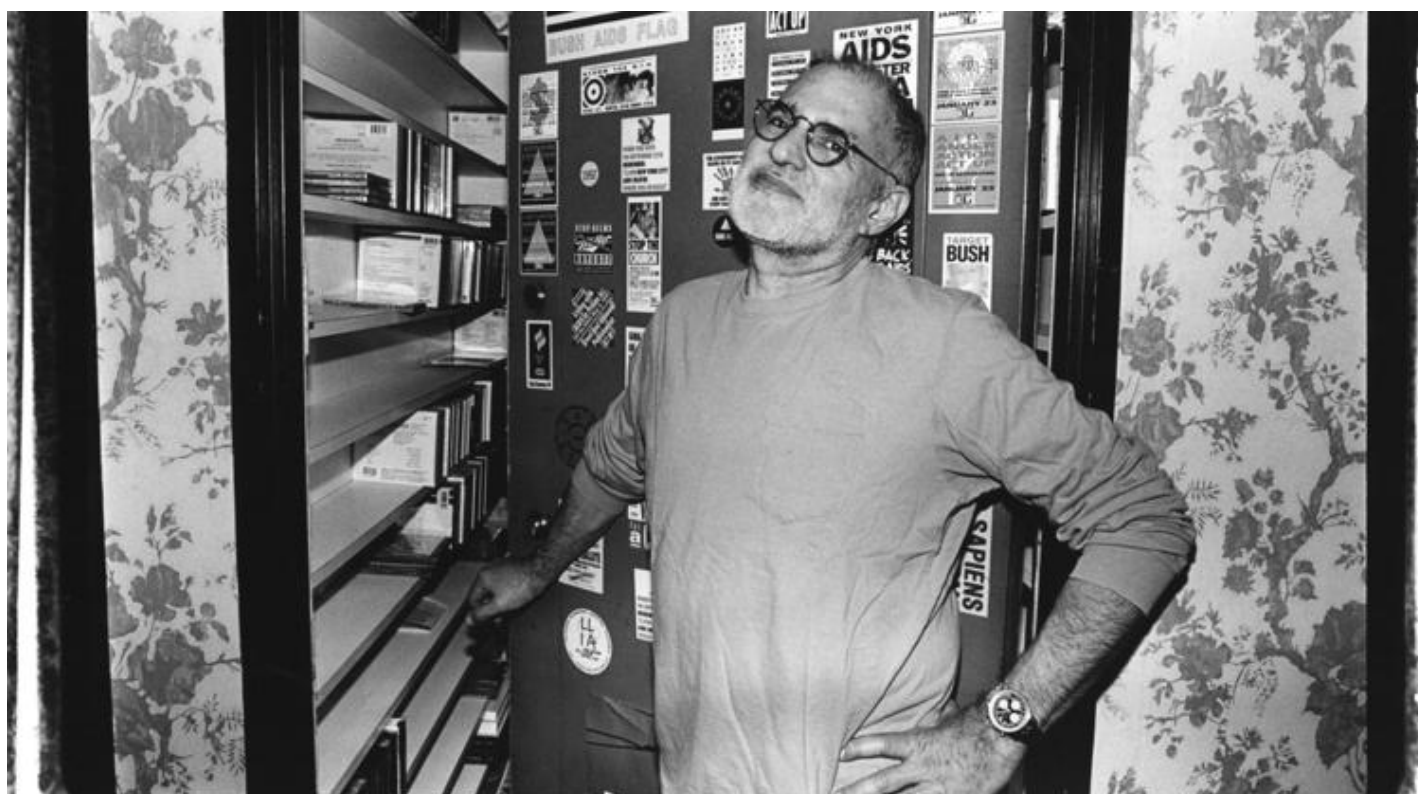


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# Larry Kramer, AIDS activist dies at 84

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*Courtesy of JTA Photo Credit: Catherine McGann*

**American writer and gay rights activist Larry Kramer poses for a portrait at the open door of his New York City apartment, April 1993.**

(JTA) — Larry Kramer, one of the most important figures in the history of LGBTQ activism and a writer, died on May 27th.

Kramer, who wrote the semi-autobiographical play “A Normal Heart,” died in Manhattan of pneumonia, his husband, David Webster, confirmed to The New York Times. He was 84.

He had undergone a liver transplant after contracting liver disease and was infected with HIV, the virus that can turn into AIDS.

Kramer was a co-founder of the Gay Men's Health Crisis, now one of the biggest AIDS service organizations in the world, but was forced out because of his outspokenness and went on to found the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, or ACT UP, a more militant group that took to the streets to protest for more AIDS drugs research and an end to discrimination against gay men and lesbians.

His worldview was shaped by his Jewish identity, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency wrote in 2016.

"In a way, like a lot of Jewish men of Larry's generation, the Holocaust is a defining historical moment, and what happened in the early 1980s with AIDS felt, and was in fact, holocaustal to Larry," Tony Kushner said in 2005.

Kramer and Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, crossed paths as the AIDS crisis continued to kill gay men, with Kramer calling him a killer. Fauci told The New York Times that Kramer spurred him to break through the slow federal bureaucracy that held up AIDS research. They later became friends, according to the report.

In March, Kramer told a Times reporter that he emailed Fauci to tell him he was sorry for how he is being treated as the public face of the efforts to combat the coronavirus.

Kramer wrote books, plays and screenplays, many with gay themes and some autobiographical. He was a Pulitzer Prize finalist for his play "The Destiny of Me," which picks up where "The Normal Heart" leaves off. His book "Reports for the Holocaust: The Making of an AIDS Activist," is a collection of his essays on AIDS activism and LGBT civil rights.

In the weeks before his death, Kramer had started to write a play in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

He was a graduate of Yale University and enlisted in the Army. He began working for Columbia Pictures in the early 1960s.