

George Washington Corner Society. for the History of Medicine

“Ryan White, Hemophilia, and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic”

Wednesday, September 10

5:30 p.m. Lecture

6:30 - 7:15 p.m. Social Gathering

Rochester Academy of Medicine
1441 East Avenue, Rochester, NY



In the 1980s, as HIV/AIDS ravaged queer communities and communities of color in the United States and beyond, a straight white teenager named Ryan White emerged as the face of the epidemic. Diagnosed with hemophilia at birth, Ryan contracted HIV through contaminated blood products. In 1985, he became a household name after he was barred from attending his Indiana middle school because he had AIDS. As Ryan appeared on nightly news broadcasts and graced the covers of popular magazines, he was embraced by music icons and well-known athletes, achieving a curious kind of stardom. This talk will focus on Ryan's experiences with hemophilia and AIDS, as well as the contested meanings of his life, death, and afterlives.



Paul Renfro is an associate professor of history and an affiliate faculty member in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program at Florida State University. He is the author of *Stranger Danger: Family Values, Childhood, and the American Carceral State* (Oxford University Press, 2020) and *The Life and Death of Ryan White: AIDS and Inequality in America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2024), which earned an honorable mention in the general nonfiction category of the Florida Book Awards.



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