

NORTHWEST newsbriefs

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received third-quarter 2003 grants that added up to \$166,000. So far this year the foundation has awarded \$379,100 to 79 charitable organizations in Oregon.

White Bird, a nonprofit founded in July 1997 by gay men Walter Jaffe and Paul King, received \$15,000 to bring world-renowned dance troupes to Oregon. The grant will fund outreach performances by acclaimed choreographer Paul Taylor in April 2004 at nontraditional venues such as hospitals, AIDS hospices, retirement communities and fire and police stations.

For more information visit www.pgefoundation.org.

TEAM TENNIS SHARES THE LOVE

Portland Team Tennis presented \$400 and \$500 checks Nov. 16 to three charities serving people with HIV/AIDS.

The money was raised at the 13th Rose City Open tournament, which was held during Labor Day weekend. This year's recipients were Esther's Pantry, which provides food and personal care items to low-income people; Our House of Portland, a residential care facility; and Women's Intercommunity AIDS Resource, which offers guidance and counseling, advocacy, education, peer programs, prevention and referrals.



Front row from left, Ray Scott of Team Tennis presents checks Nov. 16 to Dave Dishman of Esther's Pantry, Denise Blair of Women's Intercommunity AIDS Resource and Tricia Bergman of Our House of Portland

Team Tennis meets from 8:30 a.m. to noon Sundays at University of Portland. All levels of experience are welcome, and first-timers play for free.

For more information call 503-735-9058 or 503-282-7210. To sign up as a sponsor call 360-576-0590 or e-mail rayscottvua@yahoo.com.

GAY MAN'S DEATH UNDERSCORES FAMILY CONFLICT, BUDGET CUTS

Less than two days after being removed from life support by order of a court-appointed guardian, a Portland gay man died Nov. 18 at Adventist Medical Center.

Douglas K. Schmidt, 37, suffered a massive epileptic seizure March 1. Unconscious and severely brain-damaged, he spent the next 8 1/2 months in three Portland hospitals, a Northeast Portland adult care facility and a nursing home in Vancouver, Wash. Medical expenses are projected to total near \$1 million, largely assumed by the state, which in February ended coverage of his \$13-a-day epilepsy drug because of budget cuts.

Conflict among Schmidt's family members led a Multnomah County judge in September to appoint Nancy Doty as the man's guardian. After consulting with family members and health care staff, Doty reported to the court, "It has been determined by medical professionals that Douglas Schmidt will not recover his neurological functions that allow him to express himself as a person."

Greg Schmidt told *The Oregonian* that his brother experienced numerous life-threatening

illnesses, including kidney failure, pneumonia and other infections as well as gastrointestinal problems. He relied on a ventilator to breathe and could not see, eat, swallow without choking or control his bowels.

Despite a "dissenting opinion" by both Schmidt's sister Stephanie Wight and his partner, Werth Sargent, Doty asked that Schmidt's life support be discontinued, allowing him to die. Wight and Sargent went to court Nov. 17 for a restraining order that would restore life support, but Multnomah County Circuit Judge Katherine Tennyson found "no reason to change the decision that has been made."

According to *The Oregonian*, Sargent called the decision to withdraw life support cruel, saying: "If God makes the decision, that's one thing. This wasn't God." Wight said, "Somebody is killing somebody, and it's not right."

The conflict surrounding Schmidt's medical care illustrates a challenge common among sexual minorities when a family member's wishes are not known or honored regarding health care in the event of incapacitation.

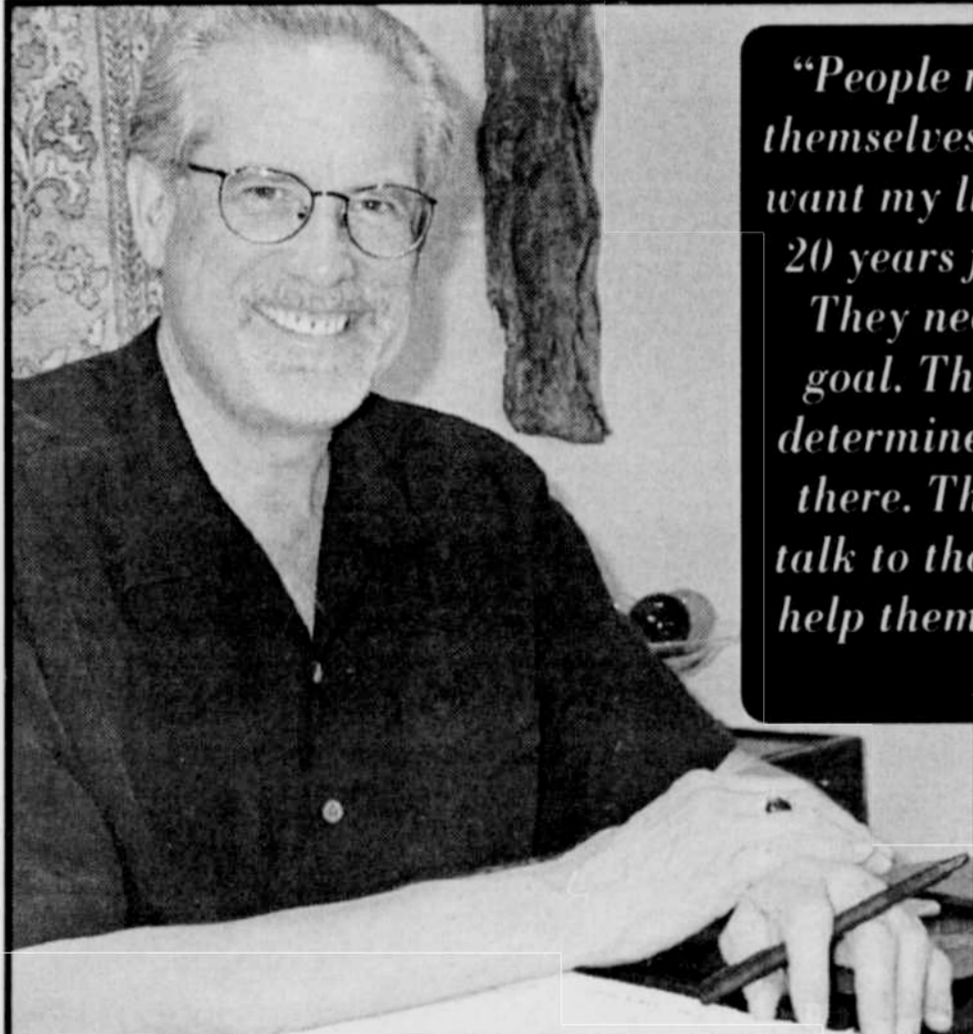
"This family has been absolutely traumatized by this whole experience, but a lot of the trauma came from within the family," Doty said. "If you have specific wishes, you had better put them in writing, or you may get stuck with a guardian who may be a very unpopular person."

Schmidt died in the company of seven family members and friends, including his mother, Sandra Wierzbica of Murrieta, Calif. "This is the hardest thing I've ever done," she told *The Associated Press*. "I talked to myself all night long, and it's the right thing for Doug." □

Compiled by JIM RADOSTA and TIMOTHY KRAUSE

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"People need to ask themselves, 'What do I want my life to be like 20 years from now?' They need to set a goal. They need to determine how to get there. They need to talk to those who can help them get there."

—Bill Findlay

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