Obits

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Billy Ray Blasingame died of AIDS March 5 at the Zen Center Hospice in San Francisco. He was 55. A California transplant from Texas, Blasingame got a master's degree in education before climbing Bank of America's corporate ladder to the rung of vice presidency. But Blasingame's vocation was tennis: He was a top-ranking member of the Gay and Lesbian Tennis Federation. Despite bouts of illness, Blasingame won the Consolation C-Singles Finals in 1996.

Blasingame's cremains were joined with those of his partner, Brian Jones, whose death preceded Blasingame's by two years, nearly to the day.

Steve Smith, 38, award-winning broadcaster and president of the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, passed away after an April 6 drug overdose. The chorus' managing director, Peter Massey, said that he believed Smith's suicide was the result of addiction rather than his serostatus. "Steve had the ability to overcome many demons, including HIV," Massey said. "But drugs got the better of him." Smith's overdose followed 90 days of sobriety.

A chorus member since 1989, Smith helped create the group's documentary about its Eastern European tour, Out Loud.

"Smith lived in the fast lane," said Massey. "But he was a very good driver. His suicide made all of us face some hard realities."

Danny Ray Snook, Jr, died of AIDS March 12. In addition to working at Crystal Springs Water, the 32-year-old also volunteered in the library of Atlanta's AIDS Survival Project. According to his partner, Matt Ramsey, Snook had a passion for music, a love for animals and an ear for interesting conversation. "He loved lively chats with new people," said Ramsey. Snook's favorite time of day was early morning, which he spent with his beloved dog, Misha. To Snook's mother, "Danny was the brightest candle in the world."

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