

# **BETH LYNWOOD, 44** (Mary Beth Handler Lynwood)

The PWAs - people with AIDS - will miss Beth H. Lynwood the most, those who worked with her say.

For the PWAs, Ms. Lynwood was a comforting, caring voice.

On Nov. 22, that voice was silenced.

About 8:15 p.m., Ms. Lynwood, 44, of Elkins Park, committed suicide by shooting herself while in her car in a section of Fairmount Park near Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia, according to Detective Gary McDonnell. She was pronounced dead at 9:16 p.m. at the Medical College of Pennsylvania, police reports said.

No note was found, McDonnell said.

Ms. Lynwood's death shocked many of those involved in AIDS issues in Montgomery County. She was an outspoken, at times controversial, advocate for AIDS causes in the county and the region.

She was past president of the Montgomery County AIDS Consortium, which she helped found, and past community representative at the Fund for Living, another AIDS group she helped found.

Ms. Lynwood was on the board of directors of From All Walks of Life, a group that raised money for AIDS services, and organized the AIDS Buddy Program for Montgomery County, now located at the Visiting Nurses Association of Montgomery County.

"She was a tireless worker on behalf of PWAs," said Jack Cionci, chairman of the Montgomery County AIDS Task Force and a board member of the consortium. "She's going to leave a gap as a person dedicated to the cause."

During Ms. Lynwood's tenure at the consortium, the group had its organizational troubles. Some members blamed her aggressive leadership style. Others praised her for pushing AIDS issues to the forefront in the suburbs and demanding more and better direct services to PWAs.

"We're missing . . . a powerful advocate for the oppressed in society," said Joseph Villines, a friend and president of the Fund for Living, which makes emergency grants to PWAs.

"Beth has touched the lives of literally thousands of people," he said. "AIDS was her number-one issue - the thing she believed in and the thing that moved her. She was outraged at society's response to AIDS and to the people who lived with it."

Ms. Lynwood was born in 1947 in Colorado Springs, Colo. She earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1973 and a master of social work degree from

Bryn Mawr College in 1978.

From 1979 to 1985, she worked as a home health-care social worker at a Philadelphia area health agency, where she developed a social work department and directed services to families coping with a terminal illness.

In 1987 she earned her Academy of Certified Social Workers credential, and in 1990 she became a licensed social worker in Pennsylvania.

In recent years, Ms. Lynwood was self-employed, working as a consultant for programs on a variety of issues, including AIDS, interpersonal skills, career development and conflict resolution.

She also was an adjunct lecturer at Montgomery Community College and Philadelphia Community College.

Ms. Lynwood was past president of the Home Health Care Social Workers of Delaware Valley. Most recently, she was the group's program chairwoman. She also was a member of the Philadelphia chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

Ms. Lynwood is survived by her mother, Pamela Moses; her son, A. Jeffrey Shindell, and her partner, Gretchen Schaff.

Funeral services were Tuesday at the Turner & Sons Funeral Home in Roxborough. A memorial service is planned for 2 p.m. Dec. 15 at the First United Methodist Church of Germantown, 6023 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia.

The family asks that any memorials be contributions to the Fund for Living, Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania's Norristown office or the First United Methodist Church of Germantown.

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