

Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXIV, Number 80, 19 February 1990 — AIDS quilt to be shown at St. Paul's [ARTICLE]

AIDS quilt to be shown at St. Paul's

By David Shimkin

A section of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, a tribute to victims of the virus, will be shown this week in St. Paul's Chapel, according to Laura Pinsky, Director of the Columbia Gay Health Advocacy Project (CGHAP).

"We're interested in remembering and honoring members of the Columbia community who have died and we're interested in helping students get a clearer picture of what the AIDS epidemic means," Pinsky said.

Ian Tattenbaum, CC '90, a member of the CGHAP, said the

quilt is designed not only to honor AIDS victims but to raise awareness of the disease.

"I think that it makes AIDS a more immediate issue," Tattenbaum said.

"You're constantly quoted figures about AIDS, but when you're looking at a panel the size of a coffin, six feet by three feet, which says something about the person, it makes it much more of an immediate issue," he added.

In addition to personal variations, the quilt panels consist of the names and birth and death dates of AIDS victims, he said.

Peter Douglas, Co-Director of CGHAP, said students were visibly shaken when the

Memorial Quilt was displayed on campus two years ago.

“People were saying, ‘Gosh, they’re so young,’” Douglas said. “Many women are shocked to see that many of the panels were of women—they were shocked to see this concrete that women also get AIDS,” Douglas said.

Douglas also said the timing of the display is appropriate because the University recently observed Safe Sex Awareness Week.

“It’s a good idea that these things are coming after another,” Douglas said.

“It might motivate people to have safer sex,” he added.

Administrators have provided mixed support for bringing the quilt onto campus this week, according to Douglas.

“We’ve had pretty good support from a lot of people at the Dean’s Office, but the central administration, as usual, has what I would describe as conditional support,” he said.

Douglas cited grim statistics concerning the quilt and AIDS.

“For every panel that you’ll see in St. Paul’s, there are about 20,000 people infected with the AIDS virus in this country,” Douglas said.

According to Wilson, the main quilt has 13,000 panels in the U.S., in addition to the numerous international sections.

“We have 38 chapters all over the world,” Wilson said.

“Some of the quilt is now traveling in Africa and Australia,” Wilson said.

Columbia provides several services for people fighting AIDS, Pinsky added.

Columbia is the only university in the country that has an organized program of medical and psychological care for students who are HIV-infected,” Pinsky added.