

The Rainbow History Project

Preserving Our Community's Memories

Anniversaries in 2009

Dates to Remember in Washington DC's LGBTQ History

The year 2009 is a time to celebrate the creation of major institutions and events in the history of Washington, DC's bisexual, transgendered, lesbian and gay community. This is the year of the Blade, the First March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights, Lambda Rising, SMYAL, the Community Center, the Lesbian and Gay Chorus of Washington and many other events and organizations.

45 years ago: 1964

- The second annual conference of East Coast Homophile Organizations, co-founded by the Mattachine Society of Washington, met in October at the Wardman Hotel.

40 years ago: 1969

- Nancy Tucker and Art Stone created the *Gay Blade*, precursor of the *Washington Blade* and first published in October;
- The Plus One opened in the summer as the first major gay dance bar in the city, erasing an informal ban on same-sex dancing;
- The Metropolitan Capitolites, an early African-American gay social club, opened the Zodiac Den (forerunner of the Clubhouse) on Riggs Rd. NE; and
- Jerry Wetzel drew together owners of gay restaurants (the city code only allowed alcohol in restaurants) in the Gay Restaurant Owners of Washington.

35 years ago: 1974

- Lambda Rising, Washington's gay and lesbian bookstore, opened at 1724 20th St. NW;
- Betty Fairchild organized DC's Parents of Gay Men and Women in May;
- The Gay Men's Counseling Collective began providing support at St. Margaret's Church;
- In the elections for Mayor and DC council, the Gay Activists Alliance held the first candidates forum; and
- The Washington Area Gay Community Council prepared the first guide to gay DC: ***Just Us***.

30 years ago: 1979

- Alexa Freeman became the first lesbian appointed to the DC government;
- The DC Council banned referenda on the Human Rights law (forestalling attempts to roll back gay rights in the city);
- Sidney Brinkley began publishing ***Blacklight*** from his home on Lamont St in August;
- The DC Coalition convened the first public discussion on race in the community;
- Georgetown University refused to recognize a gay students group and Howard University students organized the Lambda Student Alliance;
- The city's second Gay Community Center opened at 1469 Church St NW;
- The first March on Washington brought thousands of gays and lesbians to town October 12th to 14th;

- The Third World Conference of Gays and Lesbians convened at Harambee House to discuss the needs of gays and lesbians of color October 12th to 14th;
- On October 14th, Third World gays and lesbians publicly marched down Georgia Avenue to the Mall in the first public demonstration by gay people of color;
- DC's Gay Activists Alliance won a court battle with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, allowing it to place educational posters in Metro buses with the message "Someone in Your Life is Gay"; and
- ABilly S Jones and Dolores Berry participated in the first meeting of Third World gays and lesbians at the White House.

25 years ago: 1984

- Lambda Rising moved to a high profile address at 1625 Connecticut Ave. NW, putting the rainbow flag on one of DC's major arteries;
- The Lesbian and Gay Chorus of Washington organized a non-audition, consensus-based, community chorus that affirms gay and lesbian pride and cultural diversity;
- The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL) formed to support and enhance the self-esteem of sexual minority youth and increase public awareness and understanding of their issues;
- In October, the Washington Blade co-sponsored DC's first gay and lesbian film festival at the Biograph theater; and
- The Whitman-Walker Clinic opened the AIDS Evaluation Unit, a gay community-based evaluation and testing unit, and opened Schwartz House as a residence for people with AIDS.

20 years ago: 1989

- The US Court of Appeals struck down the Armstrong amendment, a congressional attempt to protect Georgetown University's ban on gay student groups;
- BiNetwork organized as a support group for bisexual men and women;
- DC's Office of Human Rights ruled that the local chapter of Big Brothers could not ban gay men from serving as volunteers.

15 years ago: 1994

- *Metro Weekly (MW)* began publishing in the Spring of 1994;
- KhushDC formed to support South Asian gays and lesbians; and
- Jessica Xavier, Dee Curry, and Jean Robinson Bay formed Transgendered Against Discrimination & Defamation (TADD) to press for rights, recognition and support of transgendered people.

10 years ago: 1999

- Bi Insurgence organized in protest over some of the Millennium march policies and held a Celebrate Bisexuality Day in September;
- November 20th, the first DC Transgender Day of Remembrance was held; and
- Earline Budd won a suit against DC's Department of Corrections that removed discrimination against transgender visitors.

5 years ago: 2004

- DC Bi Men's Network formed as a monthly social and support group alternating meetings between VA and MD; and
- In February, the city's oldest gay bar, Nob Hill, and the nation's oldest continuously operating African-American gay club, closed.

This year is also the anniversary of several restaurants/clubs that are significant in our history: in 1934, Carroll's opened on 9th St NW; in 1949, John Nocente opened Johnnie's on 8th St SE and the Cozy Corner opened at Florida and 7th St NW; in 1954, both Bob's Inn and the Derby Room opened; in 1964, Rosetta Minor's Golden Nugget (known as the Black Nugget) opened at 14th and Chapin; in 1979, both Rascals and the Rogue opened; and in 1984, Hung Jury opened.