

In memory of one who fought AIDS

By Loretta Tofani
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More than 150 family members and friends attended a Mass last night in memory of David Chickadel, 35, a well-known AIDS activist in Philadelphia who died May 11 of complications resulting from AIDS. Chickadel had been a radiology technician at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

Two of his friends, Anne Greenberg and Bill Randall, spoke of Chickadel at the Mass at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, on 13th Street near Chestnut.

"David and I led very different lives," said Greenberg, "but we shared a passion for laughter and an abiding love for flowers." She was his first "AIDS buddy," a volunteer who visits and helps an AIDS sufferer with daily chores.

Randall, who has AIDS and co-founded with Chickadel the organizations We the People With AIDS/ARC and Act Up, said in his eulogy, "His concern for others was really and truly astounding. He was ill. Yet he always took it upon himself to see that I had a hot meal."

Chickadel's activism gave him prominence. He was a member of the state Task Force on AIDS, and in that position encouraged officials to give hospice care to AIDS patients and more financial assistance to people who could not afford AZT, the drug used by many AIDS patients.

Just four days before his death, he participated in a demonstration at City Hall for increased funding for drug treatments and health-care programs for people with AIDS and ARC, or AIDS-related complex.



In the front pew, Chickadel's parents, Eleanor and Charles

Sometimes his sense of activism led to actions that shocked others. Earlier this year, while appearing on a television show, he obscenely denounced a police officer as ignorant for denying that police and ambulance crews were refusing to take people with AIDS to the hospital.

He was unafraid to tell people he had AIDS. In fact, last year he was featured in a People magazine story covering the disease's nationwide scope. He was included as a representative of the Philadelphia AIDS community.

"He wanted to bring people with AIDS together," said Ana Forbes, director of Action AIDS, in an interview yesterday. "He talked about empowerment, about not feeling

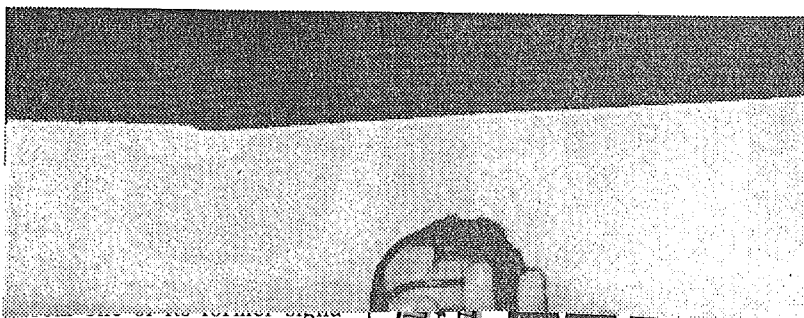
helpless."

Chickadel was born in Wilmington, the son of a homemaker and machine operator for a bakery store. A graduate of Wilmington High School, Chickadel was a hairdresser in Wilmington for several years before moving to Philadelphia and his job at Jefferson. He lived in an apartment near Rittenhouse Square.

Chickadel told his parents he had AIDS a year ago, said his mother, Eleanor Chickadel, who attended the service last night with her husband, Charles. "So many parents disown their sons and neglect them," she said. "How can they be parents and disown their children? He fought for people with AIDS, and I'm proud of him for that."

Chickadel was known for his humor, his flamboyance and his ability, through his warmth and concern, to convert friends into virtual family members.

Another friend, Rosina Rucci, 32, legal secretary, said Chickadel would "tell you things your mother would tell you," like "Don't forget your umbrella when you leave because it's raining out," and "You should wear your hair off your face; you have



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