

### **LGBT History Timeline \*\***

This is a collection of some of the major happenings in the LGBT community during the 20th century through today. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list.

- 1913** Alfred Redl, head of Austrian Intelligence, committed suicide after being identified as a Russian double agent and a homosexual. His widely-published arrest gave birth to the notion that gay people are security risks.
- 1919** Magnus Hirschfeld founded the Institute for Sexology in Berlin. One of the primary focuses of this institute was civil rights for women and gay people.
- 1933** On January 30, Adolf Hitler banned the gay press in Germany. In that same year, Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexology was raided and over 12,000 books, periodicals, works of art and other materials were burned. Many of these items were completely irreplaceable.
- 1934** Gay people were beginning to be rounded up from German-occupied countries and sent to concentration camps. Just as Jews were made to wear the Star of David on the prison uniforms, gay men were required to wear a pink triangle, and lesbian women, a black triangle.
- 1947** The first U.S. lesbian magazine, *Vice-Versa*, was published.
- 1948** The Kinsey Report surprised almost everyone with its findings that 4% of men identified themselves as exclusively homosexual while 37% had had sexual relations with other men in their adult lives.
- 1950** The Mattachine Society, often considered the beginning of the contemporary organized gay rights movement in the U.S., was first organized. Its goal was to challenge prejudice and to help gay and lesbian persons realize their collective histories and experiences. The name Mattachine was derived from medieval French history and referred to jesters who always wore masks in public.
- 1955** The Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian organization, was founded. The name was taken from the poem "Songs of Bilitis," by Pierre Louys.
- 1957** The Kinsey Report revealed that 10% of the male population is predominantly gay.
- 1961** Illinois became the first state to decriminalize homosexual acts.
- 1967** Britain decriminalized gay sex between consenting adults.
- 1968** The Metropolitan Community Church is founded in Los Angeles by Rev. Troy Perry.
- 1969** In June, the Stonewall Riots in New York City's Greenwich Village marked the beginning of major resistance by gay men and lesbians to discrimination. Police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay pub, and were caught off guard by the amount of resistance levied by patrons. The police barricaded themselves inside the Inn to protect themselves from the patrons, who were throwing bricks and bottles. This was the first substantial resistance to harassment that gay men and lesbians had put forward.
- 1969** Canada decriminalized homosexuality.
- 1970** In the summer about 200 Chicagoans took to the streets of their city with signs carrying simple messages such as "I am Gay," "Gay is as Good as Straight," and "I Exist!"
- 1972** The United Church of Christ becomes the first mainline Christian denomination to ordain an openly gay man as a minister.
- 1973** The board of the American Psychiatric Association voted unanimously to remove Homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses.
- 1977** Anita Bryant launches her "Save Our Children" campaign, protesting the Miami-Dade County gay rights ordinance. Voters subsequently overturned the ordinance by a 2-1 margin.
- 1978** In San Francisco, openly gay city council member Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone were murdered. In 1979, the convicted murderer Dan White received a verdict of voluntary manslaughter and a sentence of 7-8 years. This caused massive protests throughout the country as gay men and lesbians saw this as yet another blatant example of discrimination.
- 1979** On May 31, the California Supreme Court made a landmark decision that public utility companies may not arbitrarily refuse to hire homosexuals, nor can they interfere with employee involvement in gay organizations.
- 1979** On October 14, over 100,000 people participated in the first National March on Washington (DC) for Lesbian and Gay Rights.
- 1981** Wisconsin became the first state to pass state-wide gay rights legislation.

**1981** Doctors at the CDC first report cases of a rare form of skin cancer and a rare lung infection among gay men. This is generally regarded as the beginning of the AIDS crisis in the U.S.

**1982** The first International Gay Games were held in San Francisco. Over 1,300 gay men and lesbian athletes from 28 states and 10 nations participated.

**1982** The first public mention of AIDS by the Reagan administration occurs during a press briefing. Larry Speakes, the White House press secretary, responds to a reporter's question about the emerging virus by turning it into a joke.

**1984** The *Wall Street Journal* changed its editorial policy and now permitted the use of the word "gay" as an alternative to "homosexual" in the news. Previously the newspaper only used the word gay in quotes. *The New York Times* and Associated Press still banned the word gay except when meaning "happy" or when in quotes.

**1984** Charles Howard, a 23-year-old gay man, was attacked by three teenagers while walking home from church on July 7. The assailants kicked and beat him and threw him in a stream, where he drowned. The boys bragged to their friends and were arrested. They were convicted on the charge of manslaughter, a crime that legally implies that they did not act in malice.

**1985** Rock Hudson announces that he has AIDS. He dies later the same year.

**1985** President Reagan publicly mentions the AIDS virus for the first time, in response to a reporter's question at a press conference.

**1986** The Reagan Administration Budget Director James Miller stated that the treatment and care of persons with AIDS was a state and local concern — not a federal one.

**1987** On October 11, the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights drew over 500,000 people, making it the largest civil rights demonstration in U.S. history. This date became National Coming Out Day.

**1987** The Names Project first unveiled the AIDS Memorial Quilt on the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C. At that time, the Quilt covered the area of two football fields. Today, the Quilt is too large to be displayed in its entirety in any one place.

**1988** The 10th Annual National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays conference took place.

**1988** The Episcopal Diocese of Newark, New Jersey became the first church in the country to support ministers and congregations who condoned and blessed relationships between gay and lesbian couples.

**1990** The Hate Crime Statistics Bill passed through Congress in February. Previous legislation required the collection of data on crimes motivated by racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice. This new law also required that data be collected on crimes motivated by prejudice against people of differing sexual orientations.

**1990** At the 101st Annual Conference of American Rabbis, it was decided that gay men and lesbians would be accepted as rabbis. The resolution states that "...All Rabbis, regardless of their sexual orientation, be accorded the opportunity to fulfill the sacred vocation which they have chosen."

**1992** The University of Iowa extended its health benefits to the domestic partners of lesbian and gay employees. The University of Chicago soon followed suit.

**1992** Canada joined the vast majority of other NATO countries permitting military service by lesbians and gay men.

**1992** Voters in the state of Colorado pass Amendment 2, which prohibited any legal protections for gay and lesbian persons. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the amendment in 1996.

**1993** The first large study of female sexual orientation found that there was a strong genetic component to homosexuality and heterosexuality, as reported by researchers at Boston University and Northwestern University.

**1993** By a narrow margin, voters in San Francisco rejected a city-wide partnership ordinance that would grant legal recognition to the relationships of gay men and lesbians.

**1994** The first-ever school district-sanctioned gay youth prom is held in Los Angeles.

**1995** Coors Brewing Company and Walt Disney Company announce they will offer health benefits to domestic partners of their gay employees. Allstate Insurance changes its policies to offer joint coverage to same-gender homeowner couples.

**1996** The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would have prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation in the workplace, narrowly fails in the U.S. Senate in a vote of 50-49. It is the first time a vote on lesbian and gay civil rights has ever been before the full Senate.

- 1996** President Bill Clinton signs the Federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), denying same-sex couples to the right to have their unions/partnerships recognized by the federal government.
- 1997** Ellen DeGeneres comes out in her U.S. TV sitcom.
- 1997** A Virginia court permits lesbian adoption.
- 1998** Maine rescinds the state's gay non-discrimination statute.
- 1998** Matthew Shepard brings hate crimes against gays to the forefront of the news. The 21-year-old gay college student in Wyoming was beaten, tied to a fence, and left to die.
- 1999** Billy Jack Gaither was murdered because of his sexuality on February 19.
- 1999** Actress Hillary Swank receives an Academy Award for her portrayal of Brandon Teena in "Boys Don't Cry." Brandon was a female to male transsexual who was murdered in 1993.
- 2000** Vermont's Civil Union bill was signed into law.
- 2000** Suspects in the Billy Jack Gaither and Matthew Shepard cases were found guilty of murder and given life sentences in prison.
- 2000** Fifteen-year-old Anthony Colin wins a court battle in California after being denied the formation of a Gay Student Alliance group in his high school.
- 2000** For the first time, the U.S. census attempts to estimate the number of same-sex ("unmarried partners") households.
- 2001** A federal judge upholds Florida's ban on adoptions by gays and lesbians.
- 2001** Appearing on TV with Pat Robertson, the Rev. Jerry Falwell blames gays and lesbians (among other groups) for contributing to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.
- 2001** In San Francisco, Diane Whipple dies after being mauled by two dogs outside the apartment that she shared with her partner, Sharon Smith. The dogs belonged to Whipple's next door neighbors, who did not try to prevent or stop the attack. Smith filed a wrongful-death suit against the neighbors, in part to hold them accountable for their actions but also to challenge California law, which said same-sex partners have no legal standing to file such suits. The court permitted Smith to file her suit; both Knoller and Noel were convicted of murder.
- 2002** Comedian and actress Rosie O'Donnell publicly comes out in a television interview.
- 2002** Finland grants same-sex couples the same legal rights as heterosexual couples.
- 2002** A Philadelphia court struck down a 1998 ordinance that recognized city employees' "life partnerships," claiming the ordinance "unsurped" the power of the state to regulate marriage.
- 2002** The Ohio Supreme Court ruled a same-sex couple can adopt a last name they created for themselves, reversing the lower court's decision.
- 2003** Texas Gov. Rick Perry signs the state's version of the Defense of Marriage Act, denying same-sex couples the right to marry or receive any benefits of marriage.
- 2003** Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Penn) compares homosexuality to polygamy, incest and adultery when commenting on the sodomy case being heard by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 2003** The U.S. Supreme Court overturns the Texas sodomy law in a highly publicized case (*Lawrence et al. v. Texas*). The Court determined the law was unconstitutional based on infringement of citizens' privacy in their home.
- 2003** CNBC host Michael Savage is fired after making homophobic remarks to a man who called into his television show.
- 2003** Canada allows same-sex couples the right to marry.
- 2003** Rev. Gene Robinson becomes the first openly gay man to be confirmed a bishop in the Episcopal Church USA.
- 2004** The Massachusetts Supreme Court rules in favor of the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry.
- 2004** 12 U.S. states amend their constitutions to ban same-sex marriages.
- 2005** Illinois becomes the 15<sup>th</sup> U.S. State to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.
- 2005** Maine becomes the 5<sup>th</sup> and final New England state to ban discrimination against LGB persons.
- 2005** South Africa becomes the 5<sup>th</sup> nation (following the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and Canada) to allow same-sex couples to marry.

\*\* Adapted from a timeline originally compiled by the Aggie Allies program at Texas A&M University. Included here with their kind permission.