Milestones

January 1, 2000

Tribute
Chester Myers
1945-1999

My first memory of Chester is from a Toronto community center in 1989: This tall, handsome man was speaking passionately about the important role nutrition could play in maintaining a healthy immune system in the face of HIV. It was not your usual “take a multivitamin” lecture—Chester’s talk focused on protein, micronutrients, antioxidants and apoptosis long before the terms became trendy. He considered most dietitians’ recommendations for people with HIV to be, at best, primitive. It was amazing to hear state-of-the-art research discussed in such a practical way. Chester’s speech influenced me to increase coverage of complementary therapies in the Community AIDS Treatment Information Exchange’s (CATIE) newsletter.

Chester was a tireless man with a wicked sense of humor and a love for fresh lobster. A self-educated advocate—he had a PhD in biochemistry but was not a medical doctor—he considered his work since 1992 as scientific adviser to CATIE to be a political act. At a time when the Canadian government and trained dietitians were largely ignoring people with HIV, he produced brochures and traveled to outlying communities at his own expense to discuss nutrition.

In early August, Chester called to tell me that he was in the hospital. His death a few months later, from complications due to non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, came as a shock; that he lived with HIV for nearly 20 years is perhaps testimony to his aggressive use of nutritional supplements.

I’ve lost another mentor to this plague. I’ll miss our monthly lobster dinners and his sophisticated insight.

--Sean R. Hosein

Mergers

Latino ASOs around the country banded together this past fall to form the **National Latino AIDS Voice**, a coalition and advocacy group. At its first press conference, eight of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus’ 17 members came to show support. “This is an effort to raise the idea that Latinos need to—and can—speak for themselves on this issue,” said the Latino Commission on

AIDS' executive director, Dennis deLeon. Latinos make up 11 percent of the U.S. population, he said, but account for 22 percent of AIDS cases.

After drastic budget woes forced the layoff of its remaining full-time staff, the Indianapolis-based **Ryan White Foundation** was folded into DC's **AIDS Action** in October. The rechristened Ryan White Project will still be headed by mom Jeanne White, who founded the original advocacy group in 1990. White will continue to push for renewal of the eponymous CARE Act, which expires later this year.

In other donor decline-drien mergers and acquisitions news, **Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS** officially annexed three New York City fundraising orgs last fall; **Classical Action/Performing Artists Against AIDS, Dishes Project for Pediatric AIDS** and **Dancers Responding to AIDS**. The subsidaries collectively raised $1.38 million in 1999, about 15 percent of the umbrella group's total gross.

Careers

Julie Dorf has decided to leave her post as executive director at the **International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission**, which also advocates for HIVers. Dorf, who founded the group in 1990, built it from an all-volunteer organization to a global player that pushed Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to challenge human-rights violations based on sexuality and serostatus.

National Institutes of Health Director **Harold E. Varmus, Phd**, left the agency in December after six years at its helm, during which the annual budget grew by more than $5 billion. Varmus, a Nobel laureate– turned-administrator, fended off criticism that AIDS received an unfairly large amount of funding. He will now head New York City's Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition Executive Director **Sam Avrett** stepped down in November. But unlike many treatment ASOs, AVAC is expanding its staff—**Rose McCullough, Phd**, joined the group from the League of Women Voters in the newly created position of policy director.

Spencer Cox, chair of the **Treatment Action Group**'s antiviral project, left after five years. "It was time to have someone with more T cells working here," said the Dorothy Parker of treatment wonks, 31. "I'm old and I have AIDS. Time to go."

POZ contributing editor **Mike Barr** left his job as research assistant at New York City's **St. Vincent's Hospital**, citing increased concerns about drug-company funding causing interference with research design. "I know we have to pay our bills somehow," he said, "but to me this seemed unsavory at best." He'll continue to edit TAGline from his new home in Montreal.

Deaths

G. Eric Archibeque, MD, died September 11 of unknown causes after living with HIV for 10

years. Archibeque—known to online HIVers as “Ask Dr. Eric,” moderator of Stadtlanders Pharmacy’s “Personal Connections” HIV chat room—was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and lived in California. He moved to New York City this past January. An internist, he served on the clinical faculty at the University of California system, teaching at both the San Francisco and San Diego campuses, and also worked at the AIDS clinic at San Francisco General Hospital. Archibeque, 40, routinely volunteered additional time at San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic and New York City’s HIV Community Clinic. He died at home with his partner, Dave Pasquel, and his two cats, Michaelangelo and Mia.

Send your milestones to:
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