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TRANSITIONS

A remembrance

Author and activist Paul Monette will be treasured

by Bob Roehr

The gay community has lost one of its most beloved and respected men. Paul Monette succumbed to AIDS, the disease that transformed his life and work, on Feb. 10. He was 49.

I met Monette first through his writing—books like *Borrowed Time* and *Half-Way Home*—only later, in the flesh. He came to Washington D.C. as recipient of the National Book Award for nonfiction for *Becoming a Man: Half a Life Story*, to deliver the National Book Week address at the Library of Congress.

He spoke of hate and censorship, of hope and responsibility. The politics of silence, he said, "is as much self-imposed as imposed by our enemies. We learn the message of their hatred all too well, and we chose the closet, hoping to protect ourselves. And that very invisibility is just what our enemies want, the silence that stunts our self-esteem."

He readily agreed to have a portion excerpted for a national magazine. The details came quickly to pass, graced by Monette's characteristic warmth. The entire address became an essay in *Last Watch of the Night*.

We spoke again by phone last May in conjunction with the publication of that book. Monette was eager to again don the hat of AIDS activist, calling then AIDS czar Kristine Gebbie "a grotesquely unfortunate choice from the very beginning, which should have shown us what short shrift we were going to be given by the Clinton administration on such a deep-rooted crisis."

"As far as I am concerned, he [Clinton] is nothing but a liar. He has sold our people down the river. He is a Walmart Lothario. He has a second-rate mind and a fourth-rate, small-town way of doing things," spat Monette.

"How dare he use our tragedy, and our crisis, and our struggle for civil rights as fodder to get

money, so that he can sell us out to the religious right.

"I continue to feel that my country was stolen from me in the last 10 years, and I ain't gotten back one bit of it."

While Monette's spirit was unbroken, his body was another matter. The stark physical transformation I saw a few days later was unsettling. I recorded the interview yet did not publish it, as if that act of withholding public notice could somehow stave off his decline.

"But the spirit, ah, the spirit seems to glow brighter still, almost as if flesh had somehow screened the internal, distracted from it, and now, in dissipating, allows even more of the man's essence to shine forth in his voice and in his words," I wrote in both awe and dread. "He seems to be metamorphosing into a purer being of spirit, one day to be unencumbered by body."

"I don't know that AIDS has made me so brave as a writer. I don't know whether it has widened my heart the way the witnessing of the world at war widened Anne Frank's heart," Monette had told the packed audience at the Library of Congress.

"But who would have thought, who would have known, that the greatest account we would have of that war, the one that would sear the hearts of the future, would be written by a 14-year-old girl? And a 14-year-old girl who went to her death believing that people were fundamentally good. That is where I fail much of the time," he said.

Paul Monette was too hard on himself. He will be remembered and treasured for the goodness of his work and of his life.

A memorial reading of Paul Monette's writings will take place from 7:30 to 8:30 pm Friday, March 10, at Powell's City of Books, 1005 W Burnside St. Presenters will include Judith Barrington, Tom Spanbauer and Walt Curtis.



Paul Monette

Popular bar owner leaves legacy

John L. Adams III, the owner of popular gay-oriented establishments in Portland and Seattle, died Jan. 22 of complications from cancer. Friends and family of the 52-year-old founder of the restaurant and nightclub C.C. Slaughters say Adams leaves a legacy to the gay community.

"He was 1,000 percent supportive of the community," says Paul Kirkbride, manager of C.C. Slaughters in Portland. "He was a very generous and popular man and always willing to help people."

Adams, who was born in Declo, Idaho, established C.C. Slaughters 15 years ago.

"Back then my father was working at the Fish Grotto, which was a straight establishment with a gay clientele. He got it in his mind to open a place that was geared toward the gay community. He got some loans, saved a little money, and eventually opened up C.C. Slaughters right across the street," says Adams' son, John R. Adams. "He always tried to provide a place where homosexuals could feel comfortable going."

Adams says six years ago his father opened another Portland establishment "for the alternative community" called the Eagle. A year and a half ago, his father opened another C.C. Slaughters, in Seattle.

The elder Adams was also instrumental in

getting Seattle officials to approve a plan that would create an AIDS Memorial Park in the Emerald City. The younger Adams, who has taken over as owner of the various enterprises, says he is trying to raise \$400,000 for the project. He says Seattle City Councilor Sherry Harris, an openly lesbian public official, has been very supportive of the plan and says the city has agreed to provide matching funds for each dollar raised privately for the project.

"My father was always looking to give people a helping hand, and I'm very proud of him for that," says Adams.

John L. Adams III is survived by his sons, John R. of Portland and Rod of Seattle; father and stepmother, Jack and Emigene of Paul, Idaho; stepfather and mother, Tom and Dicey Bruncker of Renton, Wash.; sisters, Jackie Fairchild of Oakley, Idaho, Christy Tacherll of Haybur, Idaho, Cindy Dalsogleo of Sandy, Utah, and June of Cincinnati; and brothers, Scott and K.C. of Burley, Idaho.

Disposition was by cremation.

Remembrances may be made to the John L. Adams III AIDS Memorial Park Fund at Seafirst Bank in Seattle.

Ingå Sorensen