



**Transcript: 50th Anniversary of the Mattachine Society of Washington Panel Discussion
Held Thursday, October 13, 2011 at the National Trust for Historic Preservation
Sponsored by the Rainbow History Project**

**Panelists: Paul Kuntzler and Lilli Vincenz
Moderator: Mark Meinke**

Note: This panel was originally also supposed to include Eva Freund and Frank Kameny. Eva Freund dropped out after a scheduling conflict arose, and Frank Kameny died on Tuesday, October 11, 2011.

Philip Clark, Chair, Rainbow History Project: We recognize that this is a sad day for our community after the death on Tuesday of Dr. Frank Kameny, co-founder of the Mattachine Society of Washington, and a fierce, longtime GLBT activist. Dr. Kameny had intended to be a participant on tonight's panel. Following discussion, Rainbow History decided to proceed this evening in order to honor the legacy of Dr. Kameny and to increase knowledge of his life and pioneering work. We know that every heart, even the biggest, eventually gives out, but we know, too, that all of us have the power to preserve the memory of that heart, mind, and spirit that guided us closer to the equality for which we still aim.

Frank Kameny dedicated his life to ensuring that GLBT people would have a place at the table. In honor of his legacy, we have left an empty chair—Frank's chair—at our panelists' table tonight. I'd like to call now for a moment of silence in honor of the life and work of Frank Kameny. [Pause]

Thank you. We have a number of people who we'd like to thank in helping us bring this evening to fruition. First of all, we'd like to thank the National Trust for Historic Preservation for hosting the event, and special thanks go to David Field and his colleagues here for helping us, and for their assistance in reserving these beautiful rooms to talk about the Mattachine Society [of Washington]. We'd like to thank Scott Simpson for his help in drafting our initial press release, which may be the way that some of you heard about tonight's event. Also, we'd like to thank our ASL interpreters for the evening, Jerrod Sharp and Gloria Mills.

Finally, most importantly, what we'd like to do is to thank the members of our panel tonight: Lilli Vincenz and Paul Kuntzler. They are longtime members of the Mattachine Society of Washington and longtime friends and colleagues of Frank Kameny's. The moderator for tonight's panel is my predecessor as the chair of the Rainbow History Project, Mark Meinke. So thank you again for joining us, and I'm going to turn the proceedings on the evening over to Mark.

Mark Meinke, Panel Moderator: Thank you, Philip. I think because we're recording that we'll probably stay at the table rather than moving around. We can talk from there and put it on, yes [referring to the podium]. We had originally, as you know, planned to focus on the Mattachine Society of Washington, which is in many ways inseparable from Dr. Kameny and his work. And actually, it occurred to me to wonder, who is going to keep up the registration of the Mattachine Society now that Dr. Kameny has left us, because he has kept it registered for 50 years so that no one else can take the name and use it. He, as I recall some years ago, actually registered the name of the American Family Council so that it could not be registered and used in D.C. [Audience laughter.] And he, not surprisingly, thought somebody else might try to do that to Mattachine. What's running behind me on the loop is a number of summary pieces about the Mattachine Society so that if we don't touch on everything, since we want to focus to a large degree on Dr. Kameny and his work as well, it's all there and there are copies floating around somewhere.

Before we begin, I would like to ask everyone in the room who has a security clearance to please stand. [Pause] Okay, everyone who is a government employee, would you please stand? [Pause] Everyone who is a member of a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered-friendly faith community, please stand. [Pause] Okay...[to panelists] we should probably be standing, too. [Audience laughter] Everyone who has not been arrested for sodomy...[audience laughter]...if you can. All right, that should have just about gotten the entire room to its feet. And that is thanks to Mattachine Society and Frank Kameny, that you were able to stand.

Because Paul actually joined Mattachine before Lilli, we're going to start with our series of questions. We wanted to focus on the results of Mattachine, and also on Lilli and Paul's involvement with Mattachine. First, the first question I asked them to address was, "What is the impact that Mattachine and Frank Kameny have had on the gay civil rights movement in America?" Paul?

Paul Kuntzler, member of the Mattachine Society of Washington: [Moves to podium] Let me begin first—if you all saw the *Washington Post* yesterday? This photograph that appeared on B7 was taken on Saturday morning, March 20th, 1971, on E St. NW. I was Frank Kameny's campaign manager when he ran for Congress. He appeared on the ballot in Washington on Tuesday, March 23, 1971. He was the first openly gay person to run for federal office in the United States. We had our headquarters on...E St., it was next to the National Theatre. That morning, we marched from the headquarters to the White House to deliver a letter to President Nixon. And Dr. Kameny is in the photo, and I'm standing next to him. So I just wanted to let you know that.

Let me tell you my one dramatic experience I had with the impact of Dr. Kameny. I went to San Francisco on a Greyhound bus, June of 1963. I crossed the San Francisco Bay Bridge at dawn on Thursday, June 6, 1963. The next afternoon, June 7th, I went to see Hal Call, who was then the president of San Francisco Mattachine Society. He sat in his office on the 2nd floor on Mission Street and complained to me about a man who he had never met. He said, "That Frank Kameny—he keeps using the word "homosexual" openly. Doesn't he know that we should remain quiet and allow the civil libertarians to speak on our behalf?" It was an indication then of the impact that Frank Kameny was having in the very tiny gay rights movement in the United States, which consisted then of no more than about 150 people in 5 cities: New York, Philadelphia, Washington, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. And I think...and perhaps I'll...

MM: Lilli...? Do you want to wait and Lilli will answer...?

PK: Okay, great.

MM: [to Lilli] Would you like to speak to...? The impact of...?

Lilli Vincenz, member of the Mattachine Society of Washington: Oh. The impact, okay.

MM: ...that Mattachine...

LV: Yeah.

MM: ...and Kameny have had on the...

LV: What Frank and Jack Nichols did, building a base for changing the government's discriminatory policies and also for [changing] the police departments', who were hunting gay men...the Mattachine Society focused on activism, on picketing, and 1965 [when MSW first picketed the White House], publicity, visibility, broke barriers of closed existence for gay people and created hope. That was my answer so far [laughs].

MM: You mentioned the other organizations. There were not that many in the country...

PK: No. There was the Mattachine Society in Philadelphia, the Janus Society...the Mattachine Society of Washington, the Janus Society of Philadelphia, the Mattachine Society of New York, the Mattachine Society of San Francisco, and the Mattachine Society of Los Angeles, and the Daughters of Bilitis.

MM: How did the other organizations react to Mattachine when it appeared? Lilli?

LV: Well, there were often just social...social organizations, and...[publications] like, *The Ladder* was already mentioned, and I think, *One*, and what was the other one that was just mentioned?

PK: Janus Society.

LV: Janus Society [which published *Drum*] and other organizations, they wanted to add other concerns added to the Mattachine Society's passion, what it was doing. But MSW never wavered from a single focus, and that was what made it different from others. The Mattachine Society seems to have been the only one that focused on being gay people...pardon me...

MM: The civil rights one...?

LV: Yes, yes, the only one that really was single and would not respond to people who wanted to add something to Mattachine or...and even some people who were members [and wanted to address other issues], but the fact that there was this laser focus that Frank had and also we were expected to have...

[audience laughter]. That was very helpful. And also, being in Washington there, we had that perfect place where we could find out how to get to the different departments and how to, how to get in touch with them. And so we picketed, also, a number of...let's see, what did we start out with?

MM: The White House.

LV: Well, we did the White House, that was the first one, yes.

PK: Which was on Saturday, April 17th, 1965.

MM: Easter Saturday.

PK: 4 o'clock p.m.

LV: Just the ten of us: three women and seven men. We did that. It was wonderful. [Laughter]

MM: And you wore t-shirts and shorts and flip-flops? [Audience laughter] [Mark is here referring to the strict formal dress code that Frank Kameny famously enforced.]

LV: Oh, we all had wonderful...

PK: This United Press photograph shows Jack Nichols that afternoon. This poster that he was carrying, "15 Million U.S. Homosexuals Protest Federal Treatment," I made that morning. We got to the assembly point, that was at 18th...that little triangle park? Jack saw my poster and said, "I want that poster" [audience laughter]. Then there was a...the first anti-war demonstration, anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Washington that day. 25,000 people came. So we had our picket in front of the White House at 4 and 5 p.m. When we got in front of the White House, I looked across, and all of a sudden, there was a group of 30 or 40 photographers across from Lafayette Park, and one was the United Press. And I kept sort of hiding behind my...[audience laughter]...my poster. But Jack Nichols is there, Frank Kameny is there, behind is Lilli Vincenz, and just behind her is me.

I want to tell you three...two particular impacts. In September of 1963, we held the first East Coast Homophile Conference [ECHO], at the Drake Hotel in Philadelphia. Our banquet speaker that evening was this psychiatrist, Dr. Albert Ellis. He arrived with a young woman under his arm, and proceeded to say that we're all sick. One lesbian got up and protested. Frank sat and absorbed all that, but that began the struggle against the American Psychiatric Association. Then, at the third ECHO conference, and over here we have a poster at Barbizon Plaza in New York in 1965. [Speaking to Lilli:] You must have filmed...

LV: No, I didn't film it, but I was there.

PK: Yeah, I know, but you must have...we showed in the theatre, at the Barbizon Plaza, on the mezzanine, films of the pickets.

LV: No. Nobody besides me was filming at that time, but not...it didn't start until the pickets.

PK: Maybe it was...they were showing slides. Anyways, the leaders, the president of New York Mattachine Society, who were rather assertive, walked out of that.

LV: All right.

PK: Yeah, because they were upset, you know...Frank was a dramatic change from the whole procedure that was going on in the gay rights movement.

MM: How did they react to the picket in New York, Philadelphia, California?

PK: They didn't approve of it.

MM: Anyone ever picketed before for gay civil rights?

PK: No, first one was on Saturday, April 17, 1965, was the very...

LV: But there was a small group...

PK: ...very first in the history of the world.

LV: But there was a small group there in front of the...

PK: It was the next day.

LV: ...it was in New York.

PK: Sunday, at the United Nations.

LV: Wasn't it also the place where the military...you could...

MM: There was a brief protest, I think, by Randy Wicker.

PK: Oh, yes.

MM: The draft board in New York.

PK: Oh, in New York, yeah. And ours first met on Saturday...

MM: Why didn't people picket in those days?

LV: Well, we needed somebody to do this, and it was Jack Nichols who said, you know, it's Cuba, is putting gay people into, um, let's see, work camps. And so why don't we draw a comparison with what Cuba is doing? And so we did that, and that's what we did. It worked wonderfully, and then

there was the magazine, *Confidential*, filmed us, and we got so many people from all over American that wanted more information.

[Paul and Lilli speak over each other briefly here.]

MM: It helps to be in the *National Enquirer* sometimes. Well, actually, *Confidential* had a long history of exposing gays and lesbians in Washington, which people then used to find out where to go when they went to Washington. [Audience laughter.] *Washington Confidential* [1951 “scandal” book by Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer] came out about the same time as [Donald Webster] Cory’s book.

PK: Okay, yeah. Let me...

MM: Paul has brought the book that brought Nichols and Kameny together at a dinner party. Jack Nichols overheard Frank talking about *The Homosexual in America*, which had come out in 1951, about the same time that *Washington Confidential* came out, with an entire chapter devoted to “The Garden of Pansies,” which listed all the places to go in Washington. [Audience laughter.]

PK: I...something about my background. I first arrived in Washington on a special Baltimore-bound train on Wednesday, January 18th, 1961, for John Kennedy’s inauguration. I had just turned 19. On Thursday, January 19th, at 6 o’clock, it started snowing. We had the great inaugural snow. About midnight, I went into the Copper Skillet, a coffee shop, which was then on the southwest corner of Connecticut Avenue and N St.

MM: Where the California Pizza Kitchen is now.

PK: Yeah. I noticed there were a number of young gay men in the coffee shop, and I went up and introduced myself to Doug Tate and Jim Twice. We shared an efficiency apartment at 1731 New Hampshire Avenue, which is now the Carlyle Suites hotel, and I got invited to my first gay party then. After I went back to, to Michigan, in April of 1961, I saw a whole page ad in the *Detroit News* advertising a number of books sold by a Detroit, a downtown Detroit bookstore. One of them was this book, Donald Webster Cory’s *The Homosexual in America*. And so on my day off from E.J. McDewitt’s Religious Goods and Card Shop [audience laughter]...I sold religious books and Hallmark cards. I went down to the lake shore by bus to downtown Detroit and bought this book. I found out that there was a gay rights movement. And so I came back to, to Washington, again on a special Baltimore-bound train in June, and then at the end of September, I flew to Washington on a DC-3, United Airlines, September 30, 1961, and I made a decision to move here. I arrived in Washington on Thursday, December 28, 1961, at 8 p.m., on a Northwest Airlines flight from Detroit Metropolitan [Airport].

Now, the Chicken Hut, which was this gay bar that was formerly known as D’Allesandro’s Italian Restaurant and Bar [audience laughter], but it had in its marquee, it had this chicken, and it attracted young chicken men, [young men] known as chicken. On Sunday evening, February 25, 1962, I met Dr. Franklin Kameny there. Bill Fly, who was the manager of the Chicken Hut, knew that I was interested in joining the movement, so he introduced me to Frank that evening, and Frank invited me to the first Mattachine, the March Mattachine Society meeting, which was held on the first Tuesday in

March of 1962. It was up on Harvard St., in an apartment by...either...we had two brothers, Earl and Paul Aiken, who had that apartment there. On Tuesday, April 3, 1962, I was elected to its board of directors. I was then the only minor in the United States involved in what was then a tiny movement.

MM: Was it possible for anybody to join Mattachine, Lilli?

LV: Oh, yes, when I came. When I...wanted to join the Mattachine Society in '63, and Frank gave me...returned my request, and he was very nice, a very nice letter...somewhere, I have it, somewhere...and immediately, there were factions already...I can't remember all the names of people, but...it was, it was just wonderful. I enjoyed it very much, and worked very hard for the Society, for the Mattachine Society. So that's how I got started, and I knew you [referring to Paul], I saw you and all the others. Not many.

MM: What was your first impression of Frank when you met him?

LV: Oh, I liked him very much! He was so, so brilliant, and he became my tutor. And I was also on the board.

MM: What was your first impression of Frank?

PK: He was enormously self-confident...[audience laughter]

MM: To put it mildly.

PK: And very opinionated. And...we had pseudonyms, remember? Except for Frank. Frank had to use his own name.

LV: But you knew why, you knew why he...he could do it, but we weren't. To protect us.

PK: To protect us, yes.

LV: And also, he needed, any organization in Washington needed to have at least one person with a name, a real name.

PK: Well, I knew this young gay guy, from Detroit, from the Woodward Bar. His name was David LeMay, so I picked David LeMay. [Audience laughter.] However, it got so confusing when people would say "Paul" and then "David," so I dropped "David" and used "Paul."

MM: And your name was?

LV: Lilli Hansen.

MM: How did Hansen come into it?

LV: Well, I thought it was, like, Swedish or something like that. [Audience laughter.]

MM: And Jack Nichols, I think...

LV: Warren.

MM: ...took the name of somebody he was dating.

LV: Warren.

MM: Warren Adkins.

PK: Oh, Warren, yes, right.

MM: Some kid he met on the beach.

PK: Yes...I would tell you, at the 1964 ECHO conference, which was at the Sheridan Park, which is now the Marriott Wardman Park. Saturday afternoon, we had a Nazi come. We had Rabbi Lippman who was one of our speakers, and this Nazi showed up in full dress, and he had a box with a big red bow, and he started screaming that he had a Vaseline jar for Rabbi Lippman. He got arrested. However, the police would...Lyndon Johnson's aide, who got arrested at the YMCA, Walter...

[Multiple people shout out the name of the aide, Walter Jenkins.]

PK: Had previously arrested Walter, but the people who had arrested Walter Jenkins were at the hotel, and they arrested this Nazi and took him away. Frank, after the 1963 conference, Frank was in charge of the 1964 conference which was here in Washington. He excluded all those psychiatrists who held the viewpoint that we were mentally ill, after that. So at the '64 conference, they were nowhere to be seen.

MM: Did it take much convincing for Mattachine as a group to adopt the offensive against psychiatry?

LV: We were all in agreement.

PK: Well, I'll tell you, in January 1965, we had a debate in the Mattachine Society about whether or not we were mentally ill. [Audience laughter.] And our officers, Bob Belanger and some of the others, took the position, "Well, I know a lot of people who are sick." [More laughter.] Anyway, the vote came down 27 to 5. [Laughter.]

Audience member: Which way?

MM: Five people voted that they were sick.

PK: Five people voted that we were sick.

MM: Speaking of self-image...

PK: Yeah, because Frank...

MM: Was Mattachine a democratic organization?

LV: Well...[audience laughter covers a word or two of the response]...Frank had said once that, he, he once stated that his only mistake was to make MSW a democratic organization. [Audience laughter.]

MM: And that had an effect on his position in Mattachine...

PK: That's right.

MM: What happened in 1964?

PK: There was a revolt.

LV: Yes.

MM: This is only three years after the organization was formed. One of the co-founders is...what happened to him?

PK: Bob Belanger became president...[Mark's next statement covers some words of Paul's response.]

MM: Yes, Frank lost the campaign for president.

PK: ...And I think Lilli ran a campaign in Kameny Hall. [A couple slight titters at this joke.]

LV: Well, I was for Frank, and from then, later on, I agreed that we needed somebody else, [but] Bob Belanger was disappointing. So then we voted him [Kameny] in again.

PK: He [Kameny] was very, he was very insistent on his viewpoints.

LV: Oh, definitely.

PK: Yeah, he just...

MM: I actually...

PK: I cast...I never told Frank this, but I cast the deciding vote [for Belanger as president]...[audience laughter]...secret ballot.

MM: Okay, this is 47 years later, the truth has come out.

PK: Frank thought I was going to vote for him.

MM: Let the record show.

PK: Yes.

MM: And...Bob Belanger's code name was "King," wasn't it? "Robert King."

[Both Lilli and Paul voice agreement here.]

PK: He lived on 17th St. Now, in the summer of 1962, I was on the committee to draft a letter to members of Congress, all the members of the Senate, all the members of the House. We sent that letter...two members, one from Philadelphia, one congressman from Philadelphia and one congressman from the west side of New York, responded favorably. But Congressman John Dowdy, who was chairman of the House Committee on District Affairs? He introduced legislation to deny the Mattachine Society a charitable solicitations license.

LV: But that was earlier, that was much...in '63, then I knew, I was there.

PK: Yeah. Yes, and I went to the hearing. Congressman John Dowdy from Texas denied charitable solicitation to any organization that did not "safeguard the morals, welfare, and health of the members of the District of Columbia." The hearings were held in early August 1963. Frank and a member of the ACLU spoke on the...I remember I was sitting in the audience and some young congressional staffers came in, and they were listening, and I heard them say, "The chairman is not doing very well." [Audience laughter.] Anyway, at the 1964 conference, we gave John Dowdy an award for doing the most to advance the cause of homophile organizations of any public official, and we sent press releases. [Audience laughter.]

MM: Well, Mattachine had a habit of sending things to people who didn't want them.

PK: Yes. Including J. Edgar Hoover. [Audience laughter.]

MM: Who had a gift subscription, didn't he? [Audience laughter.]

PK: Yes. And the FBI contacted, and I think they had a meeting with Frank and maybe Bob Belanger? I'm not sure. And they asked us to stop sending the Mattachine materials to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. Well, Frank...he finally...well, we finally realized what was going on, because J. Edgar Hoover was himself gay and he had a partner, Clyde Tolson, you know. They had lunch every day at the Mayflower Hotel, they sat at the same table, they got the same menu, they ordered the same thing, but they never paid the bill and they never tipped. [Audience laughter.] J. Edgar Hoover was the biggest freeloader. He used to, he and Clyde Tolson would vacation out at this resort that was run by the Mafia in California for a whole month. You know, never paid for anything.

MM: Let's talk about some of the campaigns that were locally effective. In 1963, I don't know if you [Lilli] had joined yet, there was a raid on the Gayety Buffet on 9th St., which launched Frank on his campaign to rein in the police department of the nation's capital.

PK: The vice squad.

MM: The vice squad, which in those days focused on perversion, prostitution, obscenity...have I left anything out?

LV: I wasn't...I had just come in, it was '63, right, that you were talking about?

MM: How did Mattachine, and how did Frank, take on the police department?

PK: Well, I will tell you at the meeting where they formed Mattachine Society, I believe it was in November of 1961, maybe it was at the Hay-Adams Hotel...

MM: Yes.

PK: ...the head of the vice squad came. Inspector, inspector what was his name? Blick?

MM: Sgt. [Roy] Blick. [Note: Roy Blick was a lieutenant.]

PK: Ron Bailer, the late Ron Bailer worked on the [Capitol] Hill at the time, he recognized Inspector Blick, and asked him to stand up or something.

MM: Blick was his superior. The actual man who infiltrated was...Forche?

PK: Oh, Forche, yes. I wasn't there. It was even before I moved to Washington, but I heard about it. Later on, in the early 1970s, I attended a meeting with the vice squad. And I remember the head of the vice squad saying, "The only reason that we are not in gay bars arresting people is that we have other priorities." But we got it abolished.

MM: And actually...

PK: After we got home rule, we had the City Council [inaudible]...1974, 1975, it was abolished.

MM: And that was in large part due to the work of GAA [Gay Activists' Alliance].

PK: Yes, GAA, correct. I was on the board of directors...

MM: Took over undermining the funding for...

PK: Correct. For Americans for Democratic Action...

MM: ...for the vice squad.

PK: In 1977, I became the first openly chapter chair, openly gay chapter chairman of the ADA. But Harriet Taylor, who's now dead, sent a letter...

LV: Oh, I didn't know that.

PK: Yeah, she sent a letter to...

MM: The Harriet whose name is going around up there [referring to Powerpoint about MSW, projected behind the panel table] without a last name...

LV: What's her last name again?

MM: Taylor.

LV: Taylor.

MM: That's why we do these things.

PK: She died, and her husband just recently died, too. But anyways, we sent a letter to the City Council asking for the abolition of the vice squad, and we got a letter back saying it was done. They did away with the appropriations.

MM: Paul mentioned earlier the campaign against psychiatry, which became quite heated as the '60s drew to a close, and one of, I think, Frank's more memorable moments was in 1971, at the Omni Shoreham.

PK: That's right...

MM: Were you both there?

PK: ...I was handling the press.

LV: I was not there when Frank and...when Frank was there to challenge, I think, challenge the...

MM: The APA?

LV: Yes, but I was there when there were seven of us, seven gay women and men, as a workshop for the psychiatrists to kind of see how we are, what kinds of lives we are living, and that we feel healthy, we're not in therapy, so just to educate.

MM: That was a panel at one of the APA conferences.

LV: Yeah, that was seven of us.

MM: Where the APA finally agreed...I think one of Frank's points was that the APA only talked to people who were sick, and he wanted to provide examples of healthy homosexuals. And the conference in Hawaii, was that the...

LV: I don't know about Hawaii.

MM: It was the first one where they actually...

PK: Yes.

MM: ...he and Barbara Gittings presented information about healthy homosexuals, which was a new idea in psychiatry.

PK: In May of 1971, this was after the Kameny campaign [for Congress], when the American Psychiatric Association was meeting at the Wardman Park [inaudible]. We zapped the APA. We had members of Gay Liberation Front. We planned it all very well. And the doors opened and they came in whooping. [Audience laughter.]

LV: I remember that.

PK: Yes, and then, I was going around and trying to get press releases to...and I remember I gave one to...we had another major newspaper, the *Washington Star*, the *Evening Star*? And I gave it to [inaudible], a reporter from the *Post* came up and said, "I need that." Anyways, Frank moved to the podium and took over the podium. And all these people...

LV: Yeah, he took...Frank said, I don't recall that he was actually going up, but he was [saying], "If you are not listening to us, this is going to keep going, keep happening all the time." So, and I remember this is Dr. Cavanaugh, who had research there, researched lesbianism, and I was one of his... one of the people that he...I did everything that he said: drawing pictures, and talking about my life, and everything, and so when...it was the GL[F]...Liberation came, and they tore all his stuff and his papers, they threw them out, and there he stood. He didn't know what to do. [Audience laughter.]

MM: How many of you have heard Dr. Kameny tell the story? He tells it very dramatically. Joel, were you there?

Joel Martin: No, but the person that wrestled the mic at the public podium was Cliff Witt. [Multiple people speak over each other.]

MM: The speaker is Joel Martin, a former president of GAA and part of the campaign for Kameny.

PK: Martin, Joel Martin went with me to New York to meet with Gay Activists Alliance in New York, and there was six of us that formed Gay Activists Alliance of Washington.

MM: When the GLF and the GAA and the Mattachine burst into the room at the Omni Shoreham...

PK: Yes.

MM: ...it had been planned extensively, and Cliff Witt had gone ahead of time and propped doors open the previous day, so that as members of GLF, the Gay Liberation Front, GAA, and Mattachine

came up the hill out of Rock Creek Park, as sort of gay guerrillas [audience laughter]...remember, this was 1971, it was Vietnam, and that day they had been trying to shut down the city downtown by blocking roads, and now they were attacking the Omni Shoreham. Came in through the doorways and Dr. Kameny used to tell a wonderful story about enraged psychologists who had just received gold medals beating gay infiltrators over the head with their medals. [Audience laughter.] And he went up on the stage...

PK: Yes, he did, he took over...

MM: ...and took over, and the man who was convening the meeting said...were you there?

PK: I was there.

MM: He said, "Tell me your name, and I'll introduce you." And Kameny said, "I don't need an introduction, and I don't need a microphone," and just took over [audience laughter] and declared war on psychiatry. "We are at war."

PK: Frank always said, "We are the authorities."

LV: Yes! "We are the experts."

PK: "We're the experts on such matters," you know, not these doctors. I read a book in...when I was still in...[Dr. Irving] Bieber, *One Thousand Homosexuals?* [Note: this book is by Dr. Edmund Bergler]... when I was still living at home in Michigan. He said, he wrote in the book that the best possible homosexual relationship is a thousand times worse than the worst possible heterosexual relation, which is absurd. But that's what they were peddling, you know.

LV: I'm sorry, I'm not following you.

PK: In effect, the best possible homosexual relationship is a thousand times worse than the worst possible...best possible [sic] heterosexual relationship.

MM: You have to remember that those were the days when you could be arrested...

PK: Correct.

MM: ...and hauled off for electroshock therapy. On the Rainbow History website, there is an interview that *Friends* radio, who some of you will remember—*Friends* radio was gay radio for D.C. from '73 to '82—they did an interview with a lesbian woman who was actually kidnapped by her parents, taken to a clinic in Westminster, Maryland...

LV: Oh, I remember her. I remember it was terrible.

MM: ...where they interviewed her and planned to do electric shock therapy. Somehow, her girlfriend figured out something was wrong and called the house at 5020 Cathedral [Frank Kameny's

house], and Frank and a lawyer showed up twice trying to get her out. The first time, she was being held in Alexandria, I think it was, in the jail, and they refused to admit that she was there. And then when she was carried off to Westminster, Mattachine, Kameny, and the lawyer followed her and got her out. It was only because somebody alerted Mattachine. But those were the sorts of things that Mattachine did in those days.

LV: I just want to mention...

PK: I will tell you something. William Donovan? He now lives in California. He worked at the gas company. He was a friend of mine. He and his partner [inaudible]. His father, his stepfather, worked for the Pentagon. Now, they went to his father and told him that his son was attending Mattachine Society meetings. Later, Frank represented Bill Donovan before the State Department for a security clearance case. Bruce Scott was our secretary and he was, he lost his job with the federal government because he was gay. Because somebody had tied him, his name, from years earlier. You got this notice from the federal government, "You have been accused of notorious, disgraceful, immoral conduct." But there were never any, they never provided any evidence. It just was an accusation. We, when we won the first time, with Bruce Scott, the court of appeals, and then we had to refight the case again in the common law court of appeals, and Bruce Scott was the first who broke open, the first time that we started breaking down the total ban of gay people, gay men and lesbians working for the federal government.

It was nothing unusual to come home at 6 o'clock, you could work in private enterprise, and there would be two members from the Office of Naval Intelligence [ONI] asking you to come to the Navy Yard for...to interview you. And they were always looking for names of people who were working for the federal government. My late partner, Stephen Miller, he got picked up in July of 1965, by ONI. Stephen was my partner since May 28, 1962. He died seven years ago...

[END OF SIDE ONE]

LV: ...The first really good book was *The Healthy Homosexual* by George Weinberg, and that was in '72, because I helped him, also, as he was doing it. He came to Washington and met with a lot of women, with women that I knew, and it's a wonderful description of how homophobia comes about. It's kind of...he described it as—and I can't think of this word again, so please bear with me—as a type of, a type of...

MM: Pathology?

LV: Well, it is pathology, but a type of hysteria. Hysteria, that's what homophobia is. And he describes how it is done, and I would recommend that book a lot. It's very good, very well done.

PK: When I was here in June of 1961, for a week's vacation, I had lunch with my friend Doug Tate, who worked for the Equitable Life Insurance Company at Connecticut and K [St.]. After lunch, I went into a bookstore, and I found this book, *The Sixth Man* by Jess Stearn. I think [inaudible exchange at the panelists' table]. And...he was sort of, it was a big bestseller, and it sold very, very well. Tended to

be rather sensational, but nevertheless, it was beginning to...the book helped educate people, we helped break the conspiracy of silence. And it's also in 1961 when I saw Allen Drury's novel *Advise and Consent*, which later became a movie. And this Utah senator was gay and then in [inaudible], he committed suicide. But it was...Otto Preminger made it into a film, in 1962, which I own a copy of it, and there's a scene in a gay bar in New York. It was the first time in film, in explicit, in explicit detail of homosexuality on film. [Note: *Advise and Consent* had the first explicit depiction of a gay bar in film history, but it was not the first explicit depiction of homosexuality in film.]

Audience member: They played it last night on Turner Classic Movies. In the middle of the night, when elders wake up... [audience laughter]

PK: So those are the three early books that I read, and of course I also bought this book.

MM: Before we take questions, the thing that Dr. Kameny said he was proudest of was the slogan "Gay is Good."

PK: Yeah, Frank...I, it's my judgment that there were...what happened here in Washington under Frank's leadership was the second phase of the movement. The movement was founded by Henry Hay [Note: Harry Hay] and the Mattachine Society of Los Angeles. They, those people, they had two great breakthroughs. There was a Supreme Court decision that opened the mails up to mailing gay-related materials [*One Inc. v. Olesen*, 1957] and secondly, Dr. Evelyn Hooker, University of California, did a study and she compared so many apparently well-adjusted homosexuals to well-adjusted heterosexuals, and then when she gave it to colleagues, they weren't able to tell them apart: who was homosexual and who was heterosexual.

LV: But there's a Hooker, was her name...

PK: Hooker.

LV: Hooker, yeah. I did some research, also, at the University of Maryland, and it showed that straight women, the straight and the, what was it, the gay women, they're all the same...

PK: Sure.

LV: Gay women were just as healthy as anybody else, so that was good.

MM: I thought we were better than the straight people [audience laughter]. Wait a minute!

PK: Frank's leadership here in Washington laid the philosophical foundation for the gay rights movement, that homosexuality was on par and not different from heterosexuality.

LV: Yes. Definitely.

PK: And that we were morally equivalent of heterosexuality. That's when he coined the phrase "Gay is Good." And his great accomplishment was that...that is Bruce Scott, the late Bruce Scott, he was our first...

Audience member: *Scott versus Macy?*

PK: ...?

Audience member: *Scott versus Macy?*

PK: Yes. And we broke down the battle, against the prohibition of gay people, gay men and lesbians working in the federal government. And the second great accomplishment was the reversal of the American Psychiatric Association, which happened here in Dupont Circle on December 15th, 1973, at 18th and R. That was *Brown v. the Board of Education* for gay people. It was of enormous importance.

MM: Did you feel cured?

PK: Yes. [Audience laughter.] Frank said we were cured *en masse*. Now, Dr. Charles Socarides, who is the father of Richard Socarides...

LV: Yes. He's good! [Richard Socarides]

PK: Socarides was...they would bring him forward. He was dramatically homophobic.

MM: And Bieber, Dr. [Irving] Bieber.

PK: Yeah, Dr. Bieber.

Audience member: Still is. [Probably referring to Dr. Charles Socarides' continued homophobia.]

PK: His son is openly gay, but a very prominent member of the gay rights movement. He worked at President Clinton's White House, Richard Socarides did.

MM: I think maybe we should let our friends here ask questions. There's one already. Donald?

Audience member: What does the word "Mattachine" mean or where does it come from?

PK: It's from court jesters in the Middle Ages...a court jester was allowed to speak, you know, the truth. Mark, you probably know better on this...

MM: They were able to...

Audience member: It's right here in the handout, it's...

LV: The jesters.

Audience member: ...on page three of the handout...

MM: They were able to speak truth to power.

Audience member: The protest outside the White House: you mentioned reporters. I assumed, this being the White House, there were tourists around? What sort of reaction did you have from people just milling about?

PK: Well, they were astonished. I mean, we had a series of pickets in front of the White House. We had picketed the White House, the Pentagon, we picketed the Civil Service...

LV: The State Department.

PK: We went to Philadelphia on July 4th, 1965 and July 4th, 1966, Steven and I went to Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, in our Volkswagen. On July 4th, 1965, I left Rehoboth Beach and drove to Philadelphia for the picket in front of Independence Hall, in Philadelphia.

MM: It was called the Annual Reminder. Nobody ever said what you were reminding people of.

LV: Reminders' Day. It's really, what we called it, was Reminder Day, not just Reminder.

PK: In the fall of 1965, we had a much larger turnout. About 70 or 80 people.

Audience member: About the White House picket, the first one you did: I think you said it was the first time that there had ever been a public demonstration. Somebody said that. Did you have any trouble getting a permit?

PK: No.

Audience member: The National Park Service...

PK: We didn't...

MM: It was 1971. You just didn't ask for permits, you just did it.

PK: On Saturday, April 17th, 1965, we just showed up.

Audience member: And they didn't...? The park police didn't come and cart you off?

PK: No.

MM: And there was only one newspaper that covered it: *The Afro-American*.

[Inaudible; multiple people speaking.]

Audience member: Yeah, I had a question about the pamphlet about what to do when you get arrested. What was some of the advice that was included in that?

PK: Well, I do know it was a fold-out, about that [here Paul gestures a size with his hands]. Frank went into the Pentagon with that pamphlet and distributed it around. He was very good at things like that. [Audience laughter.]

Audience member: Are there any copies around?

PK: Are there any copies?

MM: Rainbow History has some. I think there's actually on the website...

PK: On the website. What to do if arrested.

MM: Say nothing. Philip?

Audience member: That's the first I heard that the *Afro-American* was the first...

MM: It was the only one that covered the Easter Saturday demonstration.

Audience member: I just wanted to clear that up, but my question was, were there ever any, that you can recall, African American or people of color actively involved in the Mattachine Society?

PK: Yes. We had at least one.

Audience member: And are they identified in that list? [Referring to list of known Mattachine Society members included in the Powerpoint projected behind the panel table.]

MM: I don't know.

LV: They didn't picket.

PK: No, they didn't picket, but we had a member who was African American.

Audience member: But are they identified in that list? Or do you recall their name?

PK: I don't remember. I will show you something...we'll bring in...all my collection...

MM: While Paul's getting that, does anyone have any questions for Lilli? In the back.

Audience member: I have a question. Nowadays, we have an alphabet soup: LGBTQIS and all of that. But when you first heard the word "gay" or "lesbian," what was...how did that impact you? When did you hear it, and what did you think or feel?

LV: Well, when I first found the Mattachine Society, I was just delighted, and I loved the term “gay.” It was just wonderful, just happy. It’s a happy word. I loved it.

MM: Much better than “deviant” or “pervert.” [Audience laughter]

PK: This is a copy of a *New York Times* magazine from November 12th, 1967, and the picket in front of Independence Hall on July 4th, 1966. I appeared in the back, right here. And it’s the first time that there was a major story in the American news media about the gay rights movement. It’s called, “Civil Rights and the Homosexual: A 4 Million Minority Asks for Equal Rights.” I went in New York, when I was in New York one day, I went to the New York Public Library, I went to [inaudible] and I got a copy of this. Okay, now there’s something else we’re bringing in...

MM: Any other questions?

Audience member: Did Frank talk about his own personal coming out, either then or later?

MM: Do you remember hearing him talk about it?

LV: I don’t remember having any kind of details about Frank’s coming out, only when I just came in, into the Society...he was...right now, I can’t...I can’t recall.

MM: I can’t, I can’t recall...

LV: But he got angry, that’s what he did. He got angry. When he was, when he was kicked out.

MM: He was so out, there was no coming out. [Audience laughter.]

[People speaking over each other for a moment.]

Audience member: I’d like to speak to that, actually. I had the extraordinary experience of meeting Frank at the WWII memorial, in the sea of humanity, 300,000 plus people, I met Frank. So, he told me about fighting at the Battle of the Bulge, and I said, “Were you out then?” And he said, “Yeah.” Which...that’s all I have to contribute, but I did ask him point blank about that, “Were you out during your service?”

MM: Dr. Kameny has said that he always regretted having lied when he was inducted. And when they asked him, “Are you now or have you ever been homosexual?” And he said no, no, not at all. Of course, he went in at the age of 18 or 19, I believe.

PK: Yes, I got notice to report for my physical in January of 1963. I sent a letter to the [inaudible]. I sent a letter to the draft board, telling them I was a confirmed, overt homosexual [audience laughter], and if they wanted evidence, they should contact Father Joseph Chase [audience laughter] of Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods, Michigan where I was a student in high school. I graduated in 1960. And I got back a 4F card, and I never heard from them again.

In 1980, I was campaign chairman, let me see, I founded the National Convention Project. Tom Bastow, who lives in...was the first co-executive director, he's retired now in Palm Springs, California. But there were three elected, five members of the delegation, the New York delegation in 1980, pledged to Ted Kennedy. In 1976, I wrote a memorandum urging the nomination of an openly gay person for vice-president or president at the Democratic convention in 1976. I couldn't get...we only had three delegates then. But in 1980, we had over about 100 openly gay men and women who were delegates or alternates to the convention and members of the committee. One of them...[inaudible] thirty-three. Don Bruce, he was the owner of the D.C. Eagle in Exile, Stephen Brown, who was president of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club and was a professor at George Mason University—he just died. There was me; I was Ward Two representative from the Democratic State Committee. And Melvin Boozer, who was president of Gay Activists' Alliance of Washington, Gay and Lesbian Activists' Alliance, Gay Activists' Alliance. He was African American. We placed his name in nomination for Vice President of the United States before the Democratic convention in New York. As an openly gay person. He died later on of AIDS. And then Christine Blackwater, who was president of the DC National Organization for Women. Now, Frank was on the ballot, but he was in the other congressional district. We had five people running on Ted Kennedy's...ward, congressional district, which consisted of Wards 1, 2, 6, and 8, and all of them...David Clark, Mary Ann...

Audience member and MM: Betty Ann King.

PK: Betty Ann King. And the other was Nadine Winter, she just died. We ran right behind them. And it was so effective in electing members of the delegation. We had thirteen percent of the delegation to the Democratic convention in New York, the highest percentage of any delegation of openly gay persons in any state up to that year.

MM: And that was one of the effects of the 1971 Kameny for Congress campaign, because they woke up the day after the election, and the *Washington Post* said...oh my god!

PK: *The Washington Post* reported that Doug Moore, Douglas Moore, who was the Reverend Douglas Moore—he ran as the Black Power candidate—and Frank, said that Frank Kameny ran ahead. We got 1,888 votes. I was campaign chair. In Capitol Hill, we had 11% of the vote, in Foggy Bottom, we had 8%, and in Dupont Circle, we had 5%.

MM: And as the *Post* pointed out, it was enough to swing an election.

PK: That's right. And *Time* magazine, in their review, said that gay power beat black power.

LV: As a result of this campaign, a lot of gay women wanted to get in touch with other women, and my then party...I'm sorry, my then *partner* and I decided to have women come into our home every week for seven years, and it was just became an establishment. And it was wonderful to have them come, and we had musicians come, and we had a good...lots of women who didn't know where to go, they didn't want to go to the bars, they just wanted to be in a place that was safe, so we provided that...

MM: It was called the...?

LV: The Gay Women's Open House, and it was really very good. After seven years, I decided I needed to do something else [laughter].

MM: And the irony was that somebody who attended here and then moved to New York City decided that they needed something like that in New York, and they created a similar organization, and when that person moved back to D.C., they created the Gay Women's...

LV: Awareness.

MM: Alliance. GWA.

LV: Alliance. But the thing was, Kay [Tobin Lahusen], Barbara Gittings' partner, actually talked to people in New York and said, you know, Lilli has this very good thing there in Arlington, but people didn't want to do it. This is New York, it's different from Washington, from Arlington. So they gave...Kay suggested, or maybe the people that listened to Kay, they decided to call it this new entity. So I wasn't even aware that Kay was the one that said, "You can do this, you can do it just the way we did it in Arlington." But they made it a little different.

MM: Yes?

Audience member: Could you say something about the membership of the Mattachine Society? In other words, you know, I'm curious how the members of the Mattachine Society were typical or atypical of the gay community at large. I mean, I'm assuming that, you know, a lot of people were still in the closet. You know, those that held federal jobs would have been very concerned. So, were those...who were those who joined the Mattachine Society? Did they maybe tend to be younger than average, or tend to be people who did not hold jobs in the federal government but in the private sector, which would make them less vulnerable? Or were they more highly educated, or you know, was there some sort of pattern? Who were the people who did this?

PK: When I attended, joined the Mattachine Society, on the first Tuesday in March in 1962, there were 17 members. Some of them were older. Paul and Earl Aiken were brothers, and they were well along, and they had been victims of the McCarthy witch hunt and had lost their jobs. We had another woman, Eleanor McCormick?

MM: Whose name is not up there. We just learned it tonight.

PK: Her husband had committed suicide. She was gay. Bruce Scott had lost his job. Frank Kameny. You know, there were a lot of people who had lost their jobs with the government who were members of the early Mattachine Society.

MM: And there were straight members.

Audience member: Otto Ulrich. Otto Ulrich. Wasn't he at the Library of Congress who lost his job or had a very [inaudible; Lilli and Mark whisper to each other about straight members of the Society and some words in the question are lost].

PK: Yeah. Mark? Otto. He asked a question.

MM: I'm sorry.

Audience member: Otto Ulrich?

MM: Yes, Otto.

Audience member: Wasn't he at the Library of Congress?

MM and LV: Yes, he was.

LV: Yes, he was.

MM: He was a translator. He had lost his security clearance. There were straight members of Mattachine, which is what I wanted to make a point about.

PK: And Eleanor's one of them.

MM: Eleanor's one, Gail Johnson...

PK: Oh, yes.

Audience member: [Inaudible name]

PK: No, she was not a member.

LV: And J.D., she was bi.

PK: Yeah, bi. Harriet Taylor was...she was active in Americans for Democratic Action. Harriet Taylor, she became a judge.

LV: There was Eva.

PK: Eva Freund.

MM: Rick?

Rick Rosendall: Earlier, there was talk about Frank's military service. He...I heard him tell this about a hundred times. He signed up on May 18, 1943, three days before his 18th birthday. He didn't exactly say he regretted lying. He said he resented having *had* to lie. And I don't know what context he said

that he was out, but it certainly was not true in any sense that we mean it today when he was in the service, precisely for the same reason that he had to lie when he enlisted. And it was [that] he enlisted in order to get into a special program that you had to volunteer in order to do, which was subsequently cancelled. But, but then he was in. But he said that a number of, upon reflection, looking back, a number of homosexual passes had been made at him, made towards him, in the Army, which he was too obtuse at the time to really pick up on. [Audience laughter.] But, at one point, there was a furtive encounter that he had, like, around the corner from this place that they were at one point, and with this other soldier that he said everybody knew about. So, there was that aspect of...and my father also served in World War II...there was that aspect of certain soldiers that were known about, but it was not discussed. There was nothing official about it, and he said that he was just not tuned into it at the time, and then nothing else was said about it. So, he wouldn't have been able, he wouldn't have been allowed to stay if he had not continued, at least publicly, officially, to lie about it. But he was, he was 17 when he enlisted.

PK: I will tell you...in February of 1971, from the morning that we were to announce our candidacy, which was at the District Building, which is now the John Wilson Building, I got...Alan Hawthorne handled the press. He was a journalist and worked for the Agriculture Department. He was an incredibly talented person. But I got up in our apartment on that morning. Steve and I lived at Carrollsworth Square at 240 M St. in Southwest. I turned down the radio and I heard this voice say, "Today, a new candidate will swish into the political arena." [Audience laughter.] Swish into the political arena. We went down, we had all the television cameras. It was like, a tremendous amount of press. We had debates on all four television stations. It was a tremendous amount of media during that campaign.

MM: Joel?

Joel Martin: Well, it was during that campaign that we enlisted GAA of New York to come down to assist us, and that's how GAA Washington came into existence. And it was interesting times, and it was really, there was a lot of buzz and a lot of activity going on. I mean, there was tremendous activity going on in the gay community.

PK: Joel Martin is in the back, is the speaker.

JM: And that gentleman who asked about African Americans in the gay movement: in GLF, there were a sizeable amount of African Americans in the GLF. When we met at, I think it's Grace Church over in...

[Inaudible bit, as people talk over each other. Grace Church is in Georgetown.]

MM: Amazing Grace, yes.

PK: GLF communed at 1620 S St.

JM: S St., yes, NW.

Audience member: How long did that last, GLF? It didn't last that long, did it?

JM: Well, I don't know exactly. I know I joined in August of '70, after I moved here, but I can't say how long it existed, because...the Kameny Campaign was when?

PK: January to March, 1971.

JM: It didn't go too much further than that, or just around then.

MM: The last people moved out in...

JM: The meetings were, I think, weekly, and they were exhaustive [audience laughter], and they went for hours...

MM: Those things were in those days.

JM: ...and there was huge, huge discussion about all kinds of issues: feminism, and racism, and sexism, and you name it, we had it.

[Inaudible; people talking over each other.]

Audience member: Process queens.

Audience member: It was at Grace Episcopal Church in Georgetown on Wisconsin Avenue or what was the church?

MM: Yes.

JM: It was down on Wisconsin Avenue, just down...

PK: Lower...

JM: Almost by the...

MM: Lower.

JM: By the...

PK: Correct.

JM: The...MacArthur...what's that thing?

PK: Yes.

JM: That goes through...? The Whitehurst Freeway. It was down there.

PK: On the first January, first Saturday in January in 1971, I went to a GLF dance up on Capitol Hill, at St. Mark's Episcopal...?

JM: Yes, it was St. Mark's.

PK: Yes, correct. Alan Hawthorne was there, and he gave me this memorandum. He used...he underscored with a green pen, about the idea of running Frank Kameny as a candidate in the general election, which was on Tuesday, March 23. We had to get 5,000 signatures of registered D.C. voters, and I thought to myself, "Well, this is an interesting idea, you know, but we'll never get the signatures." And so I took the memorandum. And the next day, I had brunch, Steven and I were having brunch, and two close friends, Richard Davidson and Lynn Burnett, who lived in Southwest, they came, and they were both working for the federal government. And I just happened to remember Alan's memorandum. So I asked them, "Would you sign a petition to put Frank Kameny on the ballot?" Fully expecting that they would say no. They said yes. I was just, "Whaaat?"

So, on Tuesday—I talked to Frank Kameny about the idea—and then on Tuesday, I went to the GLF meeting. I got there, and there were 200 young men at this meeting. It was astonishing, the numbers—I had never seen so many people. The following Friday, January 19th, Friday evening, I had an organizational meeting in my apartment, at 240 M St. SW, to organize the meeting. David Carline and another attorney from the ACLU came to the meeting, and they tried to talk us out of doing it, but we were pretty much set. We had to collect 5,000 signatures to get on the ballot, and so we began. Now Lilli here collected more signatures than anybody else in the campaign. [Clapping from the audience.] I had been active with Senator Eugene McCarthy when he ran for president in 1968. I went to New Hampshire three times, and I went up the first time on President's Day weekend, with George Washington, in February of 1968, on two buses with these students from Georgetown, to work in Manchester, New Hampshire. I went back twice. But anyways, that gave me the idea, you know, we recruited...that group of students from Georgetown University. One of them is still active in the gay rights community. We got some other students from Pennsylvania, you know, this process in the beginning of getting signatures. But I realized that we were never going to make the goal of getting 5,000 signatures, so I called Gay Activists' Alliance in New York, and we paid for a bus to bring them down in February of 1971, because we had to get 5,000 signatures. They came that weekend, we went into the weekend with like 3,800 signatures. Sunday night, we had a dance, a GLF dance out in Temple...

MM: Temple Sinai.

PK: Sinai, yeah. And I came in. Frank always tells about all these reams of the signatures...

MM: Two big rolls.

PK: Yes, two rolls. And the next morning, we had another press conference at the District Building, and we filed 6,300 signatures. Now, in addition to that, I negotiated with this African American politician from Northeast, I've forgotten his name, and he...I bought 500...1,500 signatures from him.

[Audience titters and a gasp.] And...but we had on Sunday, on Monday night, Frank...we got a lot of other signatures, and we filed those on time.

LV: We made 7,500.

PK: Yeah, we had 7,800 signatures altogether. We knew that there were 6,300 valid signatures. [Audience laughter.] *The Washington Post* ran a front-page story that said that our, Kameny's signatures were in the best order of any of the candidates. Because Alan Hawthorne worked down at the District Building with—I gave him two young gay men to work with him—he put all the registration numbers on the petitions, you know, working day and night.

MM: Another question?

Audience member: Could you say something about the relationship of the Mattachine Society to these other organizations that were springing up like the GLF and the GAA during the early '70s? What was the relationship between the organizations?

PK: Well, the Mattachine Society actually ended when it was active, it was sort of replaced by gay activists, Gay Liberation Front. They really went...they sent out...Mattachine Society sent out a questionnaire to the candidates, the Democratic candidates that were running in the primary, early January 1971. One of them was the Reverend Channing Phelps, who was a Unitarian minister. I was supporting him. He refused to answer, you know, and indicated that he wasn't supportive at all of gay people. So I quit his campaign, and I called down to that headquarters. Anyways, we later rented his headquarters, next to the National Theatre, because he lost. The Reverend Walter Fauntroy won the Democratic nomination. The Democratic nomination.

Audience member: I have a follow-up question to this general question. You had mentioned that you had met with the head of the Mattachine Society in San Francisco...

PK: Correct. Hal Call.

Audience member: Right, and he had some words about Dr. Kameny's approach and tactics.

PK: Yes.

Audience member: So it raises the question in my mind, you know, to what extent there was coordination and communication between the different Mattachine Societies around, you know, in the various cities, L.A., San Francisco, Philadelphia, New York. Because the Washington MSW sounds like it was a little bit, its tactics and approach were a little bit more "in your face"...

PK: Correct. They were.

Audience member: ...in large part due to Dr. Kameny's personality, you would say. So was there coordination between them, or were you guys more or less autonomous, doing your own thing?

PK: There was between Washington, Philadelphia, and New York, because we formed the East Coast Homophile Organization conference in 1963, 1964, and 1965. At the Barbizon Plaza in New York, there were a number of gay people, including Jim Foster, the late Jim Foster, who came from San Francisco that week. He was a delegate in the Democratic convention in 1992. So we...that was the first time. And then the ECHO conference led to the formation of perhaps more of a national organization.

MM: NACHO. As I call it, NACHO [Natch-o]. NACHO [Nake-o], as Dr. Kameny says. The North American Conference of Homophile Organizations. Which is the one that adopted the “Gay is Good” slogan.

PK: Right. But it was the ECHO conference at the Barbizon Plaza, which is now Trump Park in New York, and room rates were \$15 a night.

MM: Questions?

Audience member: Yeah, I...as far as, perhaps you individually are concerned, your attitudes, your attitudes toward the Stonewall Riots? If it was...I don't know if it was a big deal back then, or if it has become more of a big deal, if it kind of...but I guess, your personal attitudes towards it when it happened.

MM: By and large, I don't think the news reached here right away.

PK: Well, I, I have a friend, Jim Hurey, who lives at 162 W. 54th St. He told me about the Stonewall riots. You know, because he was in New York. This was in 1969. Now here...I was in New York on vacation in June 1970, and Frank told me to come to the [West] Village and there was going to be [inaudible phrases] look at all these people. This is Frank Kameny and I, in the first gay pride march, which was Sunday, June 28, 1970. It appeared in the *New York Times*. Marching down 6th Avenue. I can tell you, the thing I really remember about that, is we left the Village and were marching down 6th Avenue, up 6th Avenue, to Central Park, there was a yard sale that was going on at the corner, I think it was at 18th St., and there were about 200 people at that yard sale. It was a vacant lot. They saw us, they all went [Paul makes a facial expression here]...immobilized, staring at us. They were astonished. I remember that so well. You know, this was several thousand gay people, gay men and lesbians, marching up 6th Avenue.

MM: Did you go to Christopher Street?

LV: I was filming, together with Cliff Witt.

PK: Yeah, Cliff Witt.

LV: Yeah.

PK: Who lives in Silver Spring and works for Secrets [Southwest D.C. male stripper bar] in Southwest and is in charge of all the nude dancers. He was my assistant campaign manager. [Audience laughter.]

MM: Dan?

Dan Vera: Yeah, I was wondering if you can comment on MSW as sort of a return to the original part of the Mattachine Society? Harry Hay in Los Angeles and that first core that was, you know, quite active but then was then expelled by Hal Call, and that sort of predates sort of MSW. But the East Coast really sort of took that banner of more engagement rather than more passive...

PK: It's my view that what happened in Washington under Dr. Kameny's leadership represents the second phase of the movement and led to the development of Stonewall. Which, in my opinion, is the third phase of the development of the modern gay rights movement. Because it had...what we were doing in Washington was historic. Frank Kameny, in my judgment, was the single most important and most influential person in the history of the gay rights movement.

MM: One of the things that I would like to mention is that, there...because of the similarity of names: Mattachine Society of Washington, Mattachine Society in California. There is often a misunderstanding that they are connected. Actually, the Mattachine Society and Foundation disbanded its national organization before the Mattachine Society of Washington was ever created. And the Mattachine Society of Washington was never a chapter of the Mattachine Society and Foundation. They were completely different. In fact, Dr. Kameny used to say that he had a number of other names that he would have preferred the organization be called, but that November 15th meeting chose Mattachine in preference to his suggestions. Remember, it was a democratic organization [audience laughter]. Rats! So it didn't get the name he wanted...

Audience member: What did he want?

MM: He never told me. Did he ever tell you? He was very closemouthed about it. Sorry.

Audience member: I recall, Lilli, that you were instrumental in the founding of the *Washington Blade* in the early [inaudible] days.

MM: Nancy Tucker?

LV: Wait a minute. Washington Mattachine was not interested in any kind of socializing and so I actually formed a group of people who wanted to get a newspaper, that we needed a newspaper. And so, there was a young man who said, "How about *The Blade*? How about just naming it *The Blade*?" And we did, and we started, well, Nancy Tucker was definitely part of this, but I...we found that it was very, very important to have these newspapers, and just little ones in the beginning. And we also had a blood drive, would you believe? We went to the Red Cross and we wanted to give something back to the community, back to the general community, and so I'll never forget that. It was at least twice that we did that, we gave blood. I remember how that went and it was one person who was not accepted because of...I forget what was, what medical thing he had that he couldn't give blood. But just nowadays, I have...in this paper, today's or yesterday's paper, said that nowadays, gay men can't give blood now. And I thought, "We did this way, way, way, a long time ago. So, we also wanted to have

a social, a part of, a group where people could just be social and socializing, but that never, that never worked. Eva and I were working on that one.

MM: I see Philip giving me the sign that we need...

Philip Clark: Unfortunately, we are going to have to wrap things up on the evening. I'd really like to thank Lilli Vincenz and Paul Kuntzler for coming and sharing their memories. [Audience applause.] Thanks also to Mark for all of his work moderating the panel this evening. [Audience applause.] They're not going to turn the lights out on us quite yet, so if anyone would like, we do have a 50th anniversary, "Thank You, Mattachine Society of Washington" cake in the other room, if you'd like to help us eat that. And again, thank you very much. Mr. Kuntzler, was there something you wanted to add?

PK: One final thing. Today's *New York Times*, there's a story at the bottom of today's *New York Times*, an obituary on page A23, with Frank Kameny and President Obama's picture...

LV: Mm-hmm, nice picture.

[Audience applause and many voices talking.]

[END OF SIDE TWO]