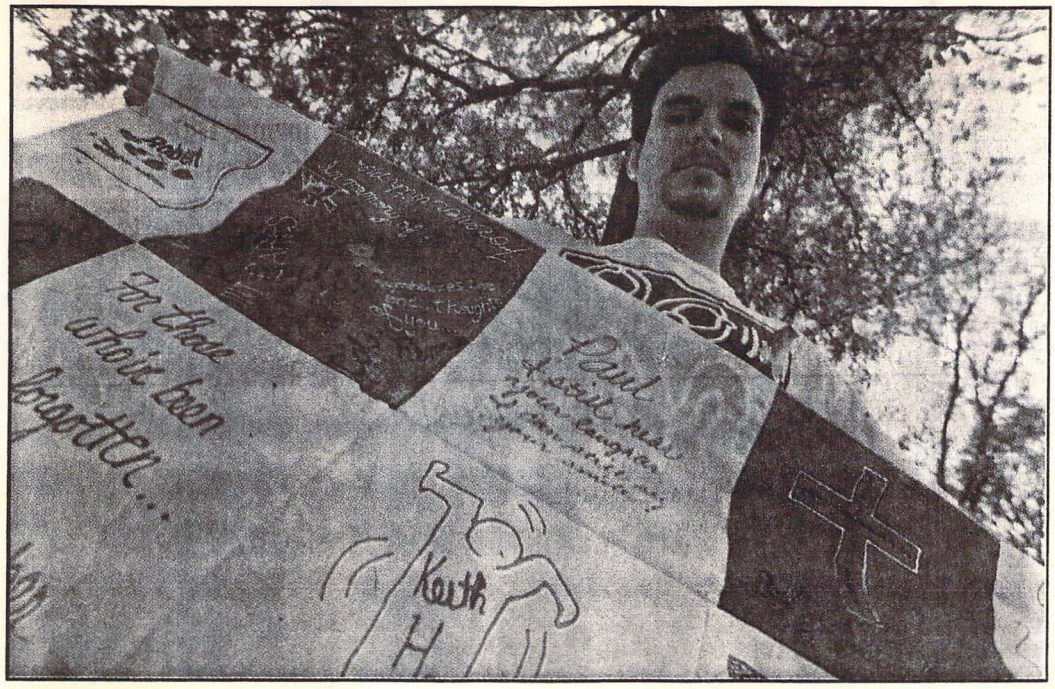
Patching up their memories



DENTON RECORD-CHRONICLE/BRAD FLOWERS

Scot Maitland, secretary of Courage, a student gay and lesbian organization at the University of North Texas, displays a quilt that can be seen on the third floor of the University Union.

Students honor AIDS victims

By Brian Anderson
Staff Writer

The University of North Texas is a college rich with tradition, but a new custom is one many people look forward to breaking — the UNT Friends and Family AIDS quilt.

"We will make additions to it until we don't have to any more — until there is a cure," Jan Hillman, director of student activities, said.

The quilt, created in observance of World AIDS Day, is designed to memorialize individuals who have died of AIDS-related illnesses. UNT students and faculty and staff members were asked to contribute the first names of friends and loved ones who have been claimed by the epidemic. Twenty-four 12-inch squares were patched together to represent the AIDS victims, and more are expected to be added as the disease spreads.

■ **PEACE** Corps efforts **/8A**
■ **NEW** network director **/1B**

"I think it is great that the university is doing this because many people still have the attitude that it can't happen to them," said Scot Maitland, secretary for Courage, a college support group for homosexual and bisexual students.

He said the quilt will serve as a reminder to UNT students of the constant threat of AIDS.

"It wasn't just a name on a piece of cloth, but it was an actual person. It sobered me up real quick. When you see a name and it clicks that this could have been a friend, it makes it real again," he said.

Courage Vice President Marina Garza needs no reminders to keep her aware of the disease. AIDS

See AIDS/**9A**

AIDS

■ **How you can get AIDS:**

According to a brochure, "HIV Infection and AIDS," published by the American Red Cross, HIV, or the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, is transmitted by semen, vaginal discharges or blood of those infected.

Once the virus enters someone's system, it destroys the body's defense mechanism against infections.

The AIDS virus might develop over a period of many years. When the body's immune system is damaged, infections and cancers are more likely to invade the body. These "opportunistic infections" kill people.

When infected with HIV, people might not know it because signs are not immediately apparent.

Most people with HIV or AIDS got it from having unprotected sex or sharing drug needles with someone already infected.

People cannot get the virus from saliva, (although it is sometimes found in the fluid) shaking hands, hugging, coughing, sneezing, swimming pools, toilet seats, straws, spoons or cups, food, insects or animals.

■ **How to protect yourself:**

Condoms can protect you from the virus; birth control pills and diaphragms cannot. Condoms must be used for every form of sexual contact. Spermicides, such as nonoxynol-9, kill HIV in laboratory tests.

Abstinence from sex is the safest way to avoid the disease. If that is not an option, remain monogamous with someone who is not infected.

Never use needles or syringes for any drug, including steroids, unless under a doctor's care.

■ **To get testing information:**

Call the Denton County Health Department at (817) 565-8642.

Available help

The following are phone numbers for some local AIDS services:

■ AIDS Services of Denton County Inc., 121 Piner St.: (817) 383-1501 to volunteer, make a donation or receive services; (817) 383-3540 for general AIDS information.
■ AIDS Interfaith Network: (817) 383-2784
■ Denton County Health Department, 301 N. Carroll Blvd.: (817) 565-8642

AIDS

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has taken a friend and a cousin from her, and she has more friends who are HIV positive.

Ricky, a friend of Ms. Garza's, died in 1991. He was fortunate to have the support of his family and friends, but his death came slowly as his body's digestive system gradually failed.

"He was literally starving. We watched him go from a healthy weight to 90 pounds in a period of three months. He was suffering for at least a year," Ms. Garza said. "Having this disease, it is a slow, painful process and other people should have more compassion."

Ms. Garza's cousin, Pepe, died of AIDS complications in 1988. But his illness, as with many other AIDS patients, was kept a secret by his family.

"My distant aunt and uncle kept it from everybody. We just got a phone call one day that he had died. We later found out it was AIDS. It was very hard for my family and the people close to him," Ms. Garza said.

The college student said she felt Pepe was robbed of the comfort his friends and family could have provided him in his last days. Ms. Garza said she never had a chance to make the most of her little time with her cousin, but she takes comfort in knowing his name is displayed on the AIDS quilt.

"It shows that person to the whole campus. Even though the people have passed away, they are still remembered on this earth. They are not forgotten," Ms. Garza said. "It shows people that AIDS is a reality. It is out there and people have died from it."

Mr. Maitland said the quilt not only provides an important message for the public, but it also can give a sense of closure to those who have lost someone to AIDS.

"This is something people can see that has sentimental value," Mr. Maitland said. "It's also good for the people who made it because it is a chance to say goodbye."