

# Let's Kick ASS

## AIDS Survivor Syndrome



Social Connection, HIV & Aging Education and Advocacy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### NOTES FROM **Memory Lives On: Documenting the HIV/AIDS Epidemic**

Jax Kelly, president of Let's Kick ASS Palm Springs (LKAPS.org) attended the Memory Lives On: Documenting the HIV/AIDS Epidemic Symposium, October 4-5, 2019, Byers Auditorium, UCSF Mission Bay Campus, San Francisco, CA. 2019.

#### **Fri., Oct. 4:**

Paulina Ilieva, Archivist at the UCSF Archives and Special Collections opened the **Memory Lives On: Documenting the HIV/AIDS Epidemic** by thanking the co-collaborators: GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco Public Library History Center, and UC Merced Library (all part of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities titled "The San Francisco Bay Area's Response to the AIDS Epidemic: Digitizing, Reuniting and Providing Universal Access to Historical AIDS Records").

Opening remarks and keynotes by Dr. Paul Volberding, Dr. Donald Abrams and Dr. Jay Levy gave a foundation for the weekend's discussions by providing each of their own unique perspectives from the onset of the epidemic in San Francisco. Each speaker recalled his initial encounters with the disease and the medical establishment's response to the challenge.

All the symposium presentations were being recorded for posterity and the speakers, who have been interviewed many times before about the epidemic, seemed conscience of what history has recorded thus far. Dr. Abrams stated "a form of PTSD" may have prevented him from writing his memoirs, but he hoped that the symposium would help him be more forthcoming with sharing his story. Sally Smith Hughes, science historian and archivist of AIDS oral histories, was in the audience and questioned whether the interviews she conducted decades ago needed to be updated as the subjects have matured, and views of the past may have been tempered by time.

Jason Chernesky and Stephen Pemberton presented on the impact of AIDS on children and hemophiliacs, respectively. Alberto Sandoval-Sanchez noted the absence of people of color in AIDS narratives. Speakers Lynne Gerber, Eric Sneathen, Andrea Milne and Maya Overby Koretsky shared the idea that metaphors for AIDS can be found in diverse elements such as sermons, organizational conflict, enemies of the movement, and our intimate relationships.

**Sat., Oct. 5:**

Dr. Margaret Handley opened the second day of the symposium with a discussion contrasting early HIV participatory research with implementation science focused on health disparities. Dr. Judy Tan presented research on HIV and aging among black men who have sex with men. Dr. Arthur Ammann advocated for the return to contact tracing as a tool for eradicating the virus. Epidemiologist Andrew Moss, who probably should have appeared with the panel of doctors that opened the symposium given his early participation in the San Francisco story, presented three 1983 cohort studies that helped explain the explosiveness of the epidemic from a public health standpoint.

Artists Nancer Lemoins, Sharon Siskin, Jeannie O'Connor and archivist Marika Cifor spoke about the power of art in documenting HIV/AIDS history. Sally Smith Hughes, Roger Eardley-Pryor, Shan-Estelle Brown and Stefan Hildebrand addressed the role of HIV history in education whether in the classroom or in multimedia.

Dr Monica Gandi, Medical Director of "Ward 86" HIV Clinic at San Francisco General Hospital and San Francisco co-chair of the upcoming 23<sup>rd</sup> International AIDS Conference closed the symposium with a broad presentation of the history of HIV in San Francisco and current goals for ending the epidemic going forward.

Photos by David "Jax" Kelly: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/YyvHrKtkMnpEopQW9>

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