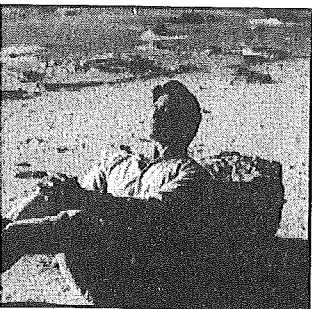


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OBITUARIES

Raymond Helm

Raymond "R.J." Helm, 31, of South Philadelphia, died May 25, 1996, of complications due to AIDS, at home, surrounded by family and friends.

Originally from Rumson, N.J., Helm attended St. Thomas of Villanova University in Miami, and also owned and operated a landscaping business there.

He moved to Philadelphia and quickly gained popularity in the community as a bartender and bar manager. He had great respect for his customers and was given that same respect in return. In



addition to his regular duties, he arranged a number of events, fund-raisers and trips for patrons.

Helm worked in several clubs in Philadelphia, includ-

ing Uncles, Club Tyz, Key West, and most recently Raffles, where he managed Down on Camac.

He is survived by his parents, Patricia and Raymond Helm; a brother, Stephen; two sisters, Maureen and Eileen; and grandmothers Rita Mulrone and Florence Helm.

A memorial service will be held at 7 p.m. June 3 at St. Rita's Church, 1166 S. Broad St.

Memorial contributions may be sent to Philly PAWS, 1234 Locust St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19146. ▼

W. Andrew Ross-Ebert

By Steven J. Caines
Special to PGN

W. Andrew Ross-Ebert, 31, re-dedicated his life from a career in interior decorating to that of an activist and educator who taught thousands of children in the South New Jersey/Philadelphia area about the danger of AIDS.

Ross-Ebert died May 18, 1996, of the disease at his home in the Barclay Farms section of Cherry Hill.

After being diagnosed as HIV-positive at age 22, Ross-

Ebert gave his first public talk in 1985 as part of a NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt display in Philadelphia.

The speech provided the first hint of his powerful speaking abilities and his honesty. In it, Ross-Ebert discussed openly how he had lost his job in Florida as a regional sales manager for a New York City-based design firm when he decided "naively" to be honest with his employers. He also told of longtime friends re-treating from his life.

But he also shared with the

listeners how the disease had brought his family together as never before.

And he shared his real fears: "I am not as worried about myself as I am about my 2-year-old niece and my 4-year-old nephew. I worry if they will contract this deadly disease when they become sexually active; just because they were ill-informed and lead to believe that this is a gay disease."

The following year, Ross-Ebert spoke before family-life classes in Cherry Hill High School East, where had been a member of the class of 1982. Instrumental in getting him to speak was Joan Saltzer, now retired from East.

"He was very nervous and he told me he was concerned about how the kids would react," she recalled. "And he was worried about rejection."

The talk went very well, he was "a powerful speaker ... articulate, completely honest and open to any questions," Saltzer said. "And after class, the kids gathered around him"

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► ROSS-EBERT, P. 5