The POZ 100: J-K

November 12, 2018

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Edward Jackson

Age 59

Birmingham, AL

A gay Black man who grew up in the rural South, Edward was diagnosed with HIV in 1988. He is now the community engagement programs manager at the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Center for AIDS Research Behavioral and Community Sciences Core, which supports research on behavioral, environmental, economic and social HIV risk and protective factors in the Deep South. He has also been a member of the National Network of Black Treatment Advocates, Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition, The Pozitively Healthy National Steering Committee, HIV Prevention Network, State of Alabama Prevention Planning Council and the Jefferson County Alabama HIV/AIDS Community Coalition, among others. "Somehow, this plague of a virus, this bull's-eye of stigma and shame, became the springboard for my role as a leader," he says. "As I once fought for my own life, I now apply those lessons learned to fight disparities in our communities."

Eric Jannke

Age 55

Palm Springs, CA

Eric JannkeJensen Larson

Eric is a founding member and president of Let’s Kick ASS Palm Springs (LKAPS), the Southern California branch of a multistate advocacy collective that brings together long-term survivors to advocate around issues affecting people aging with HIV. He has become a regular face at HIV/AIDS conferences and attended this year’s AIDSWatch, USCA and International AIDS Conference. In California, Eric also volunteers for the Desert AIDS Project (DAP) and the HIV & Aging Research Project–Palm Springs and runs the newsletter for both organizations as well as one for LKAPS. He also serves as the chair of the client advisory board at DAP. He recently wrote and compiled the Kick ASS Manual, which addresses issues of HIV and aging through individual stories and medical papers.

Ronald Johnson

Age 70

Silver Spring, MD

Ronald Johnson

Just three years after his own HIV diagnosis in 1989, Ronald was named New York City’s first coordinator for AIDS Policy. He has also served on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and has held leadership roles at AIDS United. But Ronald, who retired last year, is perhaps best described by those who know him as someone with an “unflagging and truly remarkable capacity for kindness and understanding.” Over the past three decades, he has made it his life’s mission to ensure that those living with HIV receive the care and support they need, and he has made a name for himself by showing compassion to those he serves.

Bryan Jones

Age 58

Cleveland, OH

Bryan JonesJensen Larson

Bryan threw himself into AIDS advocacy immediately after his diagnosis in 1984. The Cleveland native founded The Dirt Advocacy Movement, whose main goal was to reach the most vulnerable and at-risk in his community. The actor and dramatist, who was a featured dancer in the film Mac and Me, uses the power of theater in his one-man show AIDS … And I Die Slowly to educate people about the epidemic. Bryan also founded the educational support group Gentlemen's Quarterly, is a board member of the national organization RAHMA, which supports and empowers Muslims living with HIV, and is a member of the steering committee for U=U.

Mary Frances Jones

Age 60

Tampa, FL

Mary Frances Jones

Mary Frances has been involved with HIV education, testing and counseling since 1999, the same year she tested positive. A medical case manager at St. Joseph’s Hospital–TAMPA Care Clinic, she loves helping her clients become active managers of their own care. She solicits donations for children’s clothes and toys for clients in need and encourages local health care workers and pharmacies to participate in World AIDS Day events. Mary Frances was named St. Joseph’s World AIDS Day 2013 chairperson, an honor she earned through her compassion and dedication to the HIV-positive community over nearly two decades.

Perry Junjulas

Age 53

Albany, NY

Perry Junjulas

Perry started doing advocacy work at the Albany Damien Center in 1995, the year he was diagnosed with HIV, after visiting the center in search of solidarity with others diagnosed with the virus. Four years later, he became executive director of the organization. For the past 20 years, Perry has worked tirelessly to bring a grassroots, peer-led, trauma-informed approach to care in his community, helping countless people living with HIV find housing, achieve durable viral suppression and access the care and support they need to live and thrive with the virus. He is a past recipient of dozens of HIV and LGBT advocacy-related honors, including the Harvey Milk Award and Housing Works' AIDS Heroes, among others.

Pat Kelly

Age 64

Orangeburg, SC

Pat KellyJensen Larson

Pat is a founding member and board treasurer of PWN-USA and is the lead coordinator of the group's People Organizing Positively grants from AIDS United. She's also currently a trainer at Common Threads, a peer-led sustainable crafting collective of women living with HIV. Pat serves on the PLHIV Caucus, the South Carolina HIV Task Force, the South Carolina HIV Planning Council, the Minority AIDS Council of Orangeburg, Bamberg and Calhoun counties, and more. She recently presented at the Sero Project's latest HIV is Not a Crime summit and at USCA 2018 and was on the host committee for PWN's 2018 Speak Up!: A National Leadership Summit for Women. Some say she is the Energizer Bunny of HIV activism!

Mark S. King

Age 57

Baltimore, MD

Mark King

Mark has spent more than 30 years fighting to destigmatize HIV. He began volunteering at local community AIDS agencies in California for several years before he tested positive and eventually got a job as director of public relations for the Los Angeles Shanti Foundation. He later served as the education director of AID Atlanta. Mark is one of the most widely read HIV-positive writers in the world. His story of advocacy and recovery has been featured in numerous publications, including The Advocate, Newsweek, HuffPost, The Body, POZ and his award-winning blog, My Fabulous Disease. Mark’s prolific body of work has received honors from the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, GLAAD, HIV Equal and Folio: magazine.

Kevin Koerner

Age 59

Boston, MA

Kevin Koerner

Kevin is the site manager and front desk supervisor—and longest-serving continuous staff member—at the Boston Living Center (BLC). “Kevin is someone everyone knows they can count on,” says the coworker who nominated him for this year’s POZ 100. He first joined BLC as a member in 1998, a decade after his HIV diagnosis. Two years later, he became the program coordinator assistant and then the full-time program coordinator, overseeing holistic services, arts, workshops and other member activities for the next three years. Before joining BLC, Kevin volunteered for three years with AIDS Action’s check-in program, calling clients once a month to see how they were doing. He also served on the Ryan White Planning Council. In his free time, he’s an oil painter.

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