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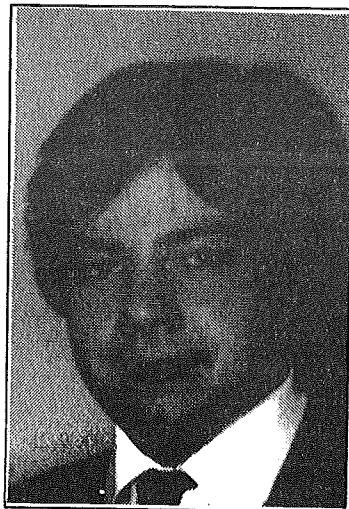
# Au Courant Publisher Michael Labance dies of AIDS

Joseph Michael Labance, the publisher of the gay weekly Au Courant, died Feb. 6 of AIDS-related lymphoma. He was 35 years old.

Labance was renowned in the community as an ardent gay and lesbian civil rights advocate who was willing to take on even the city's most favored politicians in the name of his causes. He was also famous for his hot- and short-temper.

"I wasn't spared (his temper) any more than anyone else," said Rita Addressa, executive director of the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force, laughing as she recalled the many clashes Labance had with local politicians and leaders in the gay community, including herself. "We got off to a rocky start. But through the years, I realized that Michael Labance was leaving a legacy."

David Fair, executive director of the AIDS service organization, We The People, and another long-time friend, said Labance saw the mission



Michael Labance

of his paper as being "more than mere journalism. He understood the role it played as a leader in and servant to the community."

M. Scott Mallinger, Au Courant's editor, said despite Labance's reputation for "being loud and sometimes difficult, people should remember him for his passion." His passion, said Mallinger, was the fight for gay and lesbian civil rights.

That passion surfaced early in life, when Labance, a Bensalem native, started writing gay essays for his high school newspaper. He wrote under the pseudonym "Michael Fox." He was eventually rejected by his family when they found out he was gay, said Mallinger.

Labance later worked as a sales clerk and district manager for the National Shirt Shop, was a sales representative for Metropolitan Life, and was a sales representative for

Philadelphia Gay News.

Labance founded Au Courant in 1982 with his lover Joe Youkanavitch and former editor Frank Broderick. The Labance-Broderick team became an institution not only for their journalism, but for their odd-couple relationship: Broderick was the thin, tranquil editor; Labance, the big boisterous publisher. (Broderick died of AIDS Feb. 9 1993)

Friends say Labance poured his heart into his newspaper.

"When our community is under fire, the mainstream media isn't particularly interested in responding to those attacks," said Addressa. "But Michael put the full weight of his paper behind the timely needs to support the community."

But Mallinger said Labance's greatest joy was his personal relationships, and how gay men and lesbians had learned to build their own sense of family.

"He was proud of the paper," said Mallinger, "but he was most proud of his relationship with Joe, which lasted more than 13 years."

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Feb. 11, at the Church of St. Luke and the Epiphany, 330 S. 13th St. Contributions may be made in his name to the Metropolitan AIDS Neighborhood Nutrition Alliance (MANNA), P.O. Box 30181, Phila., 19103 or the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force, 1616 Walnut St., No. 1005, Phila. 19103.

## Colorado homophobes complain that governor won't support them

BY JENNIFER MEARS

Associated Press Writer

to defend against challenges,

