



B Y J A Y B R O W N

Jay Brown, co-publisher and editor of Just Out, died at 2:22 am on Thursday, March 22, 1990 in Providence Hospital, Portland. Jay was diagnosed with pneumocystis pneumonia on February 25, and entered the hospital on March 5. Friends came from as far away as San Francisco to visit, and friends were with him the night he died.

Jay is survived by his Just Out family, many friends, and his estranged relatives living in Fairfield, California.

A party celebrating Jay Brown's life will be held Friday, April 13 at Café Mocha from 6-8 pm, 4108 NE Sandy Blvd. Bring photos and memories to share.

Last month Jay and I announced our departure from Just Out. This month it saddens me to announce that Jay departed forever.

Jay touched many lives, some positively and some negatively. I valued his friendship, and he was my family. It was my honor to be by his side during the past three weeks and to be near when he died.



We first met in 1981, at a meeting for the Cascade Voice, a fledgling gay paper. He was there to sell photographs and I was there to write. Within three months I was editor and he was my assistant editor. Eighteen months later, we started Just Out together.

Those first months were horrendous. We fought like a married couple. It took three years to really settle in to publishing Just Out, and we've spent the past four years refining it.

In September of last year, we began toying with the idea of leaving Just Out. Neither of us thought that his absence would be so permanent.

I'm still inventorying everything I learned from my association with Jay. I guess mostly he taught me to live simply and focus on living each moment as it happens.

Renee LaChance

Jay and I had a talk a month or so ago about our working relationship. During that conversation, he asked me why I didn't write for Just Out, when I did write for the LCP newsletter. He wondered if I didn't like Just Out. I was a little shocked. All along I had been pouting because he didn't think well enough of me to ask me to write for the paper.

I am afraid that kind of miscommunication was pretty typical of the year and a half that I've known Jay.

But during that year I also grew to care a lot about him, and toward the end we had a few of those talks, clearing the air, getting in touch a little with each other as people. And I am immensely grateful for that. He contributed a great deal to our community — and not just the gay community, but Portland as a whole. My greatest grief about his death is that he died so very soon after we broke through all the garbage and started to be friends.

While I was visiting him at the hospital, about a week before he died, I told him I was writing an article for the paper, and doing some editing, too. I carry the smile he gave me then in a very special place.

Chris Maier

Jay had been in the hospital for a week when I first poked my head into his Intensive Care room. He was wearing his glasses over a plastic oxygen mask; a monitor let out a string of beeps when the oxygen in his blood fell below a certain level. When he coughed — and he coughed often — his whole body seemed to rattle.

He took one glance at me as I came in. "What are you writing for next month?" he asked.

That moment was consummate Jay Brown.

As an editor, Jay was dedicated, cynical, curmudgeon, stubborn, inquisitive, unsentimental, encyclopedic in his knowledge of the community. His death leaves a strange, empty space in the Just Out office, and in the city in which — without ever trying for acclaim — he played so critical a part.

We can't fill the place Jay's left. What we can do is apply the best of his vision to our own tasks as writers, ad salespeople, artists, activists, human beings. We can keep writing. We can keep the paper coming out. Jay wouldn't consider having it any other way.

Anndee Hochman



Co-publishers Renee LaChance and Jay Brown.

Jay Brown was my friend for ten years. I met him when I was 18 and he was 45. He taught me about books and helped to spark my interest in writing. A year after we met I began writing articles for Fresh Weekly and Jay took the photographs. At that time we lived in the same neighborhood and I visited him every day. Jay would be home always, listening to music, smoking pot and reading books from the library. He didn't like to work and knew how to live frugally and happily. It was a good, simple life. But at a certain point Jay wanted to do something. That's when he developed the idea of a gay newspaper for Portland. In a short time he took that vision and made it a reality. I helped him write articles for the first issue.

In 1983 when Just Out came to be, there was only one other gay paper; the great boom of the gay community in Portland had already begun to dwindle; people were leaving, some had died. Just Out gave the community a focus again, its ideals were alternative and radical. It was about putting into the community and not just taking away from it — it was about taking responsibility, about being politically active. And to this day Just Out has remained an important mouthpiece for the gay and lesbian community. With his partner, Renee LaChance, they provided well for the community and their work made a difference.

Now without Jay the world seems different, sadder, smaller. Jay was one of my last friends in the city and the emptiness that his death leaves is overwhelming. What will the community do without him? Just Out will survive — it's meant to — and it will go on being the essential thing that it has been.

I'll miss Jay, knowing that he was there, even though I no longer live in Portland.

Goodbye, my friend, sleep well, until we see you again. Somewhere, somehow.

Joel Redon
New York City



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*Benefit performance for the Alzheimer's Association, Columbia-Willamette Chapter. Please call 229-7115 for information and benefit tickets.