



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pedro Espada Jr.

In Memorium: Dennis deLeon

PEDRO ESPADA, JR. December 14, 2009

| ISSUE: **HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL RIGHTS**

I am deeply saddened by the loss today of Dennis deLeon, a dynamic human rights advocate for those living with HIV/AIDS.

In 1993, as NYC Human Rights Commissioner, Dennis deLeon courageously disclosed his own AIDS diagnosis to the public, and began a 16-year mobilization effort to educate and champion affected communities, including immigrants, women, inmates and gay Latinos. With an already strong human rights background, his tireless work brought him to lead and develop the Latino Commission on AIDS, and further to the creation of a national Spanish-language clearinghouse for AIDS information.

His life-long antidiscrimination work began years before his diagnosis, and his influence is indelibly stamped on untold numbers of lives who have been changed for the better by his efforts. Dennis deLeon is an inspiration to us all. My heart and prayers go out to his family and loved ones.