Obits

February 1, 1999

Rick Hanenburg, who died of AIDS August 13 in Atlanta, “was a unique man—well-bred, well-educated and well-pierced,” according to his friend Bill Heustess. Along with the silver in his tongue and elsewhere, the 40-year-old’s interests included theater arts, which he majored in at Northwest College in Iowa and pursued throughout his life, both as an actor and a spectator. He became fluent in the language of Broadway, paying many a visit to the Great White Way while on breaks from bartending at Atlanta’s well-known Fox Theater.

On September 12, the AIDS community lost **Joseph Miller**, 54. A Brooklyn native and original Stonewall rioter, Miller traveled widely, teaching English in various countries for the Peace Corps. After falling ill in South Korea in 1985, he returned to New York City, where his HIV diagnosis sparked a decade-plus of activism. Miller’s credits include a part in launching the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and leading the Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project in its successful bid to add violence against HIVers to New York City’s roster of bias crimes. Miller used his knowledge of AIDS—amassed during his 60 hospital stays—to staff a PWA hotline and develop HIV prevention programs and conferences. “He knew more about AIDS than his doctors,” said Tony Saffieri, a friend of many years. “We called him the AIDS Answer Man.”

The only things **Ed Joe Shown**, 44, hated were “intolerance and hypocrisy,” said Laura West of her uncle, who died of AIDS October 8. “He was never in the closet. He never knew what the closet was.” A native of Columbus, Indiana, Shown eventually moved to Atlanta and founded the city’s leading entertainment magazine *Off P’tree*. He also oversaw the domestic staff of several Atlanta estates and volunteered at the AIDS Survival Project. There he helped develop Operation: Survive!, an intensive weekend workshop for PWAs.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Obits-7179-7647