Halftime Show

This sports fan marks the 50-yard line of a life with HIV.

April 1, 2008 By Randy Boyd

Twenty-three years ago, at the age of 23, I was a closeted cheerleader who'd just graduated from UCLA and discovered I was HIV positive. Recently, I celebrated my 46th birthday. The scoreboard now reads: half a life with HIV, half a life without.

In the first half, I felt like a big black unathletic fag, a disappointment to my sports-loving family. In the second half, I evolved into an openly gay author living with AIDS, using the gift of writing to tackle homosexuality in sports. The second half has been much more enjoyable and educational. I learned that my mom can sometimes be right: She never stopped dreaming of medical advances keeping me alive.

I learned I can survive nightmares, hospitalizations, coworkers not eating my birthday cake because an openly positive man blew out the candles. I learned friends don't always stick around. I learned I could love a dog beyond all measure.

The same spirited moves I've done since childhood—the dancing that made me a cheerleader (and fag) —are now called "street dancing," a cool unisex craze for kids today. The "young, gay and horny" behavior that made me "sick" to my peers now gets equal time with the "young, hetero and horny" stuff on MTV.

By living long enough to witness subsequent generations, I see their behavior in my own and think: The first half of my life, I lived in a world where I felt wrong for being who I am. The second half, I've realized: There's nothing wrong with who I am, and the world is catching up to understanding that same idea. Now back to the game.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/mid-life-HIV-14247-6317