



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Powerful, Inspirational Voices on the Frontlines of the AIDS and Covid-19 Pandemics Speak Out on World AIDS Day – December 1st

Featured speakers as part of National AIDS Memorial forum include Dr. Anthony Fauci, Dr. David Ho, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi & Actor/AIDS Advocate Judith Light; Mayors Keisha Lance Bottoms (Atlanta); Bill de Blasio (New York City); Robert Garcia (Long Beach) & Lori E. Lightfoot (Chicago); and Activists Alicia Garza, Cleve Jones & Kristin Urquiza

SAN FRANCISCO (November 20, 2020) – 2020 marks 40 years since the first cases of AIDS were reported in the United States, a pandemic that has led to nearly 700,000 lives lost and still no cure four decades later. This year, our nation struggles through another pandemic – the fight against Covid-19 – where the horrific loss of life has surpassed 250,000 in a matter of months.

This World AIDS Day, the National AIDS Memorial brings together powerful, inspirational voices who have been on the frontlines of both pandemics – leaders advancing science, research, the response and health outcomes -- for an important conversation about the interconnectedness of both diseases. They will share their insights on the health outlook, the stigma and impact on marginalized communities, and help answer the questions of how a nation responds, how it heals and what lessons can and must be learned for the future.

World AIDS Day 2020 – A National Conversation will be presented virtually on December 1, 2020 beginning at 10 am PST at www.aidsmemorial.org or at www.youtube.com/aidsmemorial. The event is free to the public. Through a distinguished list of guest speakers, video storytelling, and musical tributes, the forum allows people to come together and honor the lives lost, the survivors, the activism and the heroes from over the span of four decades and two horrific pandemics.

Award-winning actor and long-time AIDS advocate, **Judith Light**, will host the day's commemoration event that will feature **Anthony S. Fauci, M.D.**, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and **David D. Ho, M.D.**, Director of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center at Columbia University. They will be honored with the memorial's National Leadership Recognition Award. **ABC News Chief Medical Correspondent, Dr. Jennifer Ashton**, will moderate the conversation.

Mayors from cities that have been on the frontlines of both pandemics – **Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia, and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio** -- will lead a conversation on the impact the two pandemics have had on marginalized communities and how HIV/AIDS and Covid-19 have disproportionately affected communities of color and the systemic barriers that compound poor health outcomes. **ABC News' Co-Anchor of GMA3, T.J. Holmes**, will moderate the panel.

Activists who have helped spark change and movements – **Alicia Garza, Principal at Black Futures Lab and Co-Founder of the Black Lives Matter Global Network, Cleve Jones, Co-Founder of the AIDS Memorial Quilt and Kristin Urquiza, Co-Founder of Marked by COVID** -- will lead a conversation about activism during both pandemics and the ongoing struggle for social justice. **Human Rights Campaign President Alphonso David** will moderate the discussion.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi will offer a message of hope and pay tribute to civil rights leader, Congressman John Lewis, who passed away earlier this year and who was as a powerful voice for activism and social justice. The **Reverend Naomi Washington-Leapheart**, Director for Faith-Based and Interfaith Affairs for the

City of Philadelphia will provide the invocation.

“These conversations are ones we must have together as a nation,” said John Cunningham, Executive Director of the National AIDS Memorial. “By bringing together so many powerful voices who have been on the frontlines of both pandemics, we hope to inspire a movement toward greater health and social justice, while remembering those lost and inspiring hope for the future.”

The Presenting Partner for the World AIDS Day 2020 event is Gilead Sciences. Co-Sponsors are Chevron and Quest Diagnostics. Additional sponsors include Vivent Health, Wells Fargo, Aon, BioMarin, Blue Shield of California, Excelerate Foundation, Morrison & Foerster, Murray Reese Foundation, National Hemophilia Foundation, Nestle and Salesforce. Media partners include Hearst Newspapers, iHeart Radio/PRIDE Radio Network, the San Francisco Chronicle, POZ, Advocate and HIV Plus Magazine. A full list of partners is located at www.aidsmemorial.org/wad2020-sponsors.

During the event, the National AIDS Memorial will officially unveil the first-ever [virtual exhibition](#) of the AIDS Memorial Quilt on its website that features nearly 10,000 Quilt panels representing all 50 states and U.S. territories, using the power and beauty of the Quilt to help the nation heal during these difficult times.

Each year, World AIDS Day brings people together to unite in the fight against HIV/AIDS, show their support for people living with HIV and commemorate lives lost. The National AIDS Memorial is looked upon as the organization within the national landscape to remember, honor and help ensure that the stories of the AIDS pandemic are never forgotten.

To learn more about the National AIDS Memorial World AIDS Day commemoration, the virtual AIDS Memorial Quilt exhibition, how to participate and ways to support the events through social media channels, please visit aidsmemorial.org/wad2020.

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About the National AIDS Memorial The National AIDS Memorial, through the AIDS Memorial Grove, AIDS Memorial Quilt, and inspiring programs, helps ensure that the story of AIDS and the AIDS movement is known in perpetuity so that never again will our national conscience allow a community to be harmed because of fear, silence, discrimination or stigma. The memorial relies solely on funding from personal donors, foundations and corporate partners to support its mission and programs. Learn more at www.aidsmemorial.org.