

OBITUARY

Moonrise founder and 'Face the Music' producer Deb LeVoor dies



Deb LeVoor broadcasting "Face the Music" in the early 1980s.

BY TIM RETZLOFF

CLIO - Deborah Anne LeVoor, a founder of the pioneering lesbian organization Moonrise in the late 1970s and a community producer for the long-running radio program "Face the Music," died Dec. 30, 2004 at her home in Clio. She had been diagnosed with cancer.

LeVoor was born in Flint on Dec.

29, 1949 and came out in her early 20s. In 1978, she was one of a small group of lesbian friends who formed Moonrise, the first lesbian organization in Flint. Begun initially as a small support group in members' homes, Moonrise later evolved into a lesbian social organization which drew up to fifty women to meetings at the local Unitarian Universalist Church or at the old offices of the Flint Voice in Burton. Among the group's achievements before disbanding in 1984 were producing one of Michigan's earliest lesbian newsletters and sponsoring a Flint concert with Kate Clinton.

In a 1991 oral history interview about the group, LeVoor commented on the existence of the organization in a working class city often perceived as redneck. "I don't ever remember anybody worrying about whether we should try to get together, if there was ever any kind of threats or that it was something that wouldn't be accepted," she recalled. "It was just something they just did."

During the early 1980s, LeVoor became one of the several community producers for the lesbian/feminist program "Face the Music," broadcast on Flint's

public radio station at the time, WFBE. Reached by telephone, Janet Rauch, one of the show's two founding mothers, credited LeVoor with helping to introduce Kate Bush and Suzanne Vega to their audience. LeVoor left "Face the Music" in the mid-80s, but returned as an occasional host for several years before the program left the air when the station was sold in 1997.

Rauch remembered her friend as being honest, easy to talk to, and ever able to lift people out of gloom. "She had a really good sense of humor," Rauch said. "She always had a sparkle about her, always had a smile."

Aside from her community activities, she had been employed with the Flint Medical Lab since 1969. LeVoor is survived by her life partner of 19 years, Laurie Hoskin of Clio; her father, Theodore Hoskin of Swartz Creek; a brother, three sisters, and nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her mother, Beverly.

A memorial service for Deb LeVoor was held Jan. 8, 2005 at O'Guinn Family Funeral Home in Clio. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society.