# Milestones

November 1, 2000 By Denny Lee

Awards

At a White House ceremony August 9, **Mathilde Krim**, PhD, founding cochair of the **American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR)**, received the **Presidential Medal of Freedom**, the nation's highest civilian award. "Nearly 20 years ago, very few researchers even knew what AIDS was," said **President Clinton** during an East Room grip-and-grin. "Krim was one of the first to grasp its terrible implications. She reminds us we must not grow complacent." Honored along with Rev. Jesse Jackson and 14 other advocates, politicians and soldiers, Krim said the medal serves as a reminder of "those we have already lost to the epidemic, close to half a million in this country alone." Activists, meanwhile, issued a release reprising Clinton's 1992 campaign pledge to make AIDS a "top priority" of his administration and decried the man from Hope's "unfulfilled AIDS promises" such as elevating the AIDS czar to a Cabinet-level position, lifting the ban on federal funding of needle exchanges and a Manhattan Projectstyle race for the cure. While a who's who of HIVers and allies (including *POZ's* Sean Strub) had called on Krim to refuse the award, the AIDS icon kept her eye on the prize, responding that "my Medal of Freedom gives me new credibility [as an advocate]. . . . [Its] long-term benefits will far outweigh the very short-term attention that challenging a 'lame duck' president would attract."

The **Gay and Lesbian Medical Association** honored **Donna Futterman**, MD, for her trailblazing research. "Donna has written the book on gay youth and HIV, and that's both literal and figurative," said **Donald I. Abrams**, MD, the group's out-going president. Futterman is the director of the Adolescent AIDS Program at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, New York City, and is the co-author of *Lesbian and Gay Youth*, a look at the health obstacles facing gay adolescents. GLMA presented the award during its 18th annual convention in Vancouver in August.

The **National Institute of Drug Abuse** gave its annual Outstanding Leadership in Research award in June to **Michael Picucci**, PhD, an addiction expert noted for his work on HIV and gay mental health issues. Picucci, who was first diagnosed with HIV in the early '80s, is credited with developing new recovery techniques that blend 12-step programs with life-affirming messages. He practices at the Institute for Staged Recovery in New York City.

Partnerships

In July, HMO **Kaiser Permanente** formed the **Consortium for HIV and AIDS Interregional Search**, a research effort to utilize its extensive database of HIV patients. "Most study cohorts are very small -- anywhere from 50 to 500," said Michael Allerton, who coordinates HIV operations

policy for the Oakland, Californiabased company. Kaiser has over 12,000 HIVers in its system.

The **Earvin "Magic" Johnson Jr. Clinic**, named after the former basketball star, opened its doors in Oakland in July. The HIV health clinic targets people of color in the area and provides comprehensive services regardless of ability to pay. "The use of Johnson's name helps eliminate some of the barriers facing African Americans," said Greg Roberts, executive director of the **Magic Johnson Foundation**, one of the funders. The clinic is located in the Summit Medical Center to encourage anonymity for visitors, said Michael Weinstein, president of the **AIDS Healthcare Foundation** in Los Angeles, which operates the clinic.

Careers

**Frank Hudson**, chief executive of **Catholic Charities of San Francisco**, resigned in August after running up more than $73,000 in expenses for lavish dinners, laser hair-removal and anti-wrinkle injections. Hudson repaid $3,158 to the group -- which received $1.5 million in Ryan White funds this year -- claiming that he was dining in style to boost the charity's visibility among civic leaders. **Brian Cahill**, the former head of the city's social services department, was named to succeed him. In an interview with *Catholic San Francisco*, the official newspaper of the archdiocese, Hudson said: "I'm not perfect. I don't pretend to be."

In August, **Charles E. Clifton** was appointed editor of ***Positively Aware***, a community-based HIV treatment journal that is published by Chicago's **Test Positive Aware Network**. Clifton previously served as director of the network's Men of Color HIV/AIDS Coalition. He steps into the shoes of former editor **Steve Whitson**, who died in January of AIDS.

"Social marketing" expert **Steve Rabin** has moved to the **Kaiser Family Foundation**, a health policy research group (no relation to the insurance company), to be senior VP in charge of media relations. Rabin's previous gigs include Nelson Public Relations, which he founded in 1995, and Ogilvy & Mather, where he oversaw the $47 million "America Responds to AIDS" campaign for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "There is a real need to keep law-makers informed on how state and federal policies are affecting people with HIV," he said.

Deaths

**David William Lawrence**, 49, who helped found the **Catholic AIDS Network** in Washington, died of AIDS July 27. Lawrence often said his spiritual journey began in 1991 at an Episcopalian retreat he attended for people with HIV. He was so moved that he soon left his administrative job at NASA to pursue spiritual outreach full-time. In 1997, he convened a symposium of like-minded parishioners that later grew into the local Catholic AIDS Network. "He dedicated his life to creating a Catholic ministry for people with AIDS," said Father Jim Nickel, a friend and member of the network.

*-- Denny Lee*

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