



Youspeak Radio Episode 6 – Do Your Part – With Phill Wilson
Audio transcript

Full audio: <https://www.onearchives.org/youspeak-radio-ep-6-do-your-part-phill-wilson/>

Speaker 1 (00:00):

This is Youspeak Radio, a project by ONE Archives Foundation with generous support from the California Humanities.

Jay Vargas-Garcia (00:15):

Hi, my name is Jaileen Vargas-Garcia and my pronouns are she, they, and I usually go by Jay. This is my interview with Phill Wilson, a trailblazer and the founder of the Black AIDS Institute and personally, to me, it felt like an honor to interview him. He was amiable. He was very accepting and he's very confident. And throughout this interview, it made me feel more confident and made me feel less nervous.

Phill Wilson (00:45):

I found myself as a 24 year old being told that he had six months to live. So, the thing that I probably would have told myself, my younger self, is you have time, use it.

Jay Vargas-Garcia (01:09):

My purpose for this interview was to make it feel less intimidating and more just like having a conversation with a friend. I wanted to bring out the humanity and not just the statistics of the AIDS/HIV epidemic, to show you someone who lived through it, and is here today to tell you the story. So thank you so much and I really hope you enjoy it.

Phill Wilson (01:44):

Okay. My name is Phill Wilson. I am the founder of the Black AIDS Institute and the immediate past president and CEO. I currently am the vice chair on the board of the Foundation for AIDS Monument. And I also sit on the board of trustees for amfAR.

Jay Vargas-Garcia (02:05):

Okay, great. So, my first question is what was it like being a gay black man with AIDS in the mid '80s? And how do you think that shaped who you are as an adult today?

Phill Wilson (02:19):

For me, I came out in the spring of 1980 and my entire lived experience as an adult gay or otherwise has been in the middle of the battlefield of HIV/AIDS, pandemic. Everything about my experience, every life passage, every love, every heartbreak, every victory, every defeat, every laughter, every tear, HIV sometimes has been in the background, sometimes center stage, but AIDS has always been there. So, my life as a gay man has centered around maneuvering, living with, fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Jay Vargas-Garcia (03:07):