Obituary - Marsha Burnett

June 1, 2002 By Sylvia Gaboriault

Marsha Burnett
Fallen Fighter
1954-2002

Marsha Burnett, a long-term survivor who graced the cover of *POZ* for June 2001's "Songs in the Key of Life," died February 16 of heart failure after surgery. During her 14 years' living with AIDS, she became an AIDS educator and antiracist community organizer in Massachusetts and Vermont. She advocated for political prisoners and welfare rights, and cofounded several organizations against corporate globalization and for human rights in Central America, visiting Nicaragua twice. "Activism is my lifeblood," Burnett told *POZ*.

A widowed PWA, she waged a dramatic war against addiction and the courts for the right to raise her own children, who had been taken from her during a relapse. When she learned that the girls were being abused, she took them back -- and was arrested for kidnapping. An activist campaign not only kept her out of jail but won her custody. Armed with unshakable courage, optimism and persistence, she kept her family united until her death. She leaves behind many worldwide who will miss her deeply. In Marsha's memory, a fund has been established for her 12-year-old twins. To donate, please make checks payable to Maritza and Deloris Heatley-Burnett (write *UGMA Trust Account Gift* in the memo section for tax deductability) and mail to: Clarke & Associates, 81 Bauer Ave., Roosevelt, NY 11575 (or call 516.547.1786).

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