Ryan White: Twenty Years Ago Today

April 8, 2010 By Shawn Decker

Today marks the 20-year anniversary of the passing of Ryan White. I never like to say someone "lost their battle with AIDS" simply because they were HIV positive when they passed to spirit, and to use that phrase in the case of White would be an especially gross injustice considering the ass-whoopin' he put on the epidemic.

In terms of raising awareness and declawing a beast which needed it's nails clipped, Ryan's own misfortunes became a blessing for a community that needed someone to break down the walls of stigma. Back in 1985 when Ryan went public as a kid after not being allowed in public school for the crime of having HIV, he just wanted to be a normal kid in a time when having HIV was deemed unacceptable.

Last month, Gwenn and I spoke at Purdue in Indiana, and had the great pleasure of visiting the Ryan White display at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis.

Today, when I was having my daily iced mocha fix, Ryan was in my thoughts. If you're unfamiliar with his work to raise awareness, click on the photo below.

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