

CLEVE JONES

b. October 11, 1954



“If AIDS had taught us anything, it was that we must be true to ourselves if we are to survive.”

In 1983, Cleve Jones cofounded the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, making him among the first to respond to the epidemic. In 1987, he conceived the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, which produced the world's largest community artwork.

Born in Lafayette, Indiana, Jones studied political science at San Francisco State University. He began his career as an intern in the office of openly gay San Francisco City Supervisor Harvey Milk, who was subsequently assassinated.

He conceived the idea for the AIDS Memorial Quilt at an annual candlelight vigil remembering Harvey Milk. AIDS loomed over the gay community. At the vigil, hundreds of names of people who died of AIDS were written on cardboard scraps and taped to the San Francisco Federal Building. The cardboard reminded Jones of the pieces of fabric his grandmother quilted together.

The quilting of pieces of fabric memorializing loved ones became the world's largest piece of community art. In 1987, 1,920 panels were exhibited on the National Mall in Washington, and were viewed by more than 500,000 people. The AIDS Quilt became a symbolic funeral service since many who died were denied memorial services.

Since 2005, Jones has spearheaded efforts to diminish homophobia in the hospitality industry with a project called UNITE HERE. He was instrumental in the Sleep with the Right People campaign, which encourages gay tourists to stay at hotels that respect employees' rights.

Jones was awarded honorary doctorates from Haverford College and the Starr King School for the Ministry. His memoir, “Stitching a Revolution” (2000), was a best seller.

By 2006, the AIDS Quilt had memorialized more than 44,000 lives.

Cleve Jones was among the first to respond to the AIDS epidemic. He pioneered the AIDS Memorial Quilt, which pays tribute to more than 44,000 lives.



© ASSOCIATED PRESS

g**l**o**t**
HISTORY
MONTH

www.glbthistorymonth.com

Copyright ©2008 – A Project of Equality Forum