



R.I.P. AIDS Advocate Angela Lansbury

The beloved star of TV, film and stage died at age 96.

January 9, 2023 By [Trent Straube](#)

Legendary actress Angela Lansbury, perhaps best known for portraying Jessica Fletcher on TV's *Murder, She Wrote*, died October 11, 2022. As tributes and obituaries recounted her decades-spanning career in film, television and Broadway, many highlighted an aspect of her eclectic life that fans today may not be aware of: Lansbury was a pioneering and vocal HIV and AIDS advocate.

Angela LansburyWikipedia

“During the worst years of the AIDS crisis, Angela Lansbury was a staple at AIDS benefits, helping raise millions of dollars to fund AIDS research & patient care,” tweeted LGBTQ historian Eric Gonzaba in a post that included a newspaper clipping about Lansbury appearing in an Aid for AIDS holiday card.

In an article titled “Let’s Not Forget What Angela Lansbury Did During the Worst Years of the AIDS Epidemic,” Queerty.com rounded up several other posts and comments about the actress’s HIV advocacy.

Lansbury voiced Mrs. Potts in Disney's 1991 hit *Beauty and the Beast*.[Wikipedia](#)

Lansbury was so well known for her support of HIV and AIDS causes that in November 1996, Broadway hosted a fundraising event titled *Angela Lansbury—A Celebration*. At the time, Lansbury was at the height of her celebrity. She had become a household name thanks to *Murder, She Wrote*, which ran from 1984 to 1996. And she had voiced Mrs. Potts in Disney's 1991 hit *Beauty and the Beast*.

Angela LansburyWikipedia

The event, Playbill reported, “honored both Ms. Lansbury’s remarkable acting career and her tireless efforts against AIDS, raising over one-million dollars for the American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR) and Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.” The evening included appearances by luminaries of the Great White Way, such as Stephen Sondheim, Jennifer Holliday, Nell Carter and Bea Arthur, all of whom attested to her incredible HIV advocacy.

The AIDS epidemic reached a milestone that year: In early 1996, combination antiretroviral therapy became available, which effectively meant that an HIV diagnosis was no longer a death sentence.

Angela LansburyYouTube/The New York Times

At the tribute, Lansbury gave a speech in which she discussed HIV advocacy and recounted her friendship with director-producer Barry Brown and his former partner Fritz Holt, who produced Gypsy and who died of AIDS. “Never give up the fight until the war is won,” she told the audience. “And we will win!”