



R.I.P. David Mixner, Trailblazing Strategist and Activist

He was arrested in one of the first White House AIDS protests.

May 13, 2024 By [Trent Straube](#)

Longtime LGBTQ political strategist and AIDS activist David Mixner, who became a nationally known openly gay figure in the Clinton administration, died at his home in New York City on March 11, 2024. The cause was long COVID, The New York Times reported. He was 77.

Mixner was HIV positive and lost a partner of 12 years to the disease as well as, by his own count, 382 friends. While Ronald Reagan was president in 1987, Mixner participated in one of the first AIDS protests at the White House and was arrested along with 64 others, according to The Advocate. The LGBTQ magazine added that Mixner assisted in drafting legislation during the 1980s that helped California address the growing epidemic.

Mixner worked mostly behind the scenes, but he was an openly gay man at a time when that was rare and fraught with danger. He was pivotal in fighting antigay legislation in the 1970s and 1980s and in pushing the political establishment to support and fund LGBTQ issues. A longtime friend of Bill Clinton, Mixner worked on Clinton's presidential campaign, influencing him to include AIDS and gay rights in his messaging.

In 2021, the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law started a fellowship in Mixner's name aimed at supporting students who intend to serve the LGBTQ and HIV communities. In a CUNY interview, Mixner said:

"The community [in the early days] mobilized when our government turned its back on us.... Many of us were included in a group that signed a pledge—I was one of the founders of the pledge—that no person with AIDS would die alone. Because many, many of our friends' families disowned them when they found out; my partner's family disowned him and wouldn't see him before he died. I don't know how a mother and father can do that, but that's another issue. We made sure someone was there all the time by their bedsides."

