



Congrats Cleve

Below is an edited excerpt of a blog post by the National AIDS Memorial titled “Cleve Jones, Activist and Founder of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, Honored with Lifetime of Commitment Award on World AIDS Day.”

February 13, 2023 By [National AIDS Memorial](#)

The National AIDS Memorial marked World AIDS Day 2022 with a national observance at the 10-acre National AIDS Memorial Grove in San Francisco honoring AIDS activist and founder of the AIDS Memorial Quilt Cleve Jones with its Lifetime of Commitment Award.

The two days of events brought together leaders on the front lines of the epidemic for powerful conversations and events focused on “Changing the Pattern for a Future without AIDS,” referencing a major initiative of the Memorial that is bringing the Quilt to the South to address the growing crisis of rising HIV rates among communities of color and marginalized populations.

Jones, who founded the Quilt 35 years ago, was recognized for his visionary leadership, activism and powerful voice in the fight for health and social justice. He remains an inspirational force for change and action today, standing up without hesitation and using his voice for those who are often overshadowed and not heard.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi praised Jones in a special video tribute, saying, “Cleve, you are a force of nature—unshakable in the face of adversity, overflowing with a passion for serving others.

“When the AIDS crisis tightened its grip on San Francisco—when pain and despair grew rampant—you kept hope alive,” Pelosi continued. “You were a shining light in the dark, building community out of grief and spurring action out of anguish. From the halls of power to union halls and picket lines, you have never relented in your mission: empowering the oppressed, tearing down injustice and honoring the dignity and beauty of every person.”

Former San Francisco mayor and mentor Art Agnos presented the award to Jones in front of an audience of more than 600 members of the community, who gathered on the eve of World AIDS Day for a gala to support the Memorial’s programs. “I’m honored to receive this award, but, more importantly, I’m so pleased that the Quilt now has a permanent home with the National AIDS Memorial and that it is continuing its mission of activism and justice. One thing I’ve learned is that through hope one finds courage, and through courage we find love. Love is at the core of what we do, and that is what this Quilt represents.”

The National AIDS Memorial worked with local partners from across the country to display hundreds of Quilt sections featuring more than 3,500 individual panels in nearly 100 communities on World AIDS Day. The largest Quilt display ever in Alabama took place in Montgomery and surrounding areas as part of the Memorial's Change the Pattern initiative. The program, funded through a \$2.4 million grant from Gilead Sciences, is organizing quilting workshops, displays and educational programming with the Southern AIDS Coalition throughout the Southern United States.

The National AIDS Memorial's World AIDS Day Observance panelists highlighted the importance of the work being done around the country, the interconnectivity of issues to reach zero HIV diagnoses and the importance of education and outreach to at-risk populations during three powerful conversations (available for viewing at AIDSMemorial.org): "Reflections with Cleve Jones and 35 Years of the Quilt," "The State of the Epidemic Today with Leaders on the Frontlines" and "Young Leaders Making an Impact."

"As our community comes together this World AIDS Day, it's hard not to look around and see who's missing—our friends, lovers and family we've lost over four decades of this horrific, cruel disease," said National AIDS Memorial CEO John Cunningham. "Today, people are still dying, and there should have been a cure long ago. We are angry because bigotry, hate and stigma persist today in society. And we carry shame because communities of color and marginalized populations continue to be disproportionately impacted by HIV and discrimination, and it shouldn't be this way. It's time to change the pattern."