

Give the People Light and they will find their own way.

# The Wisconsin Light

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## Police See Nothing Puzzling in Kevin Rotar's Death St. Francis Chief Says

**Milwaukee**—In an update to our story on the death of Kevin Rotar, the Milwaukee Journal reported that authorities identified a body found on the beach at Vinmond Park as being that of Rotar, missing in Lake Michigan since August 9. The beach is about 15 miles north of St. Francis where Rotar was reported to have dived off a boat in pursuit of a hat.

According to Matthew Brooks, a spokesman for the Coast Guard, Rotar and a group of friends were aboard a 30 foot cabin cruiser, the "Just Right" owned by Club 219 manager Chuck Cicarello.

According to a front page story in the Journal on Tuesday, August 26, bylined to Tom Vanden Brook, authorities are continuing to raise questions about Rotar's death.

St. Francis Police Chief Jim Burgess, however, downplayed any inferences that could be concluded about the situation. He said that a "complete autopsy" had been done on Rotar's body and that "no evidence of trauma" had been found.

Burgess emphasized several times that there was "no suspicion of foul play"; that no one was under investigation. He thought that any implication as to that effect and any rumors were "injurious to Rotar's family."

Contrary to other reports, Burgess said that there was no conflict in the stories of those present on the boat. The only exception, he said, was in the differing judgements as to the position of the boat at the time.

Burgess, who said that he had "extensive" experience in ocean diving, denied that police have concerns or questions about the distance the body traveled while in the Lake.

According to Burgess, at the point where Rotar was, the break wall had a low point. The Lake was choppy that day. In those circumstances, Burgess said, the waves pound against the break wall and over the low section. A strong suction is set up. Based on his years of experience, Burgess said that he believes Rotar got caught in the suction and was pulled down and swept out.

Burgess said that the St. Francis Police had received a call "about 4:00 p.m." The Coast Guard and rescue units had been called first, "which is the way it should be," he said.

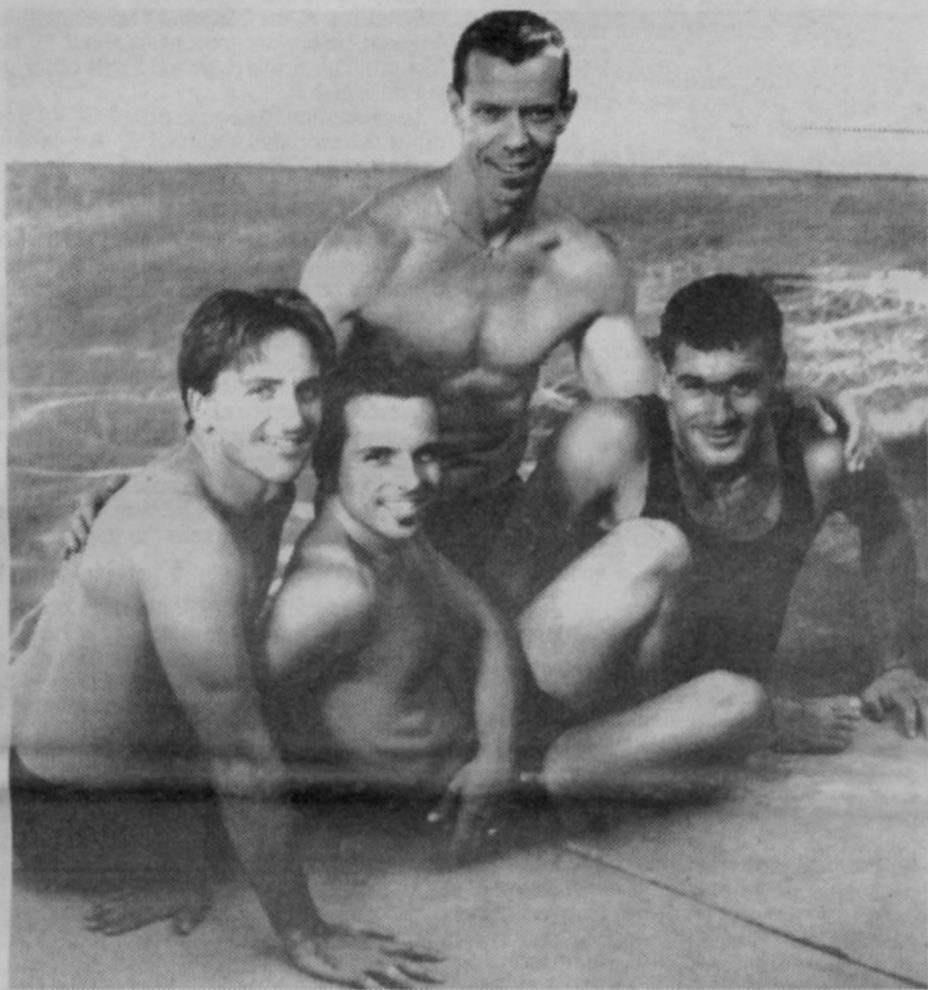
In succeeding days, stormy conditions obtained on the Lake. Burgess said that he believed that Rotar's body would have been swept along by wave action. This explains the distance, he said.

Burgess said that now police await the toxicology report, but it will do "nothing" to change police ideas that there was "no foul play."

Services were held for Kevin Rotar by his family on Sunday, August 24, 1997. He was 41.

## Psychologists Denounce Attempts to Change Gays and Lesbians

### Overwhelming Majority Attack "Reparative" Therapy



**Coming to the Party**— Men Out Loud, the openly Gay, men's a capella group from Los Angeles will be among the featured entertainers at the Decade of Light party on Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at the Milwaukee Hilton Hotel. The party celebrates the tenth anniversary of The Wisconsin Light. The group's repertoire includes pop, dance music, classic, R & B and Doo-Wop. Their debut album on Mercury records was released in June to critical acclaim.

## Medical College Receives \$4 Million Grant for Inner City Teen HIV Prevention Study

**Milwaukee**—The Medical College of Wisconsin has received a \$4,166,000 three-year grant to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of HIV prevention programs for teenagers living in inner city and public housing developments. The grant was awarded to the Center for AIDS Intervention Research (CAIR) at the Medical College by the National Institute of Mental Health.

"Recent statistics show that Americans are contracting HIV at a much younger age than in the past," said Jeffrey A. Kelly, Ph.D., director of CAIR, professor of psychiatry and behavioral medicine, and principal investigator of the study. "It is clear that we need to develop large-scale prevention programs for adolescents because they are at high potential risk for contracting the disease."

The three-year study will focus on youths, ages 12 to 17, living in 15 low-income housing developments in the metro areas of five U.S. cities: Milwaukee, Seattle, Cleveland, Roanoke (Virginia), and Atlanta. While many past HIV prevention programs have provided one-on-one and small group counseling, this project will seek to mobilize teens on a community-wide level to take on roles as AIDS prevention advocates to their peers. The youths will not only learn how to protect themselves from HIV, but will also learn how to talk effectively to other teens about the benefits of avoiding AIDS risk, creating a peer environment that supports the decisions of adolescents to protect themselves from HIV.

"For the project to be successful, it needs to be responsive to the values of the

families, so development of the prevention education program will be preceded by six months of meetings with teenagers and their parents to gather their input," Kelly said. Parental advisory committees will also be formed to participate in program planning.

The new study with adolescents follows three years of HIV prevention work already undertaken by CAIR investigators with adult women in 18 U.S. inner-city housing developments. In the now-concluding study, it was shown that women who are liked and well-respected by their neighbors in housing developments can take on roles as effective and credible AIDS prevention advocates to other women.

"We found it is possible to mobilize women to talk with their neighbors about AIDS, and that this approach results in substantial reductions in HIV risk behavior among women throughout the housing development neighborhood," said Kathleen J. Sikkema, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral medicine and co-principal investigator of the new adolescent study. Similar community methods will be conducted in the new project, which seeks to strengthen young adolescents' intentions to abstain from sex or, if already sexually active, to use condoms during sex.

"It is exciting that the plan for the new project came from women in the concluding study who asked that CAIR investigators extend their work to young people," Sikkema said.

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**Washington, DC**— On August 14, 1997, The American Psychological Association (APA) passed a resolution that represents a serious setback to proponents of so-called "reparative" or "conversion" therapy, according to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC).

The APA is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States.

According to a statement issued by the APA, the resolution "affirmed four basic principles:

- Homosexuality is not a mental disorder and the APA opposes all portrayals of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people as mentally ill and in need of treatment due to their sexual orientation;
- Psychologists do not knowingly participate in or condone discriminatory practices with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual clients;
- Psychologists respect the rights of individuals, including Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual clients, to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy;
- Psychologists obtain appropriate informed consent to therapy in their work with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual clients.

The resolution further states that the APA "urges all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientation."

According to the APA, the resolution passed "by an overwhelming majority."

"These conversion therapies amount to nothing more than psychological terrorism and are usually performed by practitioners who harbor intense bias against Gay people," said David M. Smith, HRC's senior strategist. "These practitioners usually are affiliated with extremist religious groups that promote the illusion that sexual orientation can be changed to further their political aims."

So-called reparative therapy seeks to convert Gay people to heterosexuality, which many mental health professionals agree cannot be done. Some have compared these techniques to efforts to make some left-handed people right-handed; they may learn to use their right hands but they still are innately left-handed.

Supporters of reparative therapy demanded that the APA make a statement on these therapies because they have been under intensive debate within the profession and in the larger society.

"This resolution reaffirms the fact that since there is nothing wrong with homosexuality, there is no reason that Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual people should try to change their orientations," said Kim Mills, another HRC spokesperson. "We stand with the APA in calling for an end to discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation."

The resolution strongly reaffirms that homosexuality is not a mental illness and that psychologists must not "participate in or condone discriminatory practices with sexual minority clients."

In addition, the APA resolution calls on psychologists to "respect the rights of individuals, including sexual minority clients, to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy." And it directs psychologists to obtain appropriate informed consent to therapy when working with sexual minority clients, including minors.