

AIDS Quilt Brings the Tragedy Home to Brooklyn

By Craig McGuire

By the end of 1993 more than 200,000 Americans will have died from complications arising from the AIDS virus. Bringing this tragedy home to Brooklyn, the Names Project: AIDS Memorial Quilt exhibition on display at Kingsborough Community College last week gave hundreds a look at some of the people behind those statistics.

Opening ceremonies for the The Names Project: AIDS Memorial Quilt at Kingsborough Community College in Manhattan Beach brought together scores of residents, students and community leaders to remember victims who were from the Brooklyn area.

The display, entitled

"Kingsborough Unfolds the Quilt: Gathering Strength, Fostering Understanding," included 768 quilts, each representing a life lost to the AIDS epidemic.

This display is actually a portion of the entire quilt on display at various locations around the world. Fully assembled, the total quilt spans 10 football fields and weighs approximately 29 tons. Twenty-nine countries contributed to the Names Project, including quilts for such famous personalities as performer Peter Allen, athlete Arthur Ashe, and rock star Freddy "Mercury" Bulsara.

Each quilt, measuring 3'x6', was created by the family and friends of the victim and consists of personal effects ranging from

first place ribbons to fishnet stockings.

"To experience the quilt can truly shake a persons soul and touch a place in your heart you didn't know existed," said Judith Perez, Co-Chairperson of the exhibition.

Perez, director of the college's Health Education and Lifestyle Management(H.E.L.M.) center, emphasizing the importance of events like the Names Project said, "Simply knowing that AIDS exists is not necessarily enough to ensure that people understand its impact." The exhibition fell on the day after the fifth observance of AIDS Awareness Day.

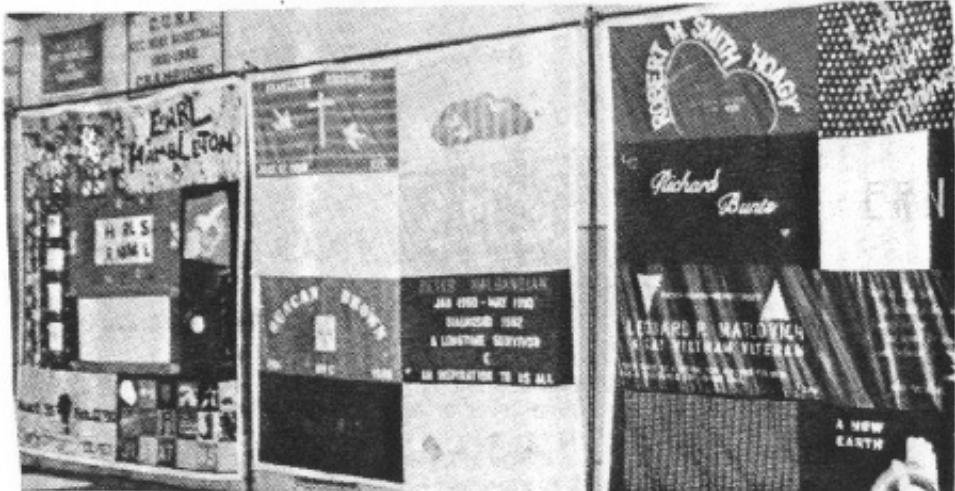
Leon M. Goldstein,

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An AIDS' memorial in the form of a huge quilt remembered the thousands of New Yorkers who have succumbed to the killer virus.

Photos by Al Sussman



Professor Judith A. Perez and Dr. Samuel Scherek take the podium during the recent commemorative event at Kingsborough Community College.

The quilt graces the lobby of the college on Oriental Boulevard.