POZ Awards 2019 / Best in Literature

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:

Fag Hags, Divas and Moms: The Legacy of Straight Women in the AIDS Epidemic (Victoria Noe)

The history of the AIDS epidemic has largely been told from the perspective of gay men: their losses, struggles and contributions. But what about women - in particular, straight women? Not just Elizabeth Taylor and Princess Diana, but thousands whose accomplishments have never been recognized? That is the thesis of this collection of profiles from Victoria Noe, herself a heterosexual woman who often found herself on the outskirts of a HIV advocacy community, despite her many personal losses and level of commitment.

Nurses On The Inside: Stories Of The HIV/AIDS Epidemic In NYC (Ellen Matzer and Valery Hughes)

We are all about any project that gives nurses their due, and Nurses on the Inside is a prime example. It is written by two nurses who witnessed the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic from the frontline. Some of the story is raw, it is sometimes graphic, but the sights, sounds, and smells of their workplace will be familiar to any of us who have been there. Have you thanked a nurse today?

Out in Time: The Public Lives of Gay Men from Stonewall to the Queer Generation (Perry N. Halkitis)

Any historical look at the lives of gay men over the course of the last 50 years will undoubtedly confront the AIDS epidemic. While that is true in the case of Perry N. Halkitis' latest book, his real mission here is to have an intergenerational conversation among us, a goal any long-term survivor will appreciate as long as wen can also listen as much as we speak.

Out of the Shadows: Reimagining Gay Men's Lives (Walt Odets)

Clinical psychologist and author Walt Odets earned his historic place in the canon of HIV literature with, among other works, his 1995 book, In the Shadow of the Epidemic, which examined being HIV negative while living in the center of the crisis. His latest work is, perhaps first and foremost, an achingly beautiful and personal memoir of his own loses and the passing of the years. Odets steps beyond that, though, with the personal stories of gay men that will resonate and inform anyone who lived through our darkest period – and wants to hear firsthand what it was like. Finally, Odets isn't interested in merely hovering over tragedy; he wants the community of gay men to reclaim and rediscover ourselves in the here and now, accept the past. "Authentic self-acceptance," he writes, "or the lack of it, is almost the entirety of what defines a life."

Remaking a Life: How Women Living with HIV/AIDS Confront Inequality (Celeste Watkins-Hayes)

"Women don't get AIDS," an activism poster from the 1980s read, "They just die from it." Author Celeste Watkins-Hayes flips this script through interviews with modern-day women living with HIV who have shifted their approach to their physical, social, and economic survival. The book also provides tips for improving our governmental and community-based approach to these issues, and in doing so, alleviate the inequalities faced by all of those living with HIV/AIDS today.

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