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## Anniversaries in 2010

### *Dates to Remember in Washington DC's LGBT History*

*The year 2005 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 anniversary year of **Us Helping Us, Hola Gay, the Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit, off our backs, official Gay Pride's founding, Gay Women's Alternative, Tyra Hunter's death and many other events and organizations.***

#### **155 years ago: 1855**

- Walt Whitman published the first edition of his book *Leaves of Grass*, containing twelve poems and a preface, in the first week of July 1855. Whitman lived in Washington from 1863 to 1873.

#### **50 years ago: 1960**

- H. Lynn Womack, owner of DC's Guild Press was arrested, prosecuted for, and convicted of sending obscene materials through the mail. The case led to the historic 1962 Supreme Court decision in ***Manual Enterprises Inc. v. J. Edward Day, Postmaster General of the United States*** holding that homosexual materials were not *per se* obscene.

#### **45 years ago: 1965**

- The US Civil Service Commission met with Mattachine Society of Washington to discuss restrictions on federal employment of homosexuals. The following year the Commission changed its guidelines on the forced resignation of homosexuals.
- Mattachine Society of Washington launched the first protest march for gay civil rights at the White House (April 17, 1965).
- Mattachine Society of Washington, New York Mattachine, and Daughters of Bilitis launched the first Annual Reminder July 4<sup>th</sup> picket line at Independence Hall in Philadelphia.
- March meeting of Jack Nichols with American University's Chaplain led to formation of the Washington Area Council on Religion and the Homosexual, the first organization to explore sexuality and religion. Mattachine Society members participating were Nichols, Gail Gonzalez, Richard Wilkins, and Robert Belanger.

#### **40 years ago: 1970**

- *off our backs*, the lesbian feminist periodical began publishing.
- Gay Liberation Front -- DC formed and started a collective at 1620 S St. NW.

- Gay and lesbian students at UMD in College Park formed the first local gay students group: the Student Homophile Association.
- Homophile Social League formed, leading to formation of the Community Church and later Metropolitan Community Church.
- The Centaur Motorcycle club, sponsor of the annual Mid-Atlantic Leather celebration, was founded.

*The Chicken Hut, the Golden Calf & the Crescent Café closed; the Glory Hole, La Zambra, and Pier 9 opened.*

### **35 years ago: 1975**

- The Metropolitan Capitollites opened The Clubhouse, which would reign for 15 years as **the** African-American dance club, at 1296 Upshur St NW.
- **Just Us**, the first guide to local GLBT organizations and social sites was published by the Washington Area Gay Community Council, written and edited by Cade Ware and Dave Aiken.
- Mary-Helen Mautner and Elaine Noble formed the Washington Women's Law Caucus.
- Deacon Maccubbin and the Community Building Organization established the first official DC Gay Pride celebration, June 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Gay Activists Alliance campaign to end decades of police harassment and entrapment succeeded by eliminating funding for the Metropolitan Police Department's vice squad (Prostitution, Perversion, and Obscenity squad).
- Dr. Franklin E. Kameny was appointed to the DC Human Rights Commission, the first appointment of an openly gay or lesbian citizen to a DC government position.
- Bet Mishpachah, a congregation for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Jews, formed and began meeting in members' homes.

*The Clubhouse opened; Keith's Theatre (an early 20th century favorite of "Jeb" and "Dash") closed.*

### **30 years ago: 1980**

- The Sapphire Sapphos, the first organized group by and for African-American lesbians, began meeting regularly.
- Maryl Kerley, Ina Alterman and others formed the Gay Women's Alternative: "an alternative to the closet; an alternative to the bars."
- The Gay Activists Alliance won the right to participate in the annual Memorial Day wreath-laying at Arlington National Cemetery.
- Mel Boozer, first African-American president of Gay Activists Alliance (1979 – 1981), was nominated for Vice President at the Democratic National Convention in August.

"Would you ask me how I'd dare to compare the civil rights struggle with the struggle for lesbian and gay rights? I can compare, and I do compare them. I know what it means to be called a nigger. I know what it means to be called a faggot. And I can sum up the difference in one word: none." – Mel Boozer, 1980.

*The Admiral Ben Bow closed; Dot's Spot opened above Mr. Henry's.*

### **25 years ago: 1985**

- The Gay Activists Alliance began providing gay-led training to police recruits.
- Rev. Rainey Cheeks and Dr. Prem Deben began organizing Us Helping Us.
- In protest over Georgetown University's refusal to recognize gay students, a coalition of local gay groups got a provision requiring compliance with DC's human rights law added to a GU bond issue.
- Bi-Ways, a support group for bisexual men and women, was founded in DC.
- The DC Committee on AIDS Issues formed and the DC government raised AIDS funding to \$1 million.

- The Whitman-Walker Clinic opened the Robert N Schwartz House, the city's first housing for people living with AIDS.
- Lisa Keen's award-winning series in the Blade chronicling the AIDS illness and death of local lawyer Ray Engebretsen brought AIDS to many people's awareness.

*The Regency Baths & the Terminal Hotel/Naples Cafe closed.*

### **20 years ago: 1990**

- DC hate crimes legislation provided stiff penalties for bias crimes against gays and lesbians.
- Susan Hester founded the Mautner Project to help lesbians facing life-threatening illnesses.
- Hola Gay, a project of Enlace, began providing phone hotline service to Latino gays and lesbians.
- The ACT UP demonstration at NIH in Bethesda drew 1,000 protesters.
- Following a fifteen year run, The Clubhouse (1296 Upshur NW), one of the city's primary African-American dance clubs closed.
- In November, the Gay Community Center closed.

*Washington Area Women's Center closed; 17th St Bar & Grill, the Bank, & the Crew Club opened.*

### **15 years ago: 1995**

- Tyra Hunter, a transgendered person, died August 7<sup>th</sup> following a traffic accident at 50th & C SE when DC EMT personnel refused to provide lifesaving services. Her death exposed a pattern of discrimination in the Fire Dept.
- The DC Bear Club formed to promote fellowship among bears, cubs, Levi/leather and other diverse members of the D.C. gay/lesbian community.
- In *Dean and Gill vs. District of Columbia*, the DC Court of Appeals held that DC law did not allow for same-sex marriage licenses sought by two local gay men, Craig Dean and Patrick Gill.
- Capital Area Rainbowlers Association formed to promote bowling for men and women in the community.

*Wet opened; El Faro closed.*

### **10 years ago: 2000**

- The Millennium March on Washington was held April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Metropolitan Police Department created the Gay & Lesbian Liaison Unit in June to reach out to and handle the needs of the GLBT community.
- The Gay Officers Action League established a DC chapter.
- Rainbow History Project organized to preserve and promote the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender history of metropolitan DC.

### **5 years ago: 2005**

- Wanda Alston, head of the Mayor's Office for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs, was murdered March 16<sup>th</sup> in her home
- The DC Center led a community organizing against crystal meth with a strategy session on June 28<sup>th</sup>.

- In October, the DC government cited eminent domain for taking over gay businesses along O and Half Streets SE to build a baseball stadium.
- In May, Whitman-Walker Clinic, faced with mounting funding and financial management issues and unable to make its payroll, laid off 50 staff members and cuts services.
- The DC Coalition and the National Black Justice Coalition led a campaign for African-American LGBT people to be included in the Million More March in October.