

PAUL LUEKEN

A Star Still Shines: Life as an Aspiring Actor

Graduate: Class of 1978 Occupation: Actor/Entrepreneur

Lights, camera, action! Paul Lueken heard these words often while on the set. Yes, a Forest Park High School graduate became a musician, actor, and director.

Since childhood, Paul wanted to act. While still in high school, he participated in *Charlie Brown*, *Rally Round the Flag Boys*, *Cheaper by the Dozen*, and *Up the Down Staircase*. At the Jasper Community Arts Center, he starred in *Cabaret* when only a teenager. He had four siblings who supported him completely: Linda, Sharon, Donna, and Ralph. Paul graduated from Forest Park High School in 1978.

He continued his education as the first Forest Park graduate to attend DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. While at DePauw, he led the marching band as drum major and participated in school theater. For a year after college, he went to New York to the Actor's Studio. While studying and auditioning, he also waited on tables and developed a great interest working for catering companies. An opportunity arose in Chicago; therefore, off he went to pursue his dream. While there, he and some friends formed Red Key Productions, which is an independent film-making company. He also acted with the Goodman Theater--something most actors can only dream of. To support himself in Chicago, he again worked as a waiter but now in the finest of restaurants. Eventually, he started making the fancy desserts for these places.

Paul knew that in order to "make it big," he would have to move to Los Angeles. That's exactly what he did. He found a beautiful place close to Venice Beach and also a loyal companion, his dog Blake. Immediately he started getting roles to play. To name just a few of the major ones: he headlined in *Screen Test*, had a featured bit in *Sixteen Candles*, and even starred in a McDonald's commercial. A theater production that also made him proud was *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Ellen Burstyn and Christopher Walken.

Even though acting kept Paul busy, his passion for cooking still lingered. Therefore, when he met Michael Brooks, he knew he wanted to start a catering service with him. They became partners and their creation Bread and Butter soon provided food in an elegant and exquisite atmosphere. His firm catered all the premiere parties for *The Lion King* and exclusively handled parties and affairs for Jamie Lee Curtis. Jamie loved his sense of humor and personality.

The business continues to this day, however, the partnership ended when sadly, Paul died from complications caused by AIDS in 1995. With all the achievements he made in only thirty-five years, just imagine what he could have done with more time.