

MOVING MOMENT

A service is held to remember Lindsey Alexander by Pat Young

It was 3 p.m. on Super Bowl Sunday, a time when people worldwide hovered around television sets to—well, you know—watch football.

But certainly not everyone. And certainly not during this most recent sportfest, which fell on Jan. 30.

Nestled in the ever-popular Old Town club Darcelle XV, friends and relatives of Todd Asay, a.k.a. Lindsey Alexander, instead gathered for a memorial service, hosted by Darcelle and Roxy, to remember the talented performer.

"Every year at Memorial Day we would sit at his dressing table and say, 'Well, my gosh. Here it is, one more year and we still haven't heard anything from our Lindsey,'" said Roxy, recalling all those years of wondering. "We always referred to him as our Lindsey."

Asay disappeared 10 years ago. He was last seen outside a downtown Portland gay bar.

On Dec. 24, 1999, police found Asay's remains buried in the back yard of

a Southeast Portland home once owned by Brian David Hill, who has been charged with the 1989 murder of Asay.

The waiting and wondering are over. Now it's time for family and friends to say good-bye and have closure to the mystery that often haunted their thoughts.

On Sunday afternoon, the normally boisterous club was somber, yet full of warm memories. Photos and flowers took center stage instead of the usual female impersonators. Snapshots of Asay with his family hung next to publicity photos of him in full drag.

The photos revealed the many facets of Asay's life. He was smiling in all of them.

Asay's family scattered his ashes in the sea at Bandon, Ore., in mid-January. Darcelle invited them to the memorial service, and they welcomed the chance to attend. Not every member could attend, but two brothers, two sisters and two sisters-in-law—some still living in their hometown of Eugene—traveled to Portland.

and how difficult it was for everyone at the club when he disappeared. Darcelle often paused to gather her thoughts and wipe away tears. After acknowledging the family's grief, Darcelle noted the grief of friends.

"We sometimes forget how friends also mourn," she said.

Then she read a poem as a tribute to the friendship between Lindsey and Lindsey's roommate, Farrah, whom Darcelle described as the closest person to Lindsey in Portland.

Other attendees shared their thoughts. Some stories brought laughter; others brought tears.

"Lindsey was my very best friend," said Farrah. "There isn't a day that goes by when I don't think about her."

Asay's oldest brother, Kelly Asay, described him as being the bright spot in their family.

"And I can see that he is the bright spot in yours, too," he said.

Asay's sister Melissa noted that Todd had wanted the family to remain part of his life after he came out, but that was not what happened.

"During the years that maybe we weren't such a close part of his life, he had family here," she said, recognizing the love and support her brother had in Portland. "And that is so wonderful and comforting to know."

Then she added: "I think that if I could see Lindsey right now, I would tell her that I'm

jealous that she is the most beautiful woman in our family."

Laughter filled the club.

It was easy to see how beautiful Lindsey was as the service ended with a video of one of her performances.

"I knew Todd as Todd," commented his brother Mark as he looked around at the roughly two dozen people who had gathered at Darcelle XV. "The thing that surprises me is the fact that 10 years after he disappeared, his friends want to remember him."

"Thank you," he added, "because it gives us a chance to say goodbye to the Todd that we really didn't know."

■ PAT YOUNG is a Portland-based free-lance writer and gay and lesbian historian. She is currently writing a book about Ballot Measure 9.

Walter Cole, a.k.a. Rose Empress Darcelle XV, speaking at a memorial honoring Lindsey Alexander



LINDSEY ALEXANDER

One of the sisters, Lindsey, was only 11 when her older brother disappeared. After she learned of his lifestyle, she was flattered that he had chosen her name as his stage name.

"Our friend is resting now," said Darcelle at the beginning of the service. "I understand that if you go in the oceans here at the Oregon coast, you end up in all the oceans of the world. Isn't that neat?"

Darcelle spoke poignantly about Asay's life

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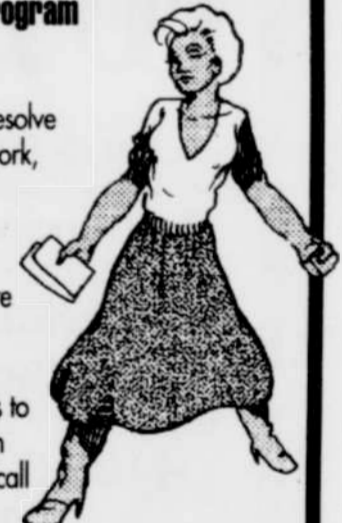
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