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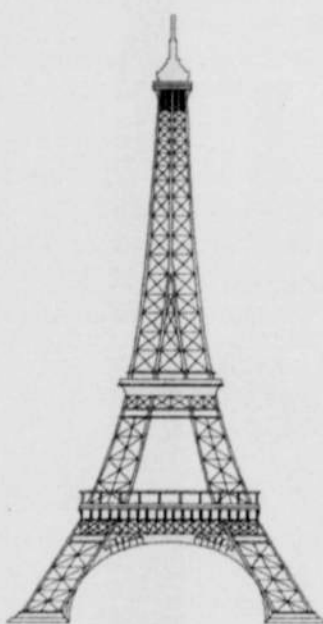


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NATIONAL news

AIDS DEMONSTRATORS LEAVE SHOES AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Largest D.C. AIDS demo in 10 years

by Bob Roehr

The biggest AIDS demonstration in more than a decade surged through the streets of Washington, D.C., on May 5, fueled by the energy of some 3,000 people.

They lay 8,000 pairs of shoes in rows on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, symbolic of the people who die each day from HIV. Many of the participants carried shoes of friends or lovers who have died of AIDS, or tucked a note with their name into a shoe.

leadership, you must find the resources, you must have the courage to end this epidemic."

"We are fed up with begging for crumbs from this administration," shouted Asia Russell, the fiery voice of ACT UP Philadelphia. "8,000 deaths and 15,000 new infections every single day throughout the world—these are avoidable tragedies. We are standing up today as the Campaign to End AIDS to say, no more."

"I've been living with AIDS since 1985," said Charles Sessoms with Prevention Works.

"What moves me forward is all of the people that I miss that we've lost and all of the people that we are going to continue to miss if this administration, if this government doesn't begin to recognize that science is the way to move forward. A morality-based philosophy is not going to end this epidemic."

"We are here today not just to fight a virus but to change our world," said Charles King, executive director of Housing Works and co-chairman of the Cam-



The number of shoes laid out by activists symbolizes the number of people who die daily of AIDS—approximately 8,000.

The group then moved across Pennsylvania Avenue to a rally in Lafayette Park.

"I am one of nearly a million Americans living with HIV/AIDS," said Terje Anderson, National Association of People with AIDS executive director. "We are here today to say very simply, this epidemic can end, this epidemic must end, and we do know how to end it. But our leaders must lead in order for that to happen."

"Our leaders must show more than just lip service, they must provide the policies and the money that it takes to end AIDS, through research, through care and treatment, through prevention, through housing, through drug treatment, through international debt policy."

"We know that we can end this epidemic. We have the tools at our disposal, and it is up to our leaders to choose to make it happen."

Anderson said that more than 600 advocates from all 50 states "visited virtually every congressional office" during the just-concluded AIDSWatch, "to deliver to the members of Congress, who work for us, a message about what the real face of AIDS is in this country."

"This week they saw real faces of real people who will be impacted by their decisions. And those people told them, you must show the



David King, co-chairman of the Campaign to End AIDS, speaks to a crowd of about 3,000.

paign to End AIDS. "We are here today because we believe and we know in our hearts that if we join together as one voice, as one movement, we can transform our world and bring an end to this epidemic."

He urged those gathered together to organize back in their communities and to return to Washington next October as part of the Campaign to End AIDS. He led the demonstrators in a chanted pledge:

"I pledge to fight AIDS in my community and around the world; to fight for access to quality treatment and care for everyone; to fight for honest AIDS prevention; to fight for a vaccine and a cure; to fight against stigma against people for AIDS everywhere." □

BOB ROEHR is a free-lance reporter based in Washington, D.C.