Cleve Jones

October 11, 2008 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

"If AIDS had taught us anything, it was that we must be true to ourselves if we are to survive."
- Cleve Jones

Cleve Jones is being honored this year on October 11 for GLBT History Month. He is one of five HIV-positive honorees this month, including Greg Louganis, Robert Mapplethorpe, Randy Shilts and Bill T. Jones.

Jones co-founded the San Francisco AIDS Foundation in 1983. He launched the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt in 1987.

Nearly 2,000 panels of the AIDS quilt were first exhibited during the second national march for LGBT equality on October 11, 1987. It was displayed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. It instantly became a powerful symbol of the devastation brought by HIV/AIDS in the United States. Today, the AIDS quilt pays tribute to more than 44,000 people.

I get emotional every time I encounter panels from the AIDS quilt. If you could harness the energy from the love that went into each panel, our planet would have been rid of this disease long ago.

October 11 also is National Coming Out Day, which is currently coordinated by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC).

Watch the HRC's promotional video for National Coming Out Day:

Click here for my article "Coming Out Again" about my disclosure process of being gay and HIV positive. (Clic aquí para leer mi artículo en español.)

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