

Metro area AIDS agency exec dies

by Jan Stevenson

FERNDALE - Linda Petersen, 51, director of client services at AIDS Partnership Michigan, died on Tuesday, Sept. 24 at Providence Hospital. She had suffered a massive cerebral hemorrhage Sept. 16 and did not regain consciousness after neurosurgery that evening.

In 1990, Petersen joined AIDS Partnership Michigan, then known as Wellness Networks, as the volunteer coordinator. She held a number of positions in her six years with the agency. Most recently she was the driving force behind their new home delivered meals program.

Petersen had overseen similar projects as the program manager at the Southcentral Michigan Commission on Aging in Portage in the mid 1980s and as the director of resource development at the Area Agency on Aging 1B in Southfield in 1989.

"She was the architect of this new program and she did a marvelous job," said Barbara Murray, executive director of AIDS Partnership Michigan. Murray said that they were planning to rename the program in honor of Petersen.

Petersen was also instrumental in helping to found Affirmations Lesbian and Gay Community Center. She wrote the first grant proposal to The Chicago Resource Center in 1990 which resulted in \$15,000 for seed money for the center. Petersen later joined the Affirmations board of directors in 1994 and served for two years.

Petersen was one of the most well liked and



Linda Petersen

highly regarded people working in Michigan's lesbian and gay community. "She doesn't have a mean bone in her body," said Marge Sampson of the Franklin Care Center for Hospice of Southeast Michigan and former board member of AIDS Partnership Michigan.

Petersen graduated from Western Michigan University with a Master of Arts in counseling and personnel in 1981. In 1982 she completed a Graduate Specialty Program in gerontology at WMU. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Northern Iowa in 1967, with honors, where she majored in English with a minor in art.

Petersen is survived by her partner of over 5 years, Jackie Worthy, sons Kurt, age 23, and Eric, age 25. Her parents and a brother live in Iowa, where Petersen was born and raised.

Worthy moved to Albuquerque in August to attend nursing school, and Petersen had planned to move there to join her sometime in the next year.

The funeral will be on Sat., Sept. 28 at 11:00 am at the Wessel's & Wilke Funeral Home, 23690 Woodward Ave., Pleasant Ridge, 810-543-0100. AIDS Partnership Michigan will host a memorial gathering open house immediately after the service at their offices at 845 Livernois, Ferndale. Visitation will be Thurs. and Fri. evenings.