

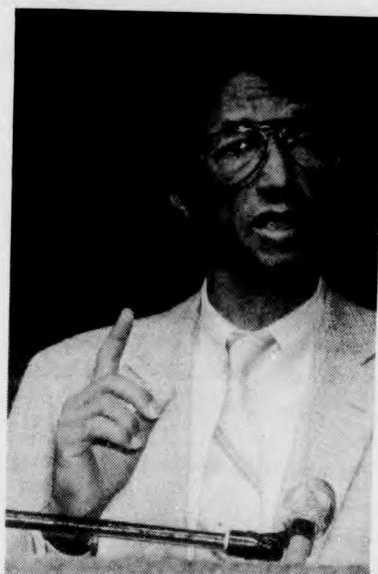
Arthur Ashe speaks at hospital sponsored AIDS conference

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Heckler, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said, "The nation's blood supply is safe." Turns out it wasn't "safe" and Arthurs condition was discovered in Sept. of 1988, when a biopsy on his brain pointed to toxoplasmosis, which is a "marker" disease for AIDS.

At first, he kept his condition quiet and opened up to a select group of close friends and family. "Living with AIDS privately", said Ashe, "means choosing friends wisely before you go public."

Although he tried to keep his condition private, it was leaked to



Living with AIDS, Arthur Ashe says he's a long term survivor

• photo by Wayne Todd

America's national daily, *USA Today*, who confronted Ashe. It forced him to hold a press conference to talk about his condition.

Several months ago, the former Wimbledon champion started the Arthur Ashe Foundation, which is a multinational organization organized through tennis, to raise money for AIDS research. The goal of the foundation is to raise five million dollars, more than half of which will be spent outside of the United States.

Ashe said he is more confident about fighting the disease and the phobia associated with it with the election of Bill Clinton. During the Republican administration, both Reagan and Bush were reluctant to even acknowledge AIDS even existed. The Republicans refused to wear red ribbons (a universal symbol of AIDS), for the fear that they would be looked at as being sympathetic towards the gay community.

Contrary to common belief, AIDS is not a gay disease, in fact, the majority of future AIDS cases will occur through heterosexual sex

acts.

Ashe was motivated to fight against the spread of the disease by shocking figures released by health organizations. The World Health Organization said they expect there to be about 44 million cases of AIDS worldwide by the year 2000. Dr. John Mayer at Harvard's school of public health, figures there will be approximately 110 million cases of AIDS by the turn of the century.

It's been speculated the difference between the two figures is largely due to the World Health Organization not wanting to scare the world community with a high figure. They consequently released a smaller, yet still large, number.

People infected with the AIDS virus need to develop a "personal

initiative", and to take care of themselves. They have to look at everything that there is to live for in this world, to see that they can still be useful and accomplish whatever they want to do during the time that they have left.

He said the worst thing to do, is to sit down in front of the television, and wait to die of AIDS. Soon after being diagnosed as having AIDS, Ashe went through a period where he was quite ill, and in and out of hospitals. His condition has since stabilized and is now touring and speaking to others about his experience.

He calls himself a "long term survivor" and suggests that anyone infected with HIV/AIDS take on the initiative to live.

The York Figure Skating Club

is putting on an exhibition for the daycare kids at 3pm on December 10 at the ice palace. All are welcome.

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