



Joseph Sonnabend, MD, Will Be Celebrated at April 12 Memorial in New York City

Leading figures in the HIV community will honor the late pioneering AIDS scientist and his musical compositions will be performed.

April 9, 2025 By [Joseph Sonnabend, MD](#)

This statement was released to the media by David Kirschenbaum and Sean Strub.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2025, to celebrate the life and achievements of Dr. Joseph Sonnabend. The pioneering AIDS doctor, researcher and safe-sex educator [died](#) in January of 2021 at age 88 after extensive health challenges. The memorial will be held at Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012. Doors open at 1:30pm and the service will take place from 2:30 to 5:30pm. The public is welcome to attend.

The event will also be livestreamed: <https://www.youtube.com/live/ArrUB0R0vRY>

The service will consist of tributes by Sonnabend's colleagues, friends and former patients, interspersed with music that he composed. The pieces will be performed by a group of distinguished musicians from the United Kingdom, including Charles Mutter, Emily Earl, Idir Shyti and Morgan Hayes.

The event will draw members of the international AIDS community. Eulogists will include writers, veteran AIDS advocates and activists, and noted medical professionals, including Dr. Rebecca Pringle-Smith, Simon Watney, Rebecca Jordan-Young, PhD, Gregg Gonslaves, PhD, Sean Strub, Bill Hibsher, Ivy Kwan Arce, Richard Berkowitz, Dr. Donald Kotler, Ash Kotak and Miriam Lewis Sabin.

Pioneering AIDS researcher and clinician Joseph Sonnabend conducted some of earliest research into AIDS. In 1983 he founded AIDS Research, the first professional peer-reviewed publication focused on the epidemic. The same year, Sonnabend, working with AIDS patients Michael Callen and Richard Berkowitz, introduced the concept of "Safer Sex" in the booklet How to Have Sex in an Epidemic: One Approach. Sonnabend was co-founder of the AIDS Medical Foundation, the first AIDS research group, now known as the American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR). He

helped launch the Community Research Initiative, which undertook AIDS clinical trials and co-founded the PWA Health Group, the first AIDS buyers' club.

For more information:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/960683132715879/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwRBhbRWZD/>

Instagram ACT UP New York: https://www.instagram.com/p/DH__8UBul_5/

Dr. Sonnabend 2021 obituary in The New York Times:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/30/science/joseph-sonnabend-dead.html>

Attention Media: Advance interviews with friends and colleagues of Dr. Joseph Sonnabend can be scheduled by contacting memorial co-organizers David Kirschenbaum at (917) 805-2607 or Sean Strub at (646) 642-4915.

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<http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/joseph-sonnabend-md-will-celebrated-april-12-memorial-new-york-city>