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# JUSTOUT at 25

## THE NIGHT THE QUILTS RAN OUT

The bleakest night was also one of the longest. Judith Rizzio was working an overnight shift, one of many in those interminable weeks back then, at the new residence for HIV/AIDS-infected people called Our House. She remembers a night of high emotions at the height of the Portland pandemic when the facility, packed to bursting with needy residents on a cold night, was so short of supplies that it simply ran out of quilts.

staff had an honored tradition of cloaking a recently passed resident in a quilt, which Rizzio remembers doing. Then, hours later, yet another resident passed. A second quilt was retrieved and laid over the body. Still later in the night, a third resident passed on. Our House staff went searching for another quilt, or anything to cover the body, but came up empty. "We had two, and all of us realized we didn't have another quilt," Rizzio says, her voice choked with emotion. "And we all thought, this is insane. This is just too much."

—Stephen Marc Beaudoin

Rizzio can look back on this with clearer eyes today. After burying one of her best friends who died from AIDS-related causes in 1979, she worked for Our House from 1989 to 2006 as the focus "went from helping people die to helping people...understand what it means to live with HIV." She's now in charge of volunteer resources at Cascade AIDS Project, managing a roster of more than 1,200 volunteers for the largest HIV/AIDS service organization in the Northwest.

But as Our House's director of volunteers and then community relations manager in the toughest years of the pandemic, Rizzio had a front seat to the "incredible brutal swell" of HIV infections in Oregon through the '80s and early '90s, watching mostly young gay men shrivel up and die a short time after contracting the disease. She recalls 1993, when AIDS-related deaths peaked, as "our worst, most difficult year."

That bleak and harrowing night she describes was in 1993. Rizzio was staffing Our House when one of the residents passed. The facility



Judith Rizzio recalls a grim night at Our House during the height of AIDS.

## Murders avenged

Two men who killed Hattie Mae Cohens and Brian Mock are found guilty of felony murder, while one pleads guilty to in exchange for a chance at parole.

by Renée LaChance

"Murders Avenged," April 15, 1993  
 Recent bias crimes in Portland have stirred up concern about how the passage of California's Prop 8 might be fostering a new wave of anti-gay violence. In the charged Oregon Citizens Alliance-dominated atmosphere of the early '90s, queer Oregonians suffered a spate of brutal murders and attacks. Few were as atrocious as the killings of gay Salem residents Hattie Mae Cohen and Brian Mock.

of Sept. 26, no Molotov apartment of Mock. Five re. Cohens, able to get ndow. She k, 45, died day. onents of deaths as  
 Edwards and Tucker. Edwards pulled a knife, one of the men with Finley got the knife away from Edwards and cut him with it. Cohens, as was her nature, intervened and calmed the situation down. Edwards and Tucker left furious, went to Cotton's and Wilson's apartment and told them what had happened. Wilson hurriedly got dressed. According to Edwards, Cotton told him and Tucker where to find some rags and bottles that they could use for Molotov cocktails. Cotton wanted to go along but was told this was "a guy thing" and