

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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## *Speaker discusses history of AIDS*

**By SARAH FOX**

*Contributing Writer*

Anna Oliviera, a representative from the Gay Men's Health Crisis, spoke to a group of 22 students on "Women's Issues in HIV and AIDS" last night in Hamilton Hall.

"AIDS is not an identity-based disease, rather it is a behavior-based one," Oliviera said in the opening of her lecture, in which she gave an overview of the evolution of the disease.

Discussion amongst the group was animated as the issues addressed revolved around such topics as research advances, HIV infection among teenage females, and pregnancy and AIDS.

During the lecture, Oliviera spoke extensively of the epidemiology of AIDS, and the evolution that the disease has undergone over the last two decades.

Oliviera said AIDS is not considered "politically correct" in society, and that there is an unfounded stigma attached to having the disease. She stressed that the disease is behavior-based, in that one's contraction of it is dependent upon personal choices and not on race, gender, or sexuality.

"It was not until the early 1980s that the first cases of AIDS were noted, and as it was, they were noted in white gay men," Oliviera said, noting that the disease was at that time referred to as GRID, Gay Related Immuno-Deficiency syndrome.

It was not until the late 1980s that women began to appear with AIDS symptoms, Oliviera continued, and not until 1993 that the definition of AIDS was expanded to include symptoms that were specific to women, such as pelvic inflammatory disease and other gynecological symptoms.

Oliviera added that during that time, the number of women with AIDS tripled. One of the main reasons women are more likely to be infected than men is because of a lack of education on the disease among females, she said.

Students who attended the lecture said it brought to light the seriousness of the possibility of infection for college-age women.

"The speech and the information that is being disclosed should be mandatory. Every woman on campus should make it her responsibility to educate herself and safeguard herself from the effects of this terrible disease. Denying its existence will not make it go away, only action will," Lynnette Marrero, CC '99, said.

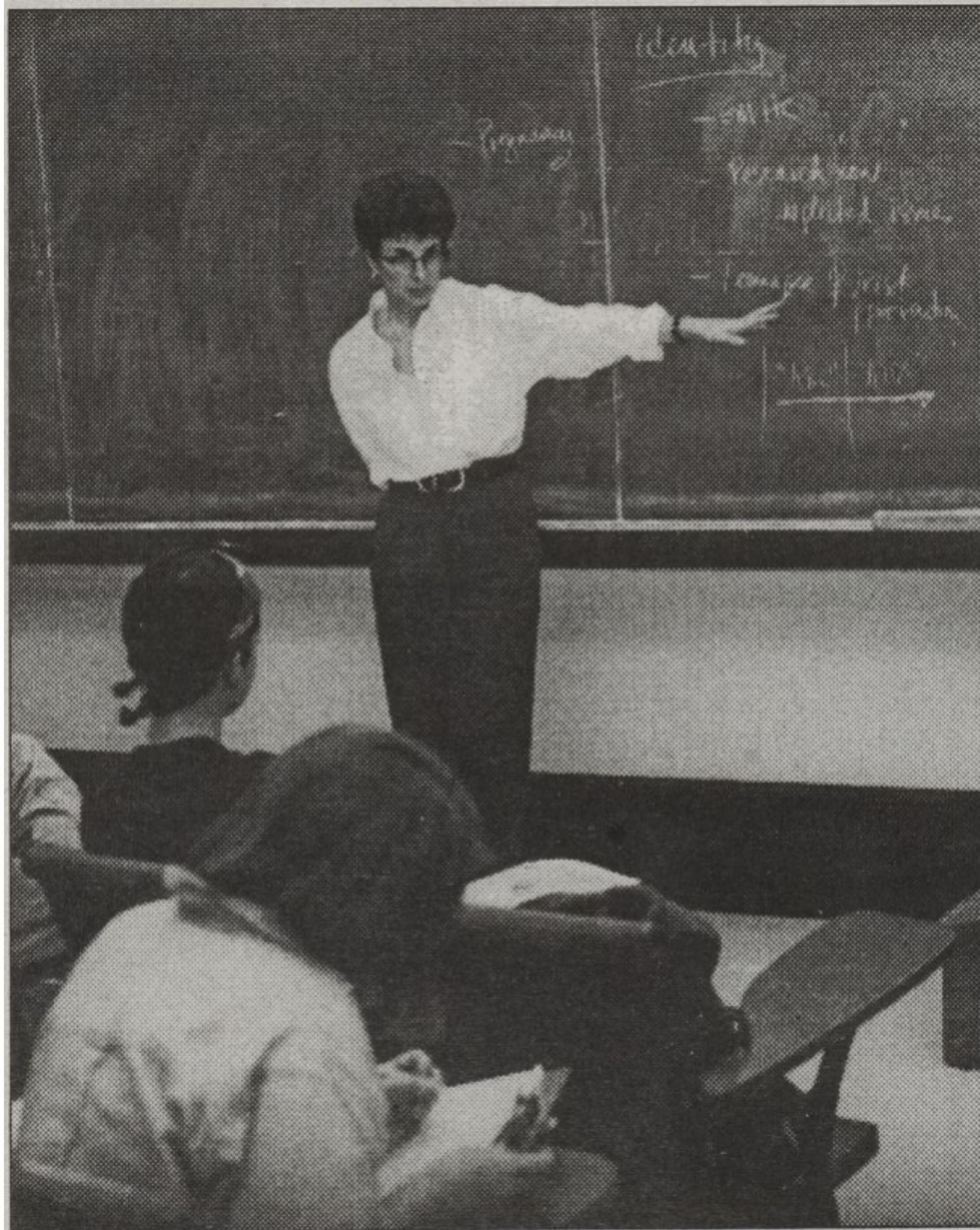


PHOTO EDITOR—STEPHEN HILGER

**Last night in Hamilton Hall, Anna Oliviera discussed the evolution of the history of women and AIDS .**