



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 27, 2010

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AIDS Organizations and LGBT Community Mourn the Loss of Zelda Rubinstein

ACTOR USED HER STARDOM TO FIGHT AIDS AT A TIME WHEN FEW WERE WILLING

Los Angeles, Calif. (January 27, 2010) – Zelda Rubinstein, who gained international recognition for her role as Tangina, the medium, in Steven Spielberg’s “Poltergeist”, passed away today in Los Angeles at the age of 76. She had been hospitalized for the past two months. In addition to all the “Poltergeist” films, Ms. Rubinstein starred in several other features, including “Sixteen Candles”, “Anguish”, and “Southland Tales”, and was a regular on the CBS Series “Picket Fences”.

Beyond her iconic film roles, Ms. Rubinstein is remembered as a fierce early advocate for the AIDS community. In 1985, she created the character “Mother,” promoting safer sex in print ads and live appearances throughout Los Angeles. She was also heavily involved in the promotion of the world’s first AIDS Walk, which was launched here in Los Angeles that same year.

Craig R. Miller, Founder and Producer of AIDS Walk Los Angeles recalls that “at a time when few celebrities were willing to speak up, Zelda’s participation was nearly as groundbreaking as the first AIDS Walk itself. She helped make the issue one that was not only accepted but embraced by the entertainment industry.” In the early days of the AIDS crisis, many who were afflicted by the disease faced issues of rejection, even from their own families. “People listened to her as if she were their mother. It was very effective.” Miller added.

“Zelda not only lent her support to the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center—before it was popular for celebrities to support AIDS and LGBT organizations – she volunteered to star in a groundbreaking HIV prevention campaign for us,” said Lorri L. Jean, CEO of the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center. “The image of her on billboards and posters, saying to a shirtless guy holding an umbrella: ‘don’t forget your rubbers,’ is now iconic. She will be deeply missed.”

Ms. Rubinstein remained active in fighting AIDS for many years, working with The Center, promoting the AIDS Walk, and participating in other campaigns and events for AIDS Project Los Angeles. According to Craig Thompson, APLA’s Executive Director, “Zelda was a pioneer in the AIDS fight. She was one of the very first Hollywood celebrities to speak out, and she was undaunted by the stigma that surrounded both the disease and those who spoke openly about it. She wanted to make a difference, and she did.”

A CELEBRATION OF HER LIFE WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT A LATER DATE.

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