



Preserving Our Community's History

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PRESS RELEASE

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Rainbow History Project Mourns the Passing of Dr. Franklin Kameny, Pioneering GLBT Civil Rights Leader

Washington, DC – The Rainbow History Project, Washington D.C.'s GLBT historical organization, mourns the loss of GLBT civil rights pioneer Franklin Kameny, who passed away on Tuesday, October 11th at the age of 86.

Fired from his job with the U.S. Army Map Service in 1958 for being gay, Kameny co-founded the Mattachine Society of Washington (MSW) in 1961. MSW had a local and national impact as one of the leading organizations fighting for gay and lesbian civil rights, and Kameny became one of the country's most visible and vocal advocates.

The work of Kameny and the MSW made significant contributions that led to the reversal of the American Psychiatric Association's classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder, the elimination of homosexuality as a bar to federal employment, decriminalization of homosexuality and homosexual practices, an end to police harassment and entrapment of homosexuals in Washington, outreach to clergy and faith communities, and the creation of regional and national organizations for gay rights. In 1965, Kameny and MSW began a series of pickets in Washington and other cities that revolutionized the tactics of gay activism.

Kameny's 1971 campaign for Congress brought further attention to civil rights for homosexuals while also demonstrating the burgeoning political significance of homosexual voters. In his public service on the Human Rights Commission and other roles and in his determinedly public presence, Kameny served as a model of the homosexual citizen's natural involvement and contribution to the greater good of society.

On Thursday, October 13th, the Rainbow History Project will honor Franklin Kameny's life and legacy at a panel discussion celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Mattachine Society of Washington. This panel discussion, originally slated to include Kameny, will be held at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue NW. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with discussion to follow at 7 p.m. This is a free event. RSVP at <http://mswrainbowhistory.eventbrite.com>