

## AIDS

# THE YEAR OF THE AIDS FEAR

## Magic Johnson, Freddie Mercury head the list of AIDS victims

The AIDS virus has finally hit home.

Until 1991, most people thought of AIDS as a virus that was rapidly growing, not a disease that happened to people who were known and loved. But after taking the life of a famed entertainer and attacking the immune system of a legendary basketball player, AIDS awareness has rapidly increased. Earvin "Magic" Johnson brought it all to the forefront when he called a nationally televised press conference to declare that he was retiring from basketball because of the virus that would inevitably lead to AIDS. And only a few weeks later, legendary rock singer Freddie Mercury fell victim to the disease.

Sure, Rock Hudson had died from AIDS. Liberace had died from this disease, as well. Ryan White, the 12-year old inspiration, had also died from AIDS. A disease that most had viewed with passive dismay suddenly became immediate on November 7, 1991. When Magic took his place in front of the podium at the Forum in Los Angeles, he seemed supremely composed. He made a promise to the American people that he would work to make

Americans more aware of prevention of this deadly disease.

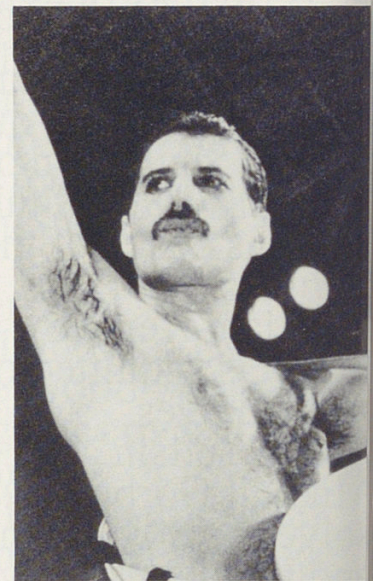
Immediately, he became a part of President Bush's National AIDS commission, and he had frequently been seen at AIDS charity events and NBA games. Magic played in the NBA All-Star game and was voted the game's Most Valuable Player, and he has also reaffirmed his

plan to play in the 1992 Summer Olympics. Talks have even surfaced about a possible return to the NBA if his health remains in good condition.

Also in 1991, another notable entertainer passed away. Freddie Mercury, lead singer for the rock group Queen, died of complications from the AIDS virus. Although he had known about his virus for

almost a year, Mercury did not confirm the rumors until November 23, 1991. Mercury was best known for his mixture of heavy metal and opera called "Bohemian Rhapsody," and other hits like "Another One Bites the Dust" and "Crazy Little Thing Called Love."

By Benjamin Tolchinsk

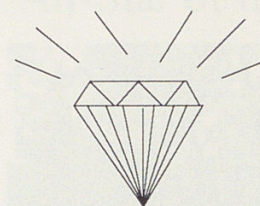


Always outlandish, Freddie Mercury (above) performs one of his many concerts before passing away in 1991.

Although he had to retire from basketball because of the HIV virus, Magic Johnson flashes his trademark smile.

  
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