those attorneys, Facciolo said.

Greenberg also served on

the board of the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association from 1988 to 1992.

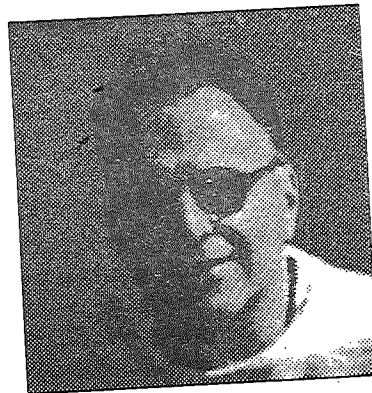
"Michael was instrumental in getting the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association affiliated with the American Bar Association" when its house of delegates approved the recognition in 1992, Facciolo said.

A board member for the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania, Greenberg also had served on the organization's volunteer panel of attorneys before joining the board.

He provided the unique perspective of someone who was not only an attorney, but was living with HIV, said Nan Feyler, the Project's executive director.

"Michael was a tremendous advocate and a great lawyer," Feyler said.

Greenberg was instrumental in helping the organization shape the policies to address the needs of people living with HIV and considering



going on disability, she said. Consulted frequently for advice on AIDS Law Project cases, Greenberg was co-counsel in a case that helped establish the rights of HIV-infected medical professionals to continue working. The area case, involving orthopedic surgeon Dr. Paul Scoles, was settled out of court.

"We're really, really going to miss him — he was an inspiration," Feyler said.

Greenberg spoke at seminars for lawyers, medical students and other professionals, said Allan Goldberg, a friend and attorney. He was invited to speak at a 1994 conference at the University of Pennsylvania's "AIDS and the Penn Family."

"He was a superb public speaker who could articulate his rage with sincerity and humor," Goldberg said. "He could move people to tears and to laughter. ... And he was a mentor to many young lawyers."

Following his decision to end his legal career, Greenberg became a prolific writer of AIDS fiction and non-fiction. His works were published in New York Queer, Queer World and Au Courant.

"The articles he wrote were

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In Memorium

Gay and Lesbian Lawyers of Philadelphia (GALLOP) mourns the loss of one of its founders, Michael M. Greenberg, Esquire, and remembers his friendship, his distinguished service to the community, and his commitment to the human and civil rights of all persons. GALLOP extends condolences to his family and friends.

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