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In Memoriam Sal Guarriello

AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) mourns the death of West Hollywood City Councilmember Sal Guarriello, a friend to the AIDS community and an advocate for APLA's work in West Hollywood.

Guarriello, who served alternately as a councilmember and mayor over four terms that spanned nearly 20 years, died April 16, 2009 after a sudden illness. He was one of the oldest elected officials in the United States.

After years as a local activist in West Hollywood, a city he called home since 1964, Guarriello was elected to the West Hollywood City Council in 1990. During his tenure, he proved a strong advocate for West Hollywood's senior community, its Russian-speaking residents, its lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population and for its disabled community, including people living with HIV/AIDS. He worked vigorously to ensure that West Hollywood provided programs for its HIV-positive citizens.

In 2002, Councilmember Guarriello began the recall process against Los Angeles District Attorney Steve Cooley after a gay resident of West Hollywood was nearly beaten to death with a baseball bat by three assailants. Councilmember Guarriello expressed outrage that the assault was classified as a robbery rather than a hate crime.

To the family members that survive him, we at APLA extend our deepest condolences for their loss.

April 17, 2009