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## Ed Hauser, 47, environmental activist who fought to preserve Whiskey Island

Posted by [April McClellan-Copeland/Plain Dealer Reporter](#) November 16, 2008 02:30AM

Categories: [Real Time News](#)



Chris Stephens/The Plain Dealer

Environmental activist Ed Hauser poses with view of Whiskey Island from abandoned coast guard station. Hauser passed away Friday morning a age 47.

For the past 10 years, Ed Hauser threw his entire life into saving the green corner of Whiskey Island, a peninsula with grassy fields and meadows on Lake Erie at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River.

As the head of Friends of Whiskey Island, Hauser collected signatures on petitions, attended too many public meetings to count and spent money from his retirement plan in a campaign to preserve the 20 acres as a park and block expansion plans by the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority.

Hauser, 47, died Friday morning. The Cuyahoga County coroner's office ruled he had a heart attack, spokesman Powell Caesar said.

Known as "Citizen Hauser" and the "Mayor of Whiskey Island," Hauser enjoyed seeing people use what became the county-owned Wendy Park in 2005, which has a marina, beach restaurant, sand volleyball courts and became home to several festivals.

"I was astounded at how many people were enjoying it on Labor Day," said his sister, Sylvia Hauser, 51 of Streetsboro. "If it hadn't been for my little brother . . ."

Cathy Stahurski, Ed Hauser's girlfriend of 11 years, said she was with him when he became ill at 4 a.m. Friday morning. She said his back was hurting and he was sweaty, but he did not want to see a doctor.

She finally persuaded him to go to the hospital with his sister, but he died in the car.

Stahurski said Hauser was an engineer who was laid off from LTV Steel Co. 10 years ago. After that, he threw himself full time into being an activist.

Besides Whiskey Island, he also served as a citizen watchdog on port authority activities, championed a steel museum in Steelyard Commons and was vocal about Cleveland's lakefront plans.

It wasn't unusual to see him at a public meeting about the proposed medical mart.

A 2006 documentary called "Citizen Hauser" chronicled his dogged activism.

"Ed Hauser made this world a better place, not always with his causes, but with his attitude towards people," Stahurski said. "Even his enemies liked him."

Elaine March, co-founder of Friends of the Crooked River, said there will be

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activists who come after Hauser, but no one will be able to fill his shoes.

"I believe he was the quintessential environmental activist," Marsh said. "He was persistent, he did unbelievable research and he used that research in very thoughtful ways."

Hauser was the fourth of five children born to Walter and the late Theresia Hauser. He graduated from Maple Heights High School in 1979 and Cleveland State University in 1990.

He loved to kayak, and could often be found in Lake Erie off Whiskey Island. He moved from Cleveland's West Side back into his childhood home in Maple Heights in May.

Michael D. Roberts, a free-lance writer in Orange, got to know Hauser last year as he worked on a story about the port authority. He called him "the most influential activist of the last decade in this town."

Services for Hauser will be Monday at 7:30 p.m. at Vito-Nero Funeral Home, 6130 Turney Road, Garfield Heights.

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COMMENTS (9)

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Posted by **slayerit** on [11/16/08 at 8:15AM](#)

God Bless You and Your Family and Loved ones as You have Blessed the many Lives You have touched as one of our own local Unsung Hero's.

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Posted by **tomjohnson** on [11/16/08 at 8:56AM](#)

Very sad that a guy who fought for Cleveland to do better has passed away. The issues he worked on remain, and the best tribute the community can give him is to pay close attention to the development plans for the port and lakefront.

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Posted by **bbc2** on [11/16/08 at 8:59AM](#)

We love you Ed.

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Posted by **ExPatClevguy** on [11/16/08 at 9:17AM](#)

I attended meetings with Ed Hauser on several occasions, and feel that he was a talented, creative and courageous guy.

His community spirit and willingness to fight for our community, (often against tin-eared local politicians and their staffers) caused me to admire him and pay close attention to his plans and concepts.

I left Ohio several years ago, but Ed Hauser stayed and fought for Cleveland, for our lakefront and for a better community.

My best regards to Ed's family.

We can all be very proud of this man. He is a hero of Cleveland history.

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Posted by **M4Martyr** on [11/16/08 at 10:27AM](#)

Wow, slayerit actually said something nice.....the end times really must be near. :)

Anyway, it seems that Billy Joel was right....only the good die young. Thank you, Mr. Hauser. May you be in a better place now.

Requiescat in paix.....

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Posted by **PoorRichard2** on [11/16/08 at 12:43PM](#)

Good guy, informed and articulate. Cleveland's lost a great citizen. Condolences to his friends and family. His spirit remains.

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Posted by **birdietrucki** on [11/16/08 at 1:01PM](#)

Cleveland has lost such a great advocate and asset to our community. My heart goes out to his family and friends in their time of sorrow. There are people on this earth that are deemed one in a million and he was one of those people.

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Posted by **bk688** on [11/16/08 at 1:05PM](#)

He did a lot for the lakefront. R.I.P.

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Posted by **august1942** on [11/16/08 at 1:58PM](#)

Terrible tragedy to die at 47 with a heart attack. My father had the same fate at 50 years old.

My sympathy to the family.

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