

## Billie Edwards

Billie Louise Edwards died of brain cancer on Wednesday, July 5 at her home in Ypsilanti, Michigan. She was 48.

Edwards was born in San Diego, California, the daughter of a United States Marine. Like her father, Edwards joined the Marines in 1965 to get an education. But she was dishonorably discharged in 1967 because she was a lesbian. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter changed the discharge to honorable.

In 1978 Edwards entered the ministry of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) and served MCC churches in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Joplin, Missouri, Northern Virginia, and Detroit, Michigan. Edwards was a co-pastor of the Detroit MCC in the mid 1980's.

Edwards received a bachelor's degree in psychology from the Union of Experimenting Colleges and Universities in Ohio and a masters degree from the Center for Humanistic Studies in Detroit.

In 1987 Edwards became the co-director of the Office of Lesbian and Gay Males Programs at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Edwards resigned that position in 1993, in protest, when the university refused to allow the center to counsel students about their sexuality. This also allowed her to spend more time with her private psychology practice.

Edwards is survived by her longtime partner Aaron Smith-Douglas, her mother, two sons, one sister, and many friends.

A memorial service in celebration of the life of Billie Edwards was held on Friday, July 21 at Temple Beth Emeth in Ann Arbor.

Memorial contributions should be made to the Billie L. Edwards Support Fund at the Center for Humanistic Studies, 70 East Ferry Street, Detroit, MI 48202.

Cruise 7-26-95 p. 15