

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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[ARTICLE]

## AIDS victims remembered in St. Paul's ceremony

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St. Paul's Chapel hosted a University-wide service last night to remember members of the Columbia community who have died of AIDS in the past year.

The event was part of the events commemorating 'A Day Without Art' on campus, which included blocking the statue of Alma Mater from view to heighten campus awareness of the AIDS epidemic.

Service participants gathered around Alma Mater at 5 p.m., and marched to the ceremony while the bells of St. Paul's rang.

Laura Pinsky, a clinical Social worker at Health Services said the overwhelming Republican victories in both congressional gubernatorial elections raises the possibility that insurance coverage for HIV-infected individuals will be curtailed.

"I'm frightened about the times we live in," Pinsky said.

Hilton Romanski, CC '95 said many people on campus still believe AIDS is a disease exclusive to homosexuals.

"Ignorance is probably AIDS' most notorious and dangerous accomplice, but it is the one we can do the most to remedy," Romanski said.

Romanski added that the burden of protection against AIDS falls on individuals of all racial affiliations.

"Whether we are black or white, rich or poor, men or women ... AIDS will love us unconditionally." Romanski said.

Spencer Cox, an HIV-positive individual and a participant in the Columbia Gay Health Advocacy

Project said people harbor many misconceptions about the HIV virus and those infected with it.

Cox said he hoped the events like AIDS Awareness Day would create a sense of respect by providing accurate information about the disease.

“Certainly respect has two goals, to respect and protect ourselves and to respect and protect each other,” Cox said.

Frank Wolf, associate dean of the School of General Studies, read aloud names of Columbia faculty, employees, students and alumni who have died of the disease while service participants lit commemorative candles.

Mark Burstein, acting vice-president for human resources, said the ceremony was effective in raising awareness through personal and emotional anecdotes.

“It reminded me of the loss that AIDS has caused to all communities—and that was very powerful,” Burstein said.