Ryan White State Historical Marker Unveiled in Indiana [VIDEO]

A teenager when he died in 1990, White had become a world-famous AIDS activist.

September 3, 2019 By Trent Straube

The newest Indiana state historical marker honors AIDS icon Ryan White, who died in 1990 at age 18. The marker was unveiled at the Hamilton Heights Middle School in Howard County, reports RTV6 news (you can watch the news segment below).

In 1987, White transferred to the Hamilton Heights school, then a high school, after having been denied admittance to his school in Kokomo, Indiana, because he had HIV. White, who had hemophilia, contracted the virus in 1984 through a blood transfusion. The Kokomo community feared White would spread the virus to students and school staff. The White family relocated to Cicero, Indiana, and Ryan attended the Hamilton Heights school in Howard County.

His story made global headlines, and White became a well-spoken and inspiring advocate for people living with HIV.

“Our life actually changed the night we moved,” Jeanne White-Ginder, Ryan’s mother said, in the RTV6 segment. “The next day, kids stopped by the house to introduce themselves to Ryan. Danny Baker, Wendy Baker was one, Jill Stewart, Billy Beechler. There was kids that stopped by, so Ryan would know somebody the first day of school.”

The federal Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is named after the teen. And rock icon Elton John said White and his family inspired him to get sober and become an AIDS advocate as well. For more about that, including a speech from John, click here.

In related news, the National AIDS Memorial in San Francisco includes a Hemophilia Memorial. White-Ginder was pivotal in bringing it to fruition. For more, click here.

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