

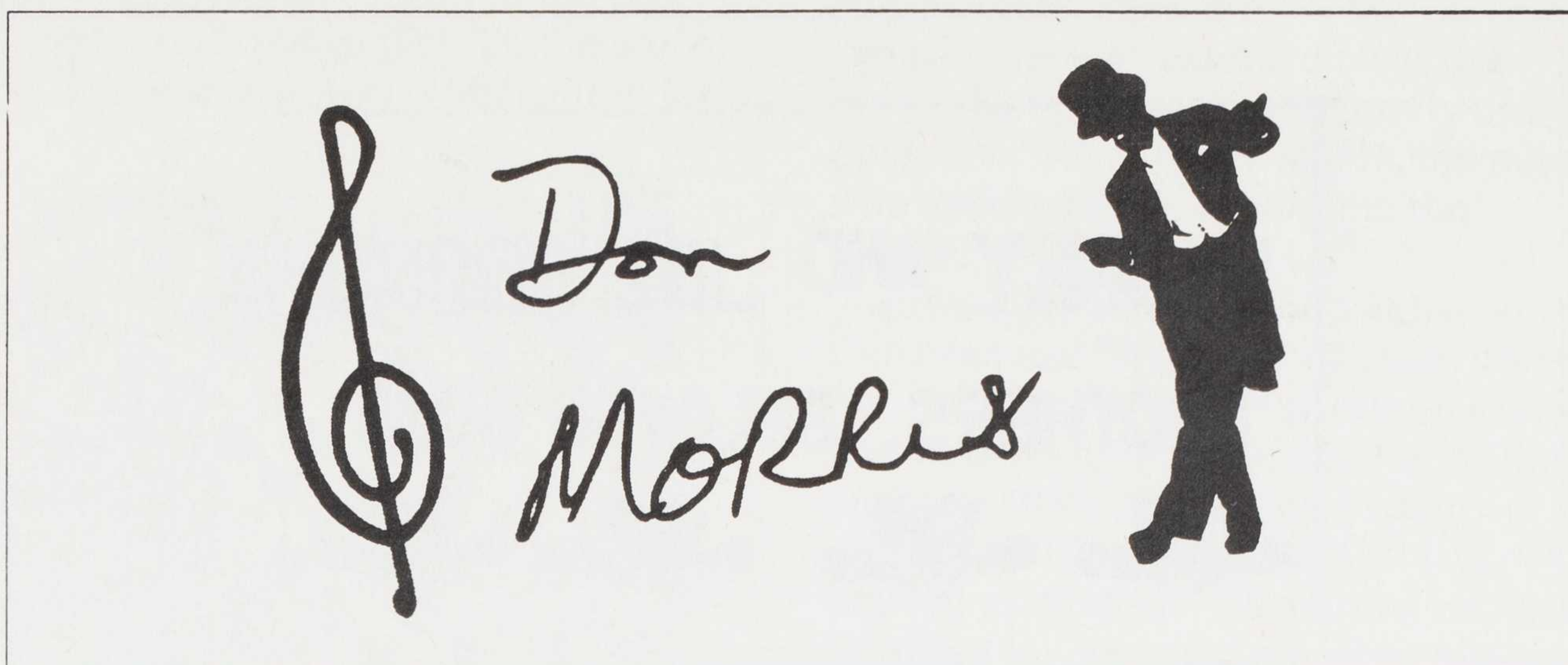
But perhaps the most emblematic panel was made by a schoolteacher in Cincinnati for a man he never met. Wayne Hadley, 28, heard from his landlord that a young man suffering from AIDS had moved into the building to be with his mother. As far as he knows, Hadley never even laid eyes on his neighbor. Yet he was keenly aware of his presence. When the man died, Hadley wrote to the project, "I needed to say something for him and for all of us that know the fear and uncertainty." His quilt is canary-yellow with the silhouette of a lone black figure to one side, casting its shadow along the bottom of the panel. The inscription, in purple block letters, reads: Our brother next door.

As the date of the Washington march approaches, the 10 sewing machines in San Francisco are working around the clock. The Castro neighborhood, so hard hit by AIDS, has been generous to the project. When he first rented the space in mid-July, Jones put a sign in the window: "This is the new home of the NAMES Project and this is our wish list: . . ." They needed everything from sequins and fabric to phone cords and cash—and the community came through. Local merchants helped pay the rent; one nameless person stuffed \$500 in the donation box. "This is a magical place," says Jones. "What you see is an extraordinary investment of love, creative energy and hours and hours of work."

And though the official deadline has passed, the panels just keep arriving, often accompanied by letters, diaries, photos, poems, even ashes. Some of the letters speak directly to the dead: One woman apologized because she refused to hug her friend when he was dying in 1981. "I know better now," she wrote. Others try to explain the rough edges of their first sewing efforts. "This didn't turn out exactly as I envisioned," confessed Billy Amberg from Petaluma, Calif., "but I'm not exactly Betsy Ross!"

It is such good humor, such resilience in the face of tragedy that allows Cleve Jones to get through each day's mail and handle all the heartache that walks through the door. (One dying man came in to do his own panel.) "There hasn't been a day since I've been here that I haven't cried," he says. "But the miracle of it is that over the sound of sewing machines, you hear the sound of laughter all the time."

CINDY RUSKIN



Don Morris taught science at a San Francisco high school, but his first loves were theater and dance. Three friends did his panel, with its rakish gold lamé cane.



Dale Hansen, a molecular biologist, had a passion for anything with a penguin theme. His lover, Jim Munson, sewed this one last addition to his collection.



Mike Melig, a student of Imperial Russia, never made it to St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow. A friend, Stephen A. Smith, fashioned this panel in his behalf.



One hundred hours and more than 200 fabric scraps went into the panel Larkin Mayo and Gary Yuschalk made for their friend Tom Castro, a housepainter.