

Dance Professor Michael Podolski dies

Michael Ballard Podolski, assistant professor of dance in the Performing Arts Department, died of AIDS-related lung cancer Nov. 10 at the age of 49.

Podolski, a native of Denver, had taught dance technique, improvisation and composition and choreographed at the University since 1984. Prior to coming to St. Louis, Podolski performed for many years as a professional dancer with the New York-based Murray Louis and Alwin Nikolais dance companies.

In 1966 Podolski made his professional debut as a member of the Nikolais Dance Company in "Vaudeville of the Elements." He toured the United States, Canada and Europe with the company and performed on television in Sweden, Germany, Yugoslavia and in the United States.

Podolski, who used the stage name Michael Ballard, joined the Murray



Michael Ballard Podolski

Louis Dance Company in 1969. Three years later he became the company soloist. Louis created the title role of "Scheherazade" and the ringmaster role in "Hoopla" specifically for him. Dance

Magazine featured a full-page photograph of Podolski in his "Scheherazade" role on the cover of the December 1975 issue. During his career with the Murray Louis Dance Company, Podolski appeared with Rudolf Nureyev on major stages in London, Paris and on Broadway.

Beginning in 1974, Podolski was the dance captain for the Louis com-

pany, conducting much of the company rehearsals in preparation for Louis' final comments and corrections.

In 1983 Podolski returned to the Nikolais Dance Company as assistant artistic director. He continued in that role until coming to the University the following year.

In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Podolski continued to perform and choreograph while at the University. He appeared on numerous occasions with the St. Louis Dancers under the artistic direction of Annelise Mertz, professor emerita of dance.

Podolski also was active in the St. Louis arts community. He served on the dance advisory board of the Missouri Arts Council and on the Edison Theatre Advisory Committee.

In 1980 Podolski co-authored *Conversations With a Dancer* with Kitty Cunningham, which featured a series of interviews about the inside life of a dancer, including touring and rehearsals. At the time of his death, he was working on a second book about dance choreography and composition.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Michael Ballard Podolski Memorial Dance Fund at the University, which has been established to provide a yearly Outstanding Choreography Prize to a student in the University's dance program. Checks should be made payable to Washington University, with Michael Ballard Podolski Memorial Dance Fund noted on the memo line. Checks may be sent to Performing Arts Department Chair, Campus Box 1108, Washington University, One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, Mo. 63130.

Podolski is survived by Norman Ader, his companion of 25 years.