

## BUSINESS DAY

## Tony Auth, Pulitzer-Winning Cartoonist, Dies at 72

By WILLIAM YARDLEY SEPT. 15, 2014

Tony Auth, a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist who for more than 40 years drew sharp and often darkly comic lines of attack across the spectrum of American life, finding absurdities in all corners of it, died on Sunday in Philadelphia. He was 72.

His death, from brain cancer, was confirmed by WHYY/News-Works in Philadelphia, where he worked after leaving his longtime employer, The Philadelphia Inquirer, in 2012 through a buyout.

Five days a week for four decades, Mr. Auth was an anchor of The Inquirer's editorial page, reaching a national audience through syndication. He was a witty whistle-blower in what he depicted as a complicated and often corrupt culture. Though he leaned left, he mocked politicians of both parties for bickering instead of confronting serious troubles, such as terrorists planning their next attack. He lamented gun violence and the failings of public education in Philadelphia. He depicted Wall Street as a pirate ship at sea firing volleys at a burning Main Street on land.

He made clear his opposition to a Boy Scouts of America policy barring gay scoutmasters by showing a reluctant troop leader saying to young scouts, "The national leadership, alas, has decided you should be helpful, friendly, courteous, kind and bigoted."

Commenting on the immigration debate, he drew two plants at the edge of an unspoiled forest plotting to prevent a marine mammal from making a Darwinian journey to live on land.

"We should build a wall," one plants says to the other.

Mr. Auth won the Pulitzer for Editorial Cartooning in 1976, five years after he joined The Inquirer. One of the cartoons the Pulitzer committee cited showed the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev standing in an American wheat field singing, "O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain," a jab at an unpopular agreement with the Soviet Union that raised the price of grain in the United States.

He was a Pulitzer finalist in 1983 and 2010 and in 2005 received the Herblock Prize, given by a foundation created by a grant from the prizewinning cartoonist Herb Block.

He often expressed gratitude to editors who defended him against repeated demands from readers that he be fired.

"Our job is not to amuse our readers," Mr. Auth said in his acceptance speech for the Herblock Prize. "Our mission is to stir them, inform and inflame them. Our task is to continually hold up our government and our leaders to clear-eyed analysis, unaffected by professional spin-meisters and agenda-pushers. In these times, when those of us who are members of the 'reality-based community' are under relentless attack from both the right and the left, we must encourage, and our work must reflect, independent and nonideological thinking."

William Anthony Auth Jr. was born on May 7, 1942, in Akron, Ohio. He began sketching at age 5 while bedridden with rheumatic fever.

"You should learn to draw," he once recalled his mother saying as she brought him pencils, crayons and paper. "You might enjoy it. It's magical." She was right. Early on, he copied drawings of Superman, Batman and the Lone Ranger and tried to illustrate dramas he listened to on the radio.

His family moved to Southern California when he was a boy, and in 1965 he graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, with a bachelor's degree in medical illustration.

He drew cartoons for the student newspaper, The Daily Bruin, as an undergraduate but did not begin drawing political cartoons until later, while working as a medical illustrator at a teaching hospital. It was the height of the

Vietnam War, and he was soon drawing for an alternative weekly started by friends from college. The Inquirer hired him in 1971.

His survivors include his wife, Eliza Drake Auth, an artist; and two daughters, Katie and Emily. He lived in Wynnewood, Pa.

Mr. Auth published several books of his cartoons, and he illustrated children's books. In 2012, the James Michener Art Museum in Doylestown, Pa., presented "To Stir, Inform and Inflamm: The Art of Tony Auth." A book of his work was published to accompany the exhibition.

"I don't try to be balanced," Mr. Auth said in a video promoting the exhibition. "I try and tell the truth as I see it."

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