



telling the small community that their son has HIV.

"Dad will say: 'What they don't know won't hurt them,'" he said.

He's very understanding of their reluctance to tell, though. He called his father "a great man" and his mother a "wonderful mom."

"They are proud of everything I've done out here," he said.

The ivy vine of stigmas and phobias connected to the virus makes McCarty's sympathetic compromise understandable.

He was active in high school in sports, drama and band and "so respected by the coaches and everyone that they gave me my own set of keys for the gym."

Now, when he's back home, he dances around a number of issues.

If spending the day in public, he has to find a sneaky way of taking the 48 prescribed pills he needs every day. Complaining about his often-severe arthritis would be hard to explain at his age.

"It's frustrating that I have to sit there and lie about why I don't feel well enough to go to an auction at 6 a.m.," he said.

Questions about dating net smoke-screened answers. He avoids the complex issues about HIV-positive people finding romantic partners.

The silent nature of McCarty's life back home says a lot of things, including gender.

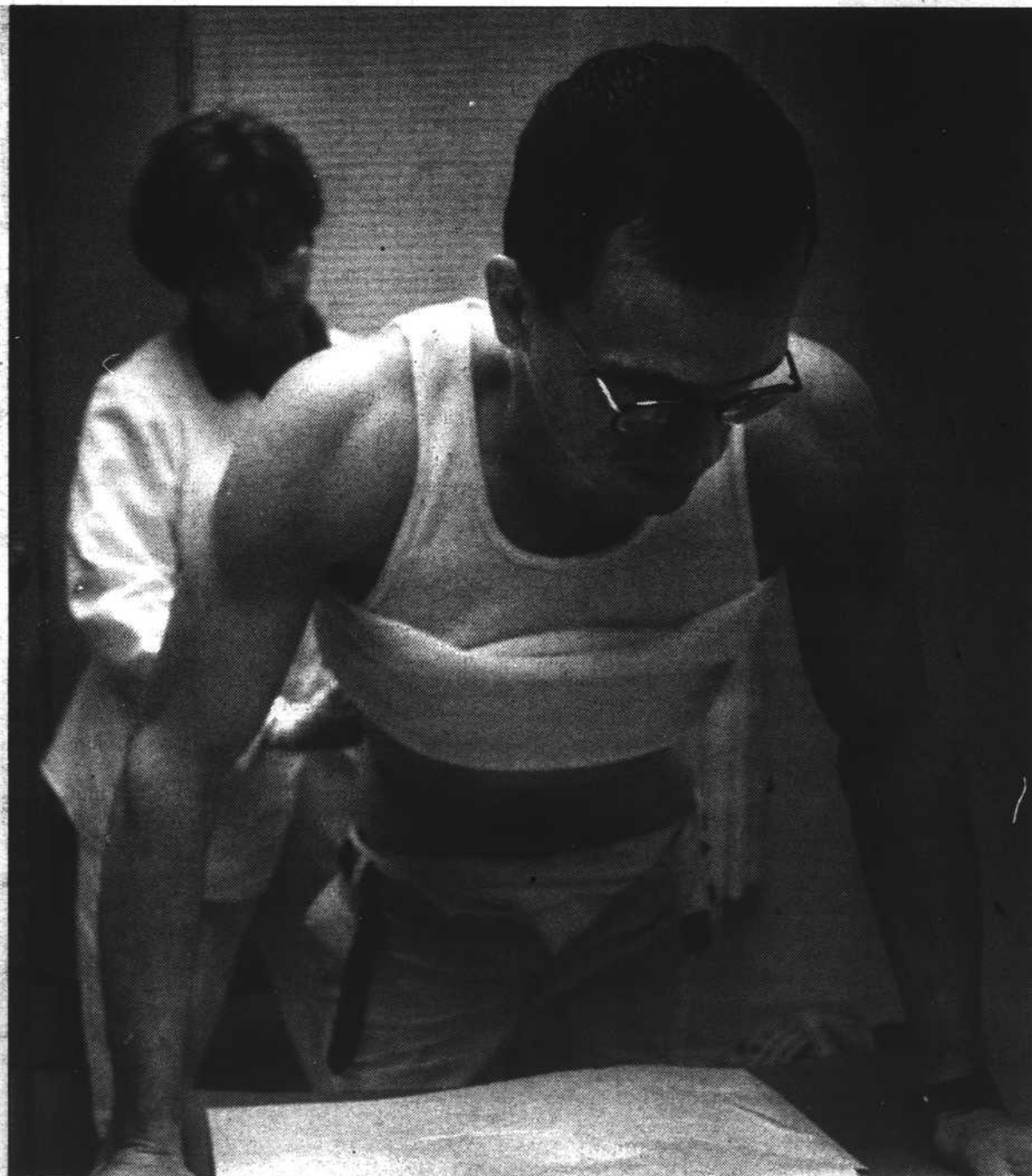
"If I was a woman, this wouldn't be as difficult to go public with," he said.

Hartley agreed: "People tend to feel more sorry for women with HIV than men who have it," she said. "It's because they don't even understand how women can get it."

McCarty admits he was infected with HIV because he practiced unsafe sex.

But it seems society's attitude towards HIV and AIDS has given him an additional affliction—a secrecy virus that has spread within him over the years. He can speak about his disease in front of any group, but he still refuses to tell the name of his small Illinois hometown.

"When I die it will have to say that I had HIV in my obituary," he said. "I think all my family and friends who don't know will be shocked and hurt that they weren't told."



**CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT:** AS A SEX EDUCATOR, McCarty talks to a group of Cather-Pound-Neihardt residents in Neihardt Residence Center last Thursday. By telling others of his experiences, McCarty said, he hopes to save lives.

**DARREN McCARTY** laughs while Patty Garivay, a polysomnographic technologist, jokes with him while preparing him for a recent sleep study at Bryan Medical Center West. As an HIV patient, McCarty often finds himself inside hospitals, laboratories and clinics.

**McCARTY WORKS OUT** almost every day to keep healthy and maintain his lean muscle mass, which HIV patients have a hard time maintaining.

**McCARTY WAITS** while RN Kathy Meyer administers a testosterone shot. McCarty gets the shots weekly to maintain his muscle mass and energy.

**JOHNNA HARGENS**, a junior psychology major, reacts to McCarty's talk Thursday night in Neihardt Hall. In his speaking engagements, McCarty receives all kinds of reactions—both laughter and tears.