

## AIDS in New York: The First Five Years

Stephanie Holmquist

It's just a snapshot of a group of men, at a glance one can see it's from 30 or so years ago. You might guess it's a group of gay men, something about the mustaches, the clothes, the shirtless man in the foreground. None of them is yet fully middle aged. If you didn't know otherwise, the smiles and camaraderie signal an evening ahead of dinner, wine, talk—an ordinary happy occasion.

But then there are the name tags. The photo, from a conference of activists in Denver in 1983, marks a turning point in the modern patient empowerment movement. This small group of men gave us the Denver Principles—the landmark response from the gay community to the crisis in medicine and medical ethics of the early 1980's. They called themselves “people with AIDS,” neither victims nor patients, but whole persons who expected to be treated as such.

National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA), the organizational home of the Denver Principles, dissolved this year. The ethos of the Denver Principles lives on for PWA and HIV and also in the general expectation of patient empowerment and dignity for all kinds of “people with...” and others facing medical challenges.

