



# Keep It Together

Check out this special issue focused on advocacy.

November 11, 2024 By [Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.](#)

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I remember the 2012 display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt in Washington, DC, as if it were yesterday. It was shown during the XIX International AIDS Conference, marking 25 years since its first display in San Francisco. It was the first time the Quilt had been shown in its entirety since 1996.

I was deputy editor at the time. Many POZ staffers attended that conference, which was the first time it had been held in the United States in decades. President Obama had lifted the U.S. HIV travel ban, so the International AIDS Society, the conference organizer, rewarded that action by hosting the conference in DC.

The Quilt was displayed in 50 venues across DC, including the National Mall. One of the most emotional moments for me was onstage on the Mall looking out at the vast Quilt panels. I got to read a few of the names of people lost to AIDS and included a personal remembrance. I left the stage in tears and had to take a long walk to recover.

The Quilt is more than a reminder of what's been lost. In addition to giving those who view it an opportunity to grieve, it also provides motivation to keep on fighting for those who remain. That's what it did for me, and I know I'm not the only one.

In large part, we have one person to thank for the Quilt: Cleve Jones. Many people helped to make the Quilt a reality, but he was the person who first conceived of the Quilt. Nonetheless, as a long-term survivor and a longtime activist, our cover subject isn't resting on his laurels.

Cleve is now working on a project to bring to life an anthology of the untold stories of HIV long-term survivors. "If I'm allowed one more big project in my life," he tells POZ, "this is going to be it." [Go here](#) to read more about it and the efforts of other long-term survivors to advocate for their fellow long-term survivors.

In this special issue focused on advocacy, we are also introducing POZ Icons, an annual tribute to individuals, both living and deceased, who've made lasting contributions to the HIV community.

The inaugural inductees into our hall of fame are Hydeia Broadbent, Cecilia Chung, Dennis deLeon, Sean Strub and Phill Wilson. We are grateful to the 2024 POZ Icons for all they've done to fight HIV and AIDS. We're also looking forward to continuing this new initiative for years to come. [Go here](#) to read more.

Another long-term survivor who has made a mark in the HIV community is Tom Viola. He has led the nonprofit Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS (BC/EFA) since 1996. The group has raised more than \$300 million for hundreds of organizations across the country. Tom will be retiring from BC/EFA December 31. [Go here](#) to read about what his work has meant to grantees, and to him, and what's to come after his farewell.

Please also [go here](#) to find a special edition of Real Health, our sister publication, focusing on HIV.