

AIDS

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and siblings too embarrassed to share those names with others. Therefore, there were rarely obituaries put in the newspaper, and funerals or memorial services were not always held for AIDS victims, because the disease was an embarrassing one. Many families would just say that their family member, who was an AIDS victim, simply ran away from home or died of cancer.

However, according to Jones, there were always a few proud parents or close siblings that wanted their loved ones to be remembered for their life's contribution and fiery spirit, so they would courageously shout out their names or be the first to hang their names on the board. Those vigils are how Jones memorialized his friends and the strangers who all fell prey to AIDS. Jones said he would tell those in attendance: "Love is love. And it doesn't include shame. You're here because you love," he said.

It dawned on Jones at one of these vigils just how much the patterns of names on the wall resembled a patch quilt. This vision recollected memories of his childhood, his mother and grandmother, and most of all, family tradition. But it wasn't until the death of Jones' good friend, Marvin, that he decided to pursue that vision proactively.

On October 11, 1987 — 366 days after Marvin's death — Jones presented his 1,920 panel patch quilt to Congress.

"The quilt was on the front page of every newspaper in the world. I had finally gotten people talking. The world needed to see that this disease was not just a gay man's disease. The misconception was that if you did have AIDS and you weren't gay, you were a hemophiliac, Haitian, or intravenous drug user. But instead, the quilt reflected the faces of those young and old, Black and White, gay and straight, drug-addicted and drug-free," said Jones.

"Prior to the presentation of this quilt, much of Congress ignored the fact that AIDS even existed. Former President Ronald Reagan didn't speak of AIDS until more people had died from it than the [number that] died in the Vietnam War. It was amazing to see the ignorance and lack of help from our government. We all felt hopeless. But we fought."

Jones, a well-known gay rights advocate, worked with the Democratic Health Committee on Capitol Hill. Dur-

ing the 3 1/2 years that Jones worked on the initial quilt, he volunteered for studies that led to the discovery of one of the first successful HIV antibodies tests and participated in test trials that utilized newly-developed Hepatitis vaccines.

According to Jones, "Someone had to test them. Luckily, I wasn't among the few that died while doctors were testing various levels of the drugs on patients. Many of the more successful AIDS medications killed them faster than the disease itself when they were administered to patients because the consumption levels were too high."

After the AIDS Memorial Quilt gained media recognition, "60 Minutes" correspondent Mike Wallace narrated a documentary titled "Life and Death in San Francisco," which chronicled the lives of San Franciscans and the devastating effects that AIDS had on their community.

"My parents and my sister are the only people who I can share memories with. I'm 52 years old, but all of my friends are gone," said Jones. In 1992, Jones himself became sick after years of subtly battling the AIDS virus.

"AIDS destroys the mind and the body. I watched friends in their twenties and thirties experience senile dementia. My hair fell out and my nails fell off. I had pneumonia, I was always nauseous, and I was beginning to go blind. I didn't eat because I'd vomit once I swallowed my food. But with the help of friends and medicinal marijuana, I was able to hold enough food down to take up to 20 pills a day."

Jones' clout allowed him to be one of the first recipients of combination drug therapy, meaning he'd take less medication with the same life-sustaining effects.

"I was well-known enough to be hand picked by the National Institute of Health to be given low-dose therapy. And within two weeks, I was better and have been progressing every year since 1994."

That is until now. Jones is now resistant to every AIDS-related medication on the market except one, which he holds in reserve until he becomes critically ill, to avoid resistance.

"I'm running out of options. And I have to always remember that if I have unprotected sex, I'll pass on a drug resistant strain."

According to Jones, African-Americans and Latinos

appear to have the highest incidence of the disease today based on health data. It is also evident that the disease is rapidly increasing in nearly every part of the world.

It is important, however, to realize that women — especially African-American women — make up the largest HIV/AIDS population in the United States, accounting for over 70 percent of all new HIV/AIDS cases.

"The AIDS Memorial Quilt now includes over 50,000 patches that represent over 90,000 people. This disease is the most preventable disease in the world, yet thousands contract it every day. I beg you all to stop being so passive, get off the Internet, and onto your feet," said Jones.

"It's time to make a difference and stand up for something bigger than yourselves. AIDS is the worst plague our civilization has ever known. Please take this disease seriously before it takes you."

Bush renews vow to aid Katrina victims

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Bush on Saturday renewed the nation's commitment to help victims of last year's Gulf Coast hurricanes and thanked U.S. troops fighting abroad.

In his Saturday radio address, Bush said Americans are grateful to those who rallied after hurricanes Katrina and Rita to bring food, water and hope to people who lost everything.

"We renew our commitment to help those who are still suffering and to rebuild our nation's Gulf Coast," Bush said.

On Saturday, he reminded Americans that many U.S. troops are spending the holiday weekend far from their families.

"We know that their service makes it possible for us to live in freedom," Bush said.

He said the desire for freedom that led the Pilgrims to America still guides the nation today.

"While they were only a shivering few, we are now a strong and growing nation of more than 300 million."

During the week, Bush visited U.S. troops stationed at Hickam Air Force Base

in Honolulu. He stopped there on his way back from a trip to Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam.

"Our service members there have deployed around the world to fight the terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq, conduct important maritime exercises in the Pacific, help deliver humanitarian aid to the victims of disaster and fight drug trafficking," Bush said.

He singled out Marine Cpl. Jason Dunham of Scio, N.Y., who died after throwing himself on an enemy grenade, saving two of his fellow Marines in Iraq.

The Medal of Honor — the nation's highest decoration for valor — will be given posthumously to Dunham, who died April 22, 2004, after an ambush near the Syrian border.

"This Thanksgiving, our thoughts and prayers are with his family and with all military families, especially those mourning the loss of a loved one," Bush said.

This week, the president is heads for the NATO summit in Europe and to meet with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in Jordan.

Your Horoscope Says... Nov. 30-Dec. 6

ARIES

Now's a better than usual time for self-reflection and meditation. Share your ideas. They're more valuable than you think. Appreciation comes from someone far away. You make the call.

Soul Affirmation: I admit what I really want out of life this week.

Lucky Numbers: 27, 48, 52

TAURUS

Listen carefully and follow good advice that will come from someone you've often regarded as foolish. You run into difficulties with one of your projects; don't worry, it's only temporary. How you manage your mind will affect the eventual outcome.

Soul Affirmation: The deed is done. I must wait for the results to unfold.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 10, 32

GEMINI

If there is someone or something that you're avoiding, don't panic if you find you must confront what you've been hiding from. Wait for things to work themselves out. Don't force the issue. Time solves more problems than you ever can.

Soul Affirmation: I seek connection with the best that is in me.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 15, 17

CANCER

Be flexible. Yes, you. There are many ways to be right, and your lover or friend will have come up with one that is different from yours. You'll be asked to compromise this week or you just have to give in. Remember you sometimes have to give a little to get a little.

Soul Affirmation: I see myself as a finisher rather than a starter this

week.

Lucky Numbers: 23, 28, 36

LEO

Use your natural magnetism to get to someone who might be hard to reach. If you have a problem that you need to get off your chest, tell a relative or friend; don't hold it inside. Where's the party? Find it. You need a social setting to make the magnetism work best.

Soul Affirmation: I give thanks for the chance to give.

Lucky Numbers: 41, 47, 52

VIRGO

Even if you can't be with someone you care for, call that person or send a Soul Vibration to let them know you care. You'll feel better, and so will the person. Take time to meditate on the good things life has in stored for you.

Soul Affirmation: The success of others is the investment I make in myself.

Lucky Numbers: 35, 41, 50

LIBRA

A person is only as good as their word. If you have made any promises recently, remember to follow through. People will be counting on you. Any dissatisfaction you feel might come from not doing what you told someone that you would do.

Soul Affirmation: Superficiality is often the best route to clarity.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 18, 36

SCORPIO

If you're not sure about a business deal, ask someone who knows. Asking questions now can help avoid mistakes in the future. The love that you have been looking for is right in front of you. Your ability to see it improves this week.

Soul Affirmation: When I am clear

about who I am, the world becomes clearer.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 14, 22

SAGITTARIUS

Your ability to display enormous grace under enormous pressure will be tested this week. Use your gifts this week to transcend petty criticism. Consider the source and know that you are doing just fine.

Soul Affirmation: I enjoy the love that others have for me.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 19, 41

CAPRICORN

You can expect a message from a distance to arrive this week and you'll be happy to hear it. The spirit is easily lifted if you remember that you only have to imagine your world the way you want it to be. Create a happy reality tonight!

Soul Affirmation: I let worry fly away.

Lucky Numbers: 24, 25, 30

AQUARIUS

You're likely to be efficient and productive this week. Even if you work hard, you'll get satisfaction from a job well done! Use your talents to create some free time for yourself. Use your time to chill out a bit.

Soul Affirmation: With spirit, I co-create my week.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 17, 21

PISCES

Educate those around you in the area of personal growth. Their improvement will bring benefits to you. Humor in communication is the key. Humor in introspection is a must.

Soul Affirmation: Success that has been following me is trying to catch up.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 30, 39