

# Facing AIDS: Stereotypes and Myths

## AIDS victim to discuss living, not dying of AIDS

**BEHREND**-“Facing AIDS: Stereotypes and Myths,” is the title of the lecture to be presented by Rae Lewis-Thornton on Wednesday, December 6 at noon. Her talk, part of the ongoing Speaker Series sponsored by the Office of Student Affairs, is scheduled for the Reed Union Building Commons; it is free and open to the public.

“I’m young, I’m educated, I’m drug-free and I’m dying of AIDS,” says Lewis-Thornton, 32, who was diagnosed as HIV-positive in 1986. She has moved away from her career as a political organizer, devoting her time and energy to the cause of AIDS.

Lewis-Thornton usually begins, “I’m Rae Lewis-Thornton, and I’m dying of AIDS. I graduated magna cum laude, shop at Neiman Marcus and I’m still dying of AIDS.”

How she continues depends on the maturity of the audience. She speaks to adolescents and college-age students.

“I talk to young girls about loving themselves more than they love a boy, or need a boy or want a boy. I’m not talking about condom use [although she

strongly promotes it for those who are sexually active]. I’m talking about not staying at home waiting on that boy to call them all night when they should be doing their homework. That’s emotional abuse...I talk a lot about responsibility to the guy.”

Lewis-Thornton tells students no question is to personal, courageously divulges intimate details of her life. She says that while her body is deteriorating from AIDS, she’s not about to let it claim her spirit.

Lewis-Thornton was diagnosed at the age of 24. Never a drug user or transfusion recipient, she believes she contracted the virus through unprotected sex with a man she dated.

For seven years, Lewis-Thornton continued to lead a normal life. She told a few close friends. She told the men she dated if she expected the relationship to lead to sex. Her being HIV-positive was not a problem for most of them, she says.

She began treatment for full-blown AIDS in 1992. Following months of chronic depression, Lewis-Thornton made a resolution. With the help of

God, she says, she was going to find a way to live while she was dying with AIDS.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, a healthy person has 1,000 to 1,500 T-cells. When the count falls below 200, the diagnosis changes from HIV-positive to AIDS. Lewis-Thornton’s T-cell count is 47.

As for her career in politics, Lewis-Thornton has a different attitude than before when she was



**Living with AIDS:** Rae Lewis-Thornton traded her political career to educate young adults about AIDS and loving themselves

involved in the campaign trail. She passionately advocates support for AIDS research and programs for AIDS patients.

Since shedding her political career for speaking to youngsters, Lewis-Thornton has spoken to roughly 200,000 young people.

she has appeared on the cover of Essence, a popular women’s magazine, and during March she shared her life with CBS viewers in a special series of reports on WBBM-Channel 2. She is a contributing editor at the station.

Lewis-Thornton found a way to

coexist with AIDS and say today she is “very happy” with her life, and especially with her new husband.

Last August, she married Kenneth Thornton, a medical professional who was fully aware of her health condition but says “something about her spirit” attracted him to her.

The 1995-96 Speaker Series is partially funded by the John Nesbit Rees and Sarah Henne Rees Foundation.

*Information provided by the Chicago Tribune and Joyce Kelly*

*“I talk to young girls about loving themselves more than they love a boy...”*  
-Rae Lewis-Thornton

## Student Events

Students who need Arts credits for their General Education requirements should note that the course that used to be called ARTS 001 is now called INARTS 001. Five sections are still available for Spring Semester 1996, and all still have openings. They are:

Sec 1 MWF 9:00 - 9:50	117 Science	A. Magenau
Sec 2 TR 11:00 - 12:15	144H Hamm.	M. Birdsong
Sec 3 TR 1:00 - 2:15	117 Science	M. Birdsong
Sec 4 MWF 11:00 - 11:50	117 Science	A. Magenau
Sec 5 MWF 10:00 - 10:50	143H Hamm.	A. Magenau



Submissions are now being accepted for Tempus literary magazine. Send manuscripts to Box 1020 or the Student Activities mailbox.

**TORONTO trip planned.** Behrend honors program is offering a bus trip to Toronto, March 23-24. Payment is due Jan 31. Call 898-6000 for info. Trip is for “Phantom of the Opera” performance.

**Commencement:** Commencement for Summer and Fall '95 graduates is Sat. January 6, 1996 at 11:00 a.m. in Erie Hall (snow date - Jan 7).

**PARKING NOTICE:** There will be no overnight parking permitted in the Jordan Road Lot (behind Police and Safety) to facilitate snow removal.

The Council of Commonwealth Student Governments is sponsoring a Penn State wide petition drive against state cuts in funding for higher education. SGA is asking everyone to sign the petition and show their support. The petition will be available in classrooms, dorms, dining areas, and the SGA office. The budget cuts in higher education compromise the availability of a quality education essential to Pennsylvania’s future.

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<p><b>Managing Your Stress</b> Nothing gets done any better or faster if you're busy being anxious and worried about it. Learn how to "go with the flow." Presented by Sue Daley, Personal Counselor, Penn State Behrend. "Plan to relax and ace those finals"</p>	<p><b>30 - Thursday</b>  OLAS Cultural Day  "Movie of the Week" "While You Were Sleeping"</p>	<p><b>01 - Friday</b>  Intervarsity Christian Fellowship 6:30 pm Reed 119  Hanging of the Greens 7:00pm-9:00pm  "Movie of the Week" "While You Were Sleeping"</p>	<p><b>02 - Saturday</b>  "Movie of the Week" "While You Were Sleeping"</p>
<p><b>03 - Sunday</b>  Protestant Campus Ministry Worship Service(Interdenominational) 8:00pm Room 114 - Reed  "Movie of the Week" "While You Were Sleeping"</p>	<p><b>04 - Monday</b>  Managing Your Stress 6:00pm Reed 114  Organizational Meetings Commuter Coun. 12pm Reed Trigon 5:30pm MCC Center SPC 5:30pm in Reed 112 OLAS 8:00pm MCC Center</p>	<p><b>05 - Tuesday</b>  </p>	<p><b>06 - Wednesday</b>  SGA Meeting, 5:15 Reed 114  Toronto Trip deposit Deadline Forms available in the Glenhill Farmhouse  Rae Lewis Thorton Speaker Series 12:00pm Reed Commons  BACCHUS : 8 p.m. Pizza Party Come meet members of the organization</p>