

Provincetown Activist Babbitt Dies At 48 After Long Illness

By Lisbeth Lipari
Bureau Chief

Provincetown civic activist and leader Preston Babbitt died after a long illness Sunday at his parents home in Tiverton, Rhode Island. Mr Babbitt was 48.

A Provincetown resident since 1980, Mr Babbitt has been actively involved in many aspects of the diverse Cape-tip community. In 1981 he co-founded the Provincetown AIDS Support Group with Alice Foley.

He also served as president of the Board of Trustees of the Universalist Meeting House, as a member of the Provincetown Historical Society, and as president of the Provincetown Business Guild.

"He always had time, and always made himself available" Town Nurse Miss Foley said. "Whatever the situation might be, he was willing to get involved. I guess it was his sense of community that drove him."

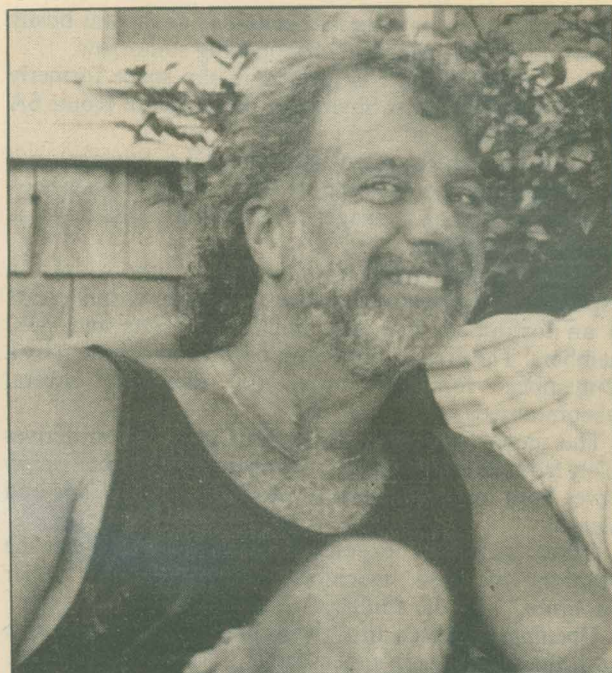
Originally from Rhode Island, Mr Babbitt graduated from Warren High School, and the University of Massachusetts. Prior to his move to Provincetown, Mr Babbitt taught art in Ludlow.

In addition to his community service, Mr Babbitt owned the Rose and Crown Guest House on Commercial Street, made wood cuts, and collected art and antiques.

A witty and articulate speaker as well as a passionate believer in Town Meeting, Mr Babbitt tickled many Town Meeting participants with his amusing but incisive commentary.

"He loved Provincetown," Mr Babbitt's friend and co-worker, Selectman Irene Rabinowitz, said. "He cared deeply about the community, but he also loved to play. He loved fashion and clothes, and was also very serious and into issues. His belief at the Support Group was that everyone with HIV positive be treated compassionately and fairly."

Recalling the early days of the Support Group, "when everyone was very secret about AIDS," Miss Foley said Mr Babbitt was never afraid to express his opinion.



The late Preston Babbitt.

"One thing about Preston," she said. "He and I had good differences of opinion on a lot of things, but it never went beyond that. No matter what, I could count on him."

Mr Babbitt is survived by his parents, Preston and Anne of Tiverton; his daughter, Lauren Mitchell of Warren; two grandsons; a sister, Carol Lehoullier of Tiverton; and two brothers, Peter Babbitt, of Tiverton and Terry Babbitt of Richmond, Virginia.

Burial will be private, but a memorial service will be held at 7 pm September 5 at the Universalist Meeting House in Provincetown.

At Mr Babbitt's request, remembrances may be sent to the Provincetown AIDS Support Group, 96 Bradford Street, Provincetown MA 02657.