Upward Mobility

October 1, 2000 By Denny Lee

New York City -- It was all about money at the **American Foundation for AIDS Research** (amfAR) “Honoring with Pride” event held on Ellis Island this summer. The first annual “Awards of Courage” -- bestowed inside the very chamber where waves of immigrants began their lives in the New World -- celebrated activist **Peter Staley**; community-based researchers **Donald Abrams**, MD, and **Joseph Sonnabend**, MD; legal dream-team **Matthew Coles**, **Nan Hunter** and **William Rubenstein**; Whitman-Walker head **Cornelius Bake**r and journalist **Anne-Christine d’Adesky**. “I keep seeing guards everywhere,” said activist-awardee **Larry Kramer**, training his imagination on the catwalk where guards with guns once strolled. “They’re pointing and yelling ’Faggots!’” He was, of course, correct about one aspect of that -- more than 600 well-heeled gay men paid top dollar for a peek at the grand dame herself, **Elizabeth Taylor**, and all the wine you can drink. Kramer, who just turned 65, recently came into his own windfall: “I just got my Social Security,” he told the crowd. “Who would have thought?” Fellow AARP member and former governor **Mario Cuomo** was paid a pretty penny to give a keynote address on AIDS activism and pharmaceutical greed. **Eric McCormack**, the gay-acting straight star of NBC’s *Will & Grace*, played host and auctioned off two walk-on parts on the show for a combined total of $60,000. When one of the bidders was asked for his line of work, he replied, “I give money to amfAR.” By evening’s end, $500,000 had been added to the group’s cash register. *Cha-ching!*

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