

## Jeff Coudriet dies at 48

[Lou Chibbaro Jr.](#) | Feb 07, 2011 | [Comments 13](#)

Jeff Coudriet, a local gay rights leader who worked as a congressional staff member before serving in various positions with the D.C. government, died Saturday in Washington following a year-long struggle with lung cancer. He was 48.

Coudriet is credited with playing a key role in efforts to repeal D.C.'s sodomy law and to pass the city's first domestic partners law during his tenure as president of the Gay & Lesbian Activists Alliance from 1992 to 1995.

Following his stint as GLAA president, Coudriet served as president of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, the city's largest LGBT political group.

Coudriet was a native of Endicott, N.Y. He graduated from New York's Cornell University before joining the Washington staff of Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-N.Y.) from 1993 to 1999. He later served on the staff of D.C. Council member Sharon Ambrose (D-Ward 6), where, among other things, he helped Ambrose draft sweeping legislation to overhaul the city's liquor law.

In 1996, the city's Democratic Party leaders appointed Coudriet to represent the District on the Electoral College in connection with that year's presidential election.

He joined the staff of D.C. Council member Jack Evans (D-Ward 2) in 2001 and served there until 2004, when he left to take a position with the city's Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration. Coudriet returned to Evans' staff in 2007 to become clerk of the Council's Committee on Finance and Revenue, which Evans chairs.

He remained on Evans' staff until the time of his death.

"It is impossible to put into words the contributions Jeff made to our city and its residents," Evans said. "My staff and I share the grief and extend our condolences to Jeff's family and friends, and deeply mourn his passing."

D.C. Council Chair Kwame Brown (D-At-Large) said he was deeply saddened upon learning of Coudriet's passing.

"He was a true public servant who dedicated his career to improving the lives of District residents," Brown said. "Jeff will be sorely missed, and his absence from the halls of the Wilson Building will be felt by many."

News of Coudriet's death stunned many of the city's LGBT and civil rights activists, who worked closely with him on LGBT and other city-related issues for more than 20 years.

"Jeff's insider knowledge of the District finances was invaluable to Shaw on many occasions, when funding needed to be identified for important projects," said Alex Padro, a gay activist and Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner representing the city's Shaw neighborhood.

In messages posted on a memorial site that Coudriet's brother set up on Coudriet's Facebook page, many of his friends and those who worked with him on various issues said he was known as a helpful and considerate person with a wry sense of humor. Others said he was always respectful when expressing disagreement with them on government and political issues.

"While he led the gay Democrats, I led the gay Republicans in town," said Carl Schmid, former president of the D.C. Log Cabin Republicans group.

"Party differences never got in the way of a true gentleman because we were always fighting for the same goal," Schmid said. "I wish so many others were like him. He will be greatly missed."

Bob Dardano, a Stein Club member who worked with Coudriet on LGBT issues in the 1990s, said of Coudriet, "He was a passionate advocate of his beliefs and did it all with professionalism and a sense of humor."

Coudriet, a long-time smoker, was diagnosed last spring about a year after he'd quit smoking. He was candid about his treatments and progress on his Facebook page and, for a time, was doing well.

A memorial service has been scheduled for **Wednesday, Feb. 16 at 11 a.m.** at Foundry United Methodist Church (1500 16<sup>th</sup> St., N.W.) in Washington, D.C. All are welcome. A funeral service will also be held on Saturday at 1 p.m. at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, 701 West Main St., in Endicott, New York.