

Chester D Myers

Nov 24, 1945 — Aug 16, 1999

Story by Ann Silversides

In the late 1980s, when so many were falling sick and dying, scientist Chester Myers got to work writing and distributing information about nutrition and HIV.

"He made brochures at his own expense and went on travelling roadshows," recalls Sean Hosein, a long time friend. "He knew the importance of nutrition for improving the lives of people with HIV/AIDS, even when governments and dietitians were ignoring it. He was an activist and a visionary."

By the time of his death in late summer, Myers was internationally recognized for his work on HIV and nutrition. He was a scientific advisor to the Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE), a member of the ethics review board of the Community Research Initiative Of Toronto, and an on-line advisor at various AIDS nutrition websites. He wrote many papers on nutrition for CATIE, and was regularly quoted in Poz magazine.

"Chester's great gift was taking a lot of scientific information and putting it into terms that a lay person could understand," says Mike Willan, health promotion coordinator for the AIDS Committee Of Toronto.

"He also did one-to-one counselling about nutrition, either by phone, in person at his home, or on-line. He made himself available to anyone who needed him. He had a very open heart and an open mind."

Myers died at age 53 on Aug 16 of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a type of cancer. A memorial service was held at the Metropolitan Community Church Of Toronto on Oct 16.

His death after a brief hospitalization came as a

shock to friends and colleagues. A cat-lover and an organist, he was known for a wonderful sense of humour and a wide and diverse group of friends.

When Myers began producing brochures on nutrition and HIV, there was little treatment available. "He gave PWAs information about how to take care of themselves," Willan says. More recently, Myers investigated some of the side effects of protease inhibitors, and how to help people cope with them.

Myers's work in AIDS was done on his own time, outside of his day jobs in the food industry. He had a PhD in biophysical chemistry. He was a passionate scientist and his

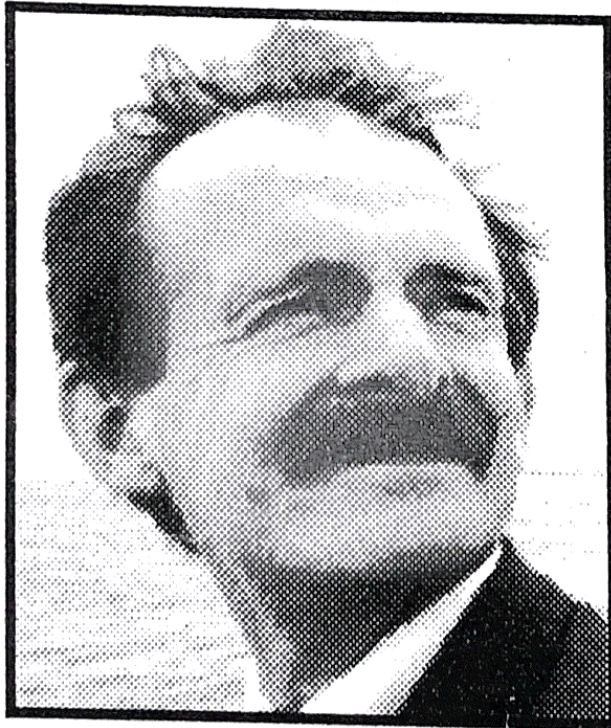
most recent position was as director of applied research and product development at the Guelph Food Technology Centre.

"He gladly shared his vast knowledge with a high level of energy and enthusiasm. I can still see him describing with his hands, arms and whole body, complex molecular interactions," says Terry Maurice, long time friend and director of the Guelph centre.

"I've always enjoyed research for its own sake," Myers said when he accepted the Guelph position early this year. "But I like to see the practical application too — a tangible result from my work." He held several patents, had published extensively in scientific journals, and served on high level academic review committees.

"Although a very pragmatic and practical scientist, he held the respect of those in the academic world... not many from the industrial research world have had this honour," says Maurice.

For on-line tributes to Chester Myers see www.geocities.com/~jenniferjensen/chester.htm, www.gftc.ca and www.catie.ca (click on newsletter, in memoriam).



VISIONARY. HIV nutritionist Chester Myers had the respect of many.