

LGBT Center Central PA History Project



*Discovering stories of
extraordinary lives*

NEWS

Summer 2016

PA Council for Sexual Minorities event highlights contributions of Gov. Shapp

A program to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Pennsylvania Council for Sexual Minorities drew an audience of more than 125 people to the State Museum in Harrisburg on April 12. The event, co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), in collaboration with the LGBT Center of Central PA History Project, highlighted the important contributions of Governor Milton Shapp to LGBT civil rights.

Dr. Anthony Silvestre, former chair of the Pennsylvania Council for Sexual Minorities, spoke about the purpose, organization and accomplishments of the Council with a panel of several former members of the Council, including Samuel Deetz, Jay Snyder, Carol Ranck, Art Duprat, Marilyn Hewitt and Dolly Shuster. Terry Dellmuth, former aid to Governor Shapp, talked about his work in guiding the task force that led up to the creation of the Council. Mark Segal, publisher of the *Philadelphia Gay News* (PGN), talked about how his efforts spurred the creation of the Council. Other speakers including Dr. Rachel Levine, Pennsylvania Physician General, Ted Martin, executive director of Equality PA, and Jason Landau Goodman, executive director of the Pennsylvania Youth Congress discussed current and future LGBT public policy efforts.



Former members of the Council talk about its legacy at the 40th anniversary program in the State Museum auditorium.

The event was followed by a reception, sponsored by PGN, and the opening of a new temporary exhibit. The exhibit, titled *"We're Here: Pioneering LGBT Rights in Pennsylvania"* marks the emergence of the equality movement for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights in the late 1960s and its progress in the commonwealth during the 1970s. Featuring photographs, documents and objects related to this pivotal moment in civil rights history, the exhibit focuses on the partnership between dedicated LGBT activist coalitions and Governor Milton Shapp, who came to office with a unique understanding of the issues of discrimination against minorities, leading to unprecedented executive action in Pennsylvania for LGBT equality. *"We're Here: Pioneering LGBT Rights in Pennsylvania"* runs through October 30. A curator's talk and tour of the exhibit will be held on June 24 at 11:30 AM at the State Museum.

Shapp was also the first governor in the nation to hold an official meeting with LGBT activists (in 1974), issue an executive order banning discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation for state employees (in 1975) and enact a proclamation for a gay pride celebration (in 1976), making him the nation's first "LGBT Equality Governor."



Left photo: Governor Shapp waves goodbye to Mark Segal after the first official meeting ever held in the nation between a governor and an LGBT activist in 1974 (photo from Mark Segal's memoir, "And Then I Danced.") Right photo: Mark Segal at the State Museum on April 12.

The exhibit also commemorates the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Pennsylvania Council for Sexual Minorities. Created by executive order by Governor Milton Shapp in February 1976, the Council is the first governmental body devoted to LGBT civil rights and public policy advocacy in the US. The Council was created with representatives of major state government agencies as well as representatives of the LGBT community from throughout Pennsylvania to discuss and advise state government leaders on LGBT issues affecting public policy through the various agencies and "to recommend ways in which discrimination against sexual minorities can be ended," according to the executive order. The Council was active through the end of Governor Dick Thornburgh's administration, after which it became inactive.

The April 12 program can be viewed at the following links:

Streaming link:

http://www.pacast.com/players/cmsplayerHD.asp?video_filename=13903LGBTDiscussion.m4v

Download link:

http://www.pacast.com/players/download.asp?video_filename=13903LGBTDiscussion.m4v

New traveling exhibit components acquired

Thanks to the generosity of our many contributors, we now have acquired a set of pop-up traveling exhibit components that will be on display at our pride week open house at the LGBT Center in Harrisburg on Thursday July 28 from 6 PM to 8 PM. These components include a graphic backdrop display, vertical banner, display pedestal, two table top glass display cases and LED lighting.

We have already been invited to do an exhibit at Lock Haven University's Library this fall and we will look for additional opportunities to do traveling exhibits at many venues throughout central PA.

Closing in on 100 interviews

We are excited to report that we have completed interviews with 92 narrators and will soon reach 100. We anticipate offering a training workshop for new interviewers and refresher training for previously trained interviewers soon. If you are interested in this training, please send an email to Barry Loveland at history@centralpalgbtcenter.org.

Support our friends

The Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus and the Central PA Womyn's Chorus have been supportive friends to the History Project, welcoming us to be part of their information tables and providing free ad space in concert programs. Please check out their web sites for upcoming concert information and support them in their events.

<http://www.harrisburgmenschorus.org/>

<http://www.cpwchorus.org/>

And don't forget upcoming events at the LGBT Center including 3rd in the Burg at the LGBT Center Gallery every 3rd Friday evening: check out the full calendar of events at www.centralpalgbtcenter.org/

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project

Winner of the 2014 J. Franklin Jameson Award from the Society of American Archivists

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