

## **NEWS**

### **For Immediate Release**

From: Hudson River Park Trust

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## **NEW YORK CITY'S FIRST PERMANENT AIDS MEMORIAL DEDICATED IN HUDSON RIVER PARK**

**-- On 20th Anniversary of *World AIDS Day*, Remembrance Starts  
with Dedication --**

**New York, NY November 30, 2008:** New York City's first permanent memorial to people who have died from AIDS was dedicated today. Originally conceived in 1994, the memorial is in the Greenwich Village section of Hudson River Park.

The Hudson River Park Trust provided the beautifully landscaped knoll for the memorial -- a 42-foot-long curved stone bench situated on a granite path cut into the lawn near Bank Street. The path is complemented by a balcony that juts out over the river where Pier 49 once stood. The old pilings, still visible above the water, are a poignant metaphor for the lives lost to AIDS. The memorial is intended to be used as a place for people to sit and contemplate those who have been lost.

"This monument is a symbol of the profound effect AIDS has had on New York City and our country," said Lawrence Swehla, board member of the AIDS Monument Committee (AMC). "The site is dedicated to all of those whose lives have been forever changed by AIDS," he added.

The concept for a permanent AIDS monument in NYC began during the International Human Rights March held in New York in 1994. Following the march several activists incorporated a non-profit called AIDS Monument Committee (AMC). Since that time the group has been responsible for fundraising efforts for the design of the memorial.

In 2005, the Hudson River Park Trust, the not-for-profit entity responsible for the design, construction, maintenance and operation of the 550-acre Hudson River

Park, offered the group a landscaped site in the park for a permanent location for the AIDS memorial.

“The Pier 49 pile field in Hudson River Park will provide a tranquil location for those who would like to sit on the memorial bench and remember loved ones who died from this terrible disease as well as those who live with it every day,” said Connie Fishman, President of the Hudson River Park Trust. “We are pleased that the Trust was able to provide a home for this memorial in Greenwich Village, the neighborhood that was at the core of activism against this disease more than 20 years ago.”

Since the early 1980s, when AIDS was first identified, tens of thousands of New Yorkers have been inflicted with the disease. From 1985 to 2002, over 81,000 AIDS deaths were reported in New York City. Today, HIV continues to have an untold impact on more than 90,000 New Yorkers living with HIV, as well as their families, friends and caretakers.

At today’s dedication community activists unveiled the memorial quote engraved into the black granite bench: “I can sail without wind, I can row without oars, but I cannot part from my friend without tears.”

The AMC built the memorial to commemorate those who have died from the disease, those who live with HIV, and those who have cared for people with HIV/AIDS, educators and researchers who will one day eradicate it.

### **About Hudson River Park Trust**

Hudson River Park Trust is a partnership between New York State and City charged with the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the five-mile Hudson River Park.

A public benefit corporation and 501(c) (3) charitable organization, the Trust is governed by a thirteen-member Board of Directors. We employ a focused, diverse staff with experience in parks, design, finance, public policy, operations and maintenance. We are governed by the Hudson River Park Act, a 1998 law that established the park, the Trust and its governing requirements.

The Trust has a fifty-member Advisory Council which plays an integral role in the park planning process. The Advisory Council is comprised of elected officials and representatives from the business, environmental and civic communities.

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