Zackie Achmat

October 1, 2013 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

"Activism is the one way to win incremental changes that improve people's lives on a daily basis and reduce the risks or mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS."
-Zackie Achmat

Zackie Achmat is an official honoree today for LGBT History Month 2013, which this year has several HIV-positive honorees.

Zackie Achmat (born in 1962 as Abdurazzak Achmat) has been an activist against apartheid and HIV/AIDS discrimination in South Africa since the age of 14. Throughout his career, the HIV-positive activist has risked arrest to ensure protections for gays and lesbians in South Africa, founding the South African National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality and helping to advocate for the HIV-positive community's right to health and human rights in the developing nation.

In 1998, he and 10 other activists founded the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), an international AIDS activist group that combined the tactics and political networks of AIDS advocacy groups in the United States and Europe, such as ACT UP, with those of South African trade unions and anti-apartheid movements.

Achmat has received numerous awards for his work, including the Desmond Tutu Leadership Award, the Jonathan Mann Award for Global Health and Human Rights, the Nelson Mandela Award for Health and Human Rights and amfAR's Award of Courage. In 2004, he was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Today, he still works in South Africa as an HIV/AIDS and LGBT activist. He is prominently featured in the recent HIV/AIDS documentary *Fire in the Blood*.

Go to lgbthistorymonth.com for more about Achmat and the other honorees.

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