



Year Seven

The Rainbow History Project's seventh year was marked by the passing of longtime Board member and supporter Cheryl Spector, expansion of Rainbow History's community and research partnerships, re-examination of its mission, and celebration of our Community Pioneers. Through the year, we continued to benefit from the unstinting support of our members, Brother Help Thyself, the Academy of Washington, the Humanities Council of Washington, DC and other benefactors.

COLLECTIONS. Early in 2007, Rainbow History's Board and its Advisory Board considered its mission to "collect" and the limits on its ability to share collections and archival materials with researchers and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community. A decision to seek a local archival partnership to keep and preserve collections while retaining Rainbow History's rights of access and distribution led to a request for proposals. Following an extended review, the Board voted unanimously in early January 2008 to partner with the Historical Society of Washington in bringing Rainbow History's collections to a wider audience.

PIONEERS. Rainbow History, with the generous support of a grant from the Humanities Council of Washington, DC, expanded its recognition of LGBTQ community pioneers through an exhibit of photo portraits by Board member Patsy Lynch and biographies of the pioneers by Mark Meinke. Following six months of preparation, a public ceremony of recognition was held at Busboys and Poets on September 27th in honor of twenty-eight pioneers. The Community Pioneers exhibit display took recognition of these pioneers beyond the LGBTQ community to a wider audience. In November, the exhibit moved to The Center for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender People (1111 14th St NW), where it continues. The Center and Rainbow History co-sponsored a reception for the Community Pioneers on December 16th.

WALKING TOURS. Rainbow History continued presenting its popular gay history walking tours in 2007 with board members Kim Sescoe, John Olinger, Jeff Donahoe, and Mark Meinke leading tours in Dupont, East Dupont and Capitol Hill neighborhoods. The new East Dupont brochure was published with support from the Dupont Circle Citizens Association (DCCA), who co-sponsored the first walking tour of the area. In addition, we continue to offer tours for special events and groups visiting the Washington area. Our new relationship with DCCA led to our having an information table at the annual Dupont Circle house tour.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN RESEARCH TOUR. In late May, Rainbow History put together four days of panels, speakers and visits in support of a "rolling seminar" on LGBTQ history from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Lilli Vincenz hosted an evening discussion for the students with members of the Mattachine Society of Washington and early Gay Activists Alliance members. Joan E Biren met separately with the students, as did Dr. Franklin E. Kameny. Jessica Xavier led a review of local and national transgender history. This was followed by a panel of African-American leaders and

founders and members of the National Coalition of Black Gays and the DC Coalition. Panelists included ABilly S Jones-Hennin, Buddy Sutson, and Louis Hughes.

CHERYL SPECTOR. Rainbow History and its Board members responded immediately to a fire at Board member Cheryl Spector's home in June, helping to sort through the remains of her personal collection of LGBTQ historical items and documents. Cheryl's role in documenting our local history was underscored by the tragedy of her death from leukemia in early September. Rainbow History participated in memorials to Cheryl and celebrated her on its website. Board members and volunteers assisted Cheryl's family and the Arlington Gay and Lesbian Association in sorting through items in her storage space to identify important historical items in her collection. Rainbow History has received nearly \$2,200 in donations earmarked for preserving her collection and continuing her work.

ANNUAL WASHINGTON, DC HISTORICAL STUDIES CONFERENCE. Board member John Olinger continued to represent Rainbow History on the planning committee for the annual historical studies conference, held this year at the Historical Society of Washington. John also moderated one of the panels during the conference.

COMMITTEE ON LESBIAN & GAY HISTORY (CLGH). Rainbow History was actively involved in the planning for events of CLGH at the annual American Historical Association's January conference in Washington, DC. Rainbow History chair, Mark Meinke, a member of CLGH's board of governors, organized a joint reception with CLGH for historians attending the conference and Community Pioneers. Earline Budd, Divya Guru Rajan, Yassir Islam, and Atul Guru spoke about transgender history and the founding of Khush-DC, the local South Asian LGBTQ group.

WEBSITE. Rainbow History's website continues to grow in both content and use. At the end of 2007 there were over 400 webpages, including multipage Adobe pdf files, on the site. With so many entries, the site is past due for redesign. In the past year, thanks to generous donations from Kay Lahusen and Barbara Gittings, the documentation of the early years of activism has grown tremendously. In addition, we have added more sound clips from the *Friends Radio* archives and more images kindly lent by photographer Patsy Lynch.

Good indicators of website activity are the numbers of visitors to the site and the numbers of pages they have viewed. Over the past four years, visitors to the site have grown by 167%. However, the number of pages viewed has more than tripled, growing by 360%. This suggests that site visitors are accessing more than one page, always a good indicator of site popularity.

The financial report will be presented at the annual meeting in March 2008.