

# Regi Thompson

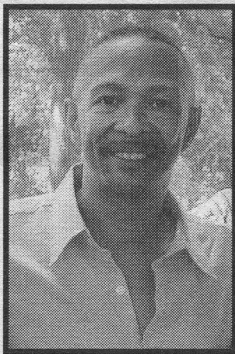
June 17, 1955 - June 27, 2005

BY JASON MICHAEL

**DETROIT** - Entrepreneur and nightclub owner Regi Thompson died in the early morning hours of June 27. His death the result of malignant lymphoma, the most common type of blood cancer. Thompson turned 50 on June 17.

A Detroit native, Thompson had been promoting parties around town for years, at places like Club Parabox, via Regine Productions, before he opened his own nightclub, Regine's off the Park, in 1997. A fire gutted the club in May 2000, but Thompson rebuilt it and opened an even bigger club in its place, named Regines - The Club and Café. With two separate rooms and some 10,000 total square feet, the club was one of the biggest and best in the city.

"The end product has been worth the year," Thompson said upon reopening, a year after the fire reduced the club to nothing but a concrete shell. "As a result of the fire, Detroit is ending up with one of the premier gay clubs of the Midwest, I



BTL file photo: Jason Michael

think." The club went through yet another metamorphosis in 2002, when Thompson changed the name of the club to the Palladium, and began offering a straight night on Fridays that was hosted for

a time by radio station WJLB. No matter what he was currently calling the club, Thompson never stopped reinvesting in his enterprise, adding bigger sound and better light, a kitchen, a video bar - anything and everything he could think of to keep it a first-class entertainment venue. Even after he became too ill to attend regularly, Thompson kept an eye on business through a series of web cams

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he could access from his home.

When not concentrating on the club, Thompson was devoted to his family and liked to travel. He regularly visited such places as Santo Domingo and various Caribbean locales.

"He was almost like a brother to me," said John Collins, the poplar deejay and a consistent presence at Thompson's club. "I respected what he did for the gay community because he always felt that as black gays we would often party at those little holes in the wall. So his goal was have a nice club for us to go to. That was his dream and he realized it, and he always reinvested in his club to make it better. He was a very generous person."

The Palladium will remain open under the guidance of Thompson's loyal staff.

Funeral services for Thompson will take place at 11 a.m. on Saturday, July 2, at the Holy Cross Baptist Church, located at 6220 Linwood in Detroit. A memorial will be held at the Palladium on Friday July 1 from 6 to 10 p.m.