

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXV, Number 80, 13 February 1991 — GS student, playwright dies of AIDS  
[ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]

## GS student, playwright dies of AIDS

By Greg Langmead

*Spectator Staff Writer*

A School of General Studies (GS) student died yesterday morning at 11 a.m. of the AIDS virus.

Alan Michael Contini, GS '90, was a continuing education playwriting instructor at GS and was

Dramatists, a campus theater group, according to Ben Sahl, GS '91, a friend of Contini.

"The family's giving the cause of death as AIDS. That's what he wanted," Sahl said.

AIDS patients do not die of the AIDS virus itself, but of diseases contracted because of the virus, which weakens the body's immune system.

Contini received the 1990 Jess Cloud Memorial Award in Poetry and the 1990 Dean's Citation for Outstanding Service to the School and its Students.

"He was an exceptionally talented playwright and poet. We love him and we're going to miss him always. There will never be another one like him," Contini's friends Lisa Cohen, a first-year law student, and Marcy Wecker, GS '92, said.

The Columbia Dramatists were in the process of rehearsing a play which Contini wrote, called "Positive/Negative," when he died, Sahl said.

Contini was going to co-direct

the play himself but became too ill.

“By the time we got to rehearsal he wasn’t leaving the house,” Sahl said.

Contini was media coordinator for the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power and was actively involved in AIDS awareness on campus, according to General Studies Student Association (GSSA) Treasurer Christine McBurney, GS ’91, who was also Contini’s friend.

“He was extremely well-liked, probably the best known student within GS. He was extremely active within the student political affairs and a founding father of Columbia Dramatists. He was someone who was loved by a wide variety of people,” Sahl said.

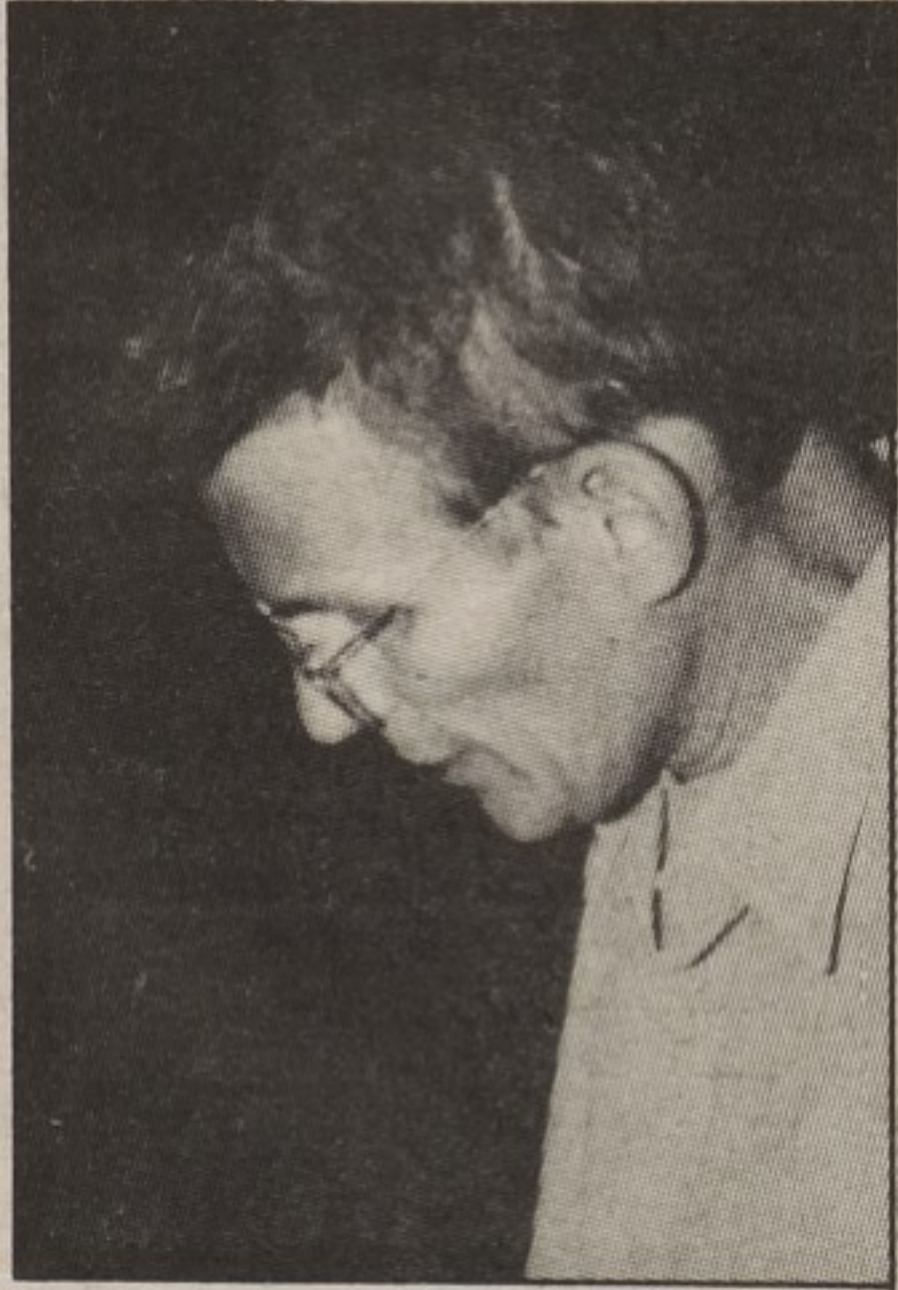
GSSA President Robert deLuna, GS ’91, offered a different view of Contini’s character.

“He didn’t come across as a nice guy. He was direct to the point of being acerbic. But all the time it was because he cared. GS will definitely miss his unique sarcasm. They’re negative adjectives but they’re only meant in a positive way,” he said.

A memorial service for Contini will be held on Friday at 3:30 p.m. in St. Paul’s Chapel.

The GSSA canceled its meeting last night due to the absence of several members who were close friends of Contini.

artistic director of Columbia



COURTESY BLAIR FELL

**Alan Michael Contini**