The 2016 POZ 100: Celebrating the South

This list paid tribute to advocates living and working in the South—the region most impacted by HIV/AIDS.

November 16, 2020 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr., Joe Mejía , Jennifer Morton and Trent Straube

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The 2016 POZ 100 list paid tribute to HIV advocates living and working in the South, then and still the region in the United States most impacted by HIV/AIDS. For the purposes of the list, POZ used the U.S. Census Bureau's definition of the South as encompassing Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

Recognizing the work of advocates in the region was an obvious choice in 2016, which was also a presidential election year. Any attempt to end the epidemic in the United States would require a concentrated effort there. At the time, 44% of people living with HIV in the United States resided in the South despite the fact that the region accounted for only 37% of the total U.S. population.

To say that year's honorees—a mix of HIV-positive and HIV-negative people—had their work cut out for them would be an understatement. Nonetheless, there was no shortage of folks doing the needed work to combat the stigma, lack of resources, limited access to health care and rising rates of sexually transmitted infections standing in the way of efforts to stanch the epidemic.

Those honored in 2016 were a group as diverse as the communities they serve. Honorees included professional AIDS advocates and part-time volunteers, Black church members and an atheist from Black Lives Matter, scientists and stay-at-home moms, social workers and social media savants all united in their quest to address such neglected populations as Latinos, women and Black gay and bisexual men.

Catching Up With...

Stacy Jennings

Stacy Jennings Jonathan Timmes

What advice do you have for people doing HIV advocacy work today?

Speaking up and speaking out will give you the freedom to live, love and be yourself. I've been an advocate since birth. When I was born, my cries were my advocacy tools to be fed, to be changed, to be held and to be loved. We need to continue to speak out because advocating will get you everything you need and desire.

Tammy Kinney

Tammy KinneyCourtesy of Tammy Kinney

What advice do you have for people doing HIV advocacy work today?

Be sure to ask yourself why you are doing this work. Sometimes advocates have to get uncomfortable to help a person living with HIV. Remember to practice self-care and be willing to step back and let someone else step up. We have a new generation of advocates. Let them learn from those who were fighting in the ’80s, and we need to be willing to learn from them.

Derek Canas

Derek CanasCourtesy of Derek Canas

Why do you advocate for people living with HIV?

I’m an advocate because stigma is still a very strong reason that people don’t get tested.

2016 Medical Milestone

The Undetectable Equals Untransmittable (U=U) movement was launched by the Prevention Access Campaign, a coalition of activists, community members and scientists.

The 2016 POZ 100

Robert Adams-Ghee

Dazmine Allen

Ellen Allen

Ruby Amagwula

Tiye Amos-Mandela

David Armstead

Justin Bell

Stephen Bloodworth

Renee Y. Burgess

Michael Burks

Angel Camacho

Derek Canas

Nicholas Carlisle

Adrian Castellanos

John Curry

Steve Daniels

Laurie Dill

Dázon Dixon Diallo

Billy Duckett

Chip Eakins

Yvonne Early

Jason Elliott

Stephen Fallon

David Fawcett

Darnell Ferrell

Phyllis Finch

Gregory “Gregg” Fordham

Jaysen Foreman-McMaster

Victoria “Vicky” Fortugno-Oliver

Gary Fowler

Joe C. Fuentes Jr.

Bambi Gaddist

Joaquin “Jack” Garcia Jr.

Patrick “Pat” Gordon

Mark Grantham

Sam Graper

Chelsea Gulden

Christine Hackford

Leslie Hall

TK “Thunder Kellie” Hampton

Danny Harris

David Hearn

Ronald Henderson

Jean Hernandez

Kathie Hiers

Jeremy Hobbs

Monique Howell-Moree

Art Jackson

Stacy Jennings

Darrin Johnson

Kecia Johnson

Monica Johnson

Marxavian Jones

Shyronn Jones

Carmen Julious

Deborah Kahal

Alleen King-Carter

Tammy Kinney

Daron Kirven

Janet Kitchen

Twana Lawler

Cheryl Lewis Edwards

Arianna Lint

Jonathan Lucas

Tiommi Luckett

Andrew Martin

Michael Maus

Carolyn McAllaster

Butch McKay

Brady Morris

Morris Murray

Roberto Olmo

Jon Gabriel Ortiz

Byanca Parker

David Parker

Michael Emanuel Rajner

Ken Rapkin

Allison Rice

Cathy Robinson-Pickett

Steven Romeo

Esther Ross

Blake Rowley

Evelyn Scott

Ieshia Scott

Shirley Selvage

Melvin G. Slack III

Alex Smith

Carlton Smith

Savalas Squire

Lee Storrow

Wesley Thompson

Jennifer Townsend

The Reverend Joyce Turner Keller

Kevin Varner

The Reverend Debbie Warren

Daniel Weaver

Robin Webb

Charles Whitehead

Auntjuan Wiley

Ashton P. Woods

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