POZ Awards 2019 / Best Celebrity Advocate

Read about the nominees, then scroll down to vote for your favorite!

October 1, 2019

Welcome to the 4th Annual POZ Awards, which spotlight the best representations of HIV/AIDS in media and culture.

The POZ editorial staff selects the nominees, but POZ readers choose the winners.

Eligible nominees were active or were presented, published or produced between October 1, 2018, and September 30, 2019.

Be sure to vote for your favorite nominees by the World AIDS Day deadline: Sunday, December 1, 2019.

VOTING IS CLOSED!

Here are the nominees:

Gareth Thomas

The legendary rugby player did not disclose his HIV status to the world freely. Gareth's announcement was, in fact, was his attempt to outrun the circling vultures of British tabloid newspapers. The Welsh sports star's video announcement contained all of the confusion and pain that people living with HIV know so very well. He won our hearts, even as watching him in such pain broke them. Already, the star is delivering messages about HIV stigma, health and vitality, and what it means to be undetectable. His influence on the public perceptions of people living with HIV is incalculable.

Janet Mock and Our Lady J

This phenomenal pair, who share writing duties on the FX series Pose (Mock has directed episodes as well), made history this year as the first transgender producing team to be nominated for an Emmy for Best Dramatic Series. More importantly, their work on Pose continues to delve into the

lives of transgender women living in New York City during the most brutal years of the AIDS epidemic. Advocacy takes many forms. Telling stories of our shared history is a fine use of their commitment and talents.

Jonathan Van Ness

Let's face it. Jonathan Van Ness is America's sweetheart right now, and we are here for it. After bringing his adorable dose of positive reinforcement to his personal grooming subjects on the hit reality show, Queer Eye, and then coming out as non-binary, Van Ness had another big reveal: he announced that he is living with HIV. In whirlwind appearances since, Van Ness has explained what it means to have an undetectable viral load, attached himself to various HIV groups and charities, and even endorsed presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren due to her plan to make HIV meds more affordable.

Prince Harry

Prince Harry continues to demonstrate his rightful place as heir to Princess Diana's legacy of HIV awareness and compassion. His royal calendar remains packed with engagements that focus on his commitment to HIV, and his most recent embrace of rugby star Gareth Thomas is just the latest example of Harry going above and beyond his exalted station to deliver important HIV education to the world.

Ryan Murphy

Sometimes, the greatest contribution a gatekeeper of privilege can offer is to provide an opportunity to others and then get the hell out of their way. When Murphy, a white cisgender gay man, decided to bring the ballroom scene of the late 1980s to life, he first consulted the team behind the iconic documentary Paris is Burning – and then he gave them all a job on Pose. His personal experiences with HIV in the gay community have influenced his work, but he wisely trusts his transgender producing and writing team to bring it all to life. That's a lesson in being an ally.

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