

# LGBT History Timeline

Adapted from the [Safe Schools Coalition's "A Living Memory LGBT History Timeline"](#) and the United Church of Christ's history.

- 1925** After a year of police raids, New York City's roster of 20 gay and lesbian restaurants and "personality clubs" is reduced to 3.
- 1930** *Encyclopedia of Sexual Knowledge* illustrates first "sex-change" procedures.
- 1935** "Successful" electric shock therapy treatment of homosexuality reported at American Psychological Association meeting.
- 1941** "Transsexuality" first used in reference to homosexuality and bisexuality.
- 1942** Switzerland decriminalizes adult homosexuality (men only; lesbianism wasn't outlawed to begin with).
- 1943** U.S. military bars gays and lesbians from serving in the Armed Forces.
- 1945** The Quaker Emergency Committee of New York City opens the first social welfare agency for gay people, serving young people arrested on same-sex charges.
- 1945** First known female-to-male sex change surgery, on Michael Dillon in Britain.
- 1950** A Senate hearing reveals the majority of State Department dismissals are based on accusations of homosexuality; Senate approves wide-ranging investigation of homosexuals "and other moral perverts" in national government.
- 1952** American Psychiatric Association includes homosexuality under "sociopathic personality disturbance" in its first official list of mental disorders.
- Immigrants banned from U.S. if they have "psychopathic personality," including homosexuality.
- 1953** Twenty-nine out of 30 men arrested during an 8 day period, charged with engaging in homosexual acts in the Atlanta public library restroom, lost their jobs after newspapers printed their names and addresses at least 6 times.
- President Dwight D. Eisenhower orders dismissal of all federal employees guilty of "sexual perversion".
- Kinsey report on women's sexuality, including lesbian behavior, released.



**1954** Dr. Evelyn Hooker presents a study showing gay men are as well adjusted as straight men, at an American Psychological Association meeting.

**1955** In the wake of the murder of a boy, 29 Sioux City, Iowa men suspected of homosexuality are committed to mental asylums as a preventive measure.

**1957** “Transsexual” coined by Harry Benjamin.

American Civil Liberties Union approves a policy statement saying laws against sodomy and federal restrictions on employment of lesbians and gay men are constitutional.

**1960** First U.S. public gathering of lesbians, at San Francisco’s Daughters of Bilitis national convention.

**1961** First openly gay person runs for U.S. public office (drag queen Jose Sarria, running for San Francisco city supervisor).

First use of the term “homosexual” in a feature film shown in the US (British movie “Victim”); motion picture code seal of approval is denied.

**1962** Illinois becomes first state to make consensual same-sex acts legal.

First known positive radio program about homosexuality (Randy Wicker and 7 gay people, on WBAI in New York City).

**1963** American Civil Liberties Union opposes government interference in the private sex lives of consenting adults.

**1964** “Life” magazine runs positive cover story on “Homosexuality in America”.

The first openly gay person appears on national television (Randy Wicker, on “The Les Crane Show”).

Series of public demonstrations held in Washington, D.C. by the East Coast Homophile.

Organizations to protest U.S. government discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

**1966** “Lesbian” heard for the first time in a Hollywood movie (“The Group”).

First U.S. gay community center opens, in San Francisco, led by The Society for Individual Rights.

Harry Benjamin publishes *The Transsexual Phenomenon*

First transgender public uprising at San Francisco’s Compton’s Cafeteria



**1967** England and Wales legalize male homosexuality.

New York and New Jersey decide that state liquor commissions can no longer forbid bars from serving gay men and lesbians.

First gay bookstore in the U.S. opens: Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop.

“John” turned into “Joan” at John Hopkins Hospital after a circumcision accident; published case widely impacts gender theory.

**1968** The American Psychiatric Association moves homosexuality from “sociopathic” category to “sexual deviation”.

Bi Alliance begins at the University of Minnesota.

**1969** Betty Friedan warns feminist movement of the “lavender menace” within its ranks.

Stonewall Riots

National Institute of Mental Health study chaired by Dr. Evelyn Hooker urges decriminalization of private sex acts between consenting adults.

The Council for Christian Social Action of the United Church of Christ adopted the "[Resolution on Homosexuals and the Law](#)." This resolution declared its opposition to all laws which make private homosexual relations between consenting adults a crime and thus urges their repeal; and encourages the UCC Conferences, Associations, and local churches to hold seminars, consultations, conferences, etc. for honest and open discussion of the nature of homosexuality in our society.

**1970** Gay “zaps” begin; first against New York City Mayor John Lindsay.

Unitarian Universalist Association becomes first U.S. mainstream religious group to recognize LGB clergy and laity within its ranks and to demand an end to anti-gay discrimination.

The Vatican issues a statement reiterating that homosexuality is a moral aberration.

**1972** “Ithaca Statement on Bisexuality,” by the Quaker Committee of Friends on Bisexuality, is published in “The Advocate”; National Bisexual Liberation Group forms in New York.

East Lansing, Michigan, becomes first city to ban anti-gay bias in city hiring.

The Rev. William R. Johnson became the first openly gay minister to be ordained in the United Church of Christ.



First time a U.S. national political convention (the Democrats) addressed by gay leaders.

**1973** American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses.

U.S. Supreme Court refuses to hear case on the firing of an Oregon teacher for lesbianism.

Lesbian Herstory Archives founded.

The Executive Council of the UCC adopted "[Human Sexuality and Ordination](#)," which recommended that congregations, Associations and Conferences initiate programs of study and dialogue with regard to the implications (meanings) of human sexuality, and the relationship between ordination and human sexuality.

**1974** First state-level openly gay person elected: Elaine Noble of Massachusetts.

Ohio Supreme Court rules that even though homosexuality is legal, the state can refuse to incorporate a gay organization because "the promotion of homosexuality as a valid life style is contrary to the public policy of the state."

AT&T becomes first major American corporation to agree to an equal opportunity policy for lesbians.

"Time" and "Newsweek" run "bisexual chic" articles.

**1975** U.S. Civil Service Commission stops banning gay men and lesbians from federal jobs.

Footballer David Kopay is first major sports star to come out (voluntarily) publicly.

The 10<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed the "[Resolution on Human Sexuality and the Needs of Gay and Bisexual Persons](#)."

The 10<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC also passed the "[A Pronouncement: Civil Liberties without Discrimination Related to Affectional or Sexual Preference](#)" resolution.

**1976** First openly gay police officer hired (by San Francisco).

*Tales of the City* published by the "San Francisco Chronicle," includes LGB and T characters.

"Doonesbury" is the first mainstream comic strip to feature a gay male character.



Lynn Ransom of California is one of the first openly lesbian mothers to win custody of her children in court.

Renee Richards outed as MTF and barred from a women's tennis tournament.

San Francisco Bisexual Center opens.

**1977** The Rev. Anne Holmes became the first openly lesbian minister to be ordained in the United Church of Christ.

Anita Bryant and Save Our Children succeed in repealing Miami law against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

80% of surveyed Oregon doctors say they would refuse to treat a known homosexual.

Arkansas recriminalizes gay sex after two years without such a law.

Florida forbids adoption by gays and lesbians.

The 11<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed the "[Recommendations in Regard to the Human Sexuality Study](#)."

The 11<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC also passed the "[Resolution Deploring the Violation of Civil Rights of Gay and Bisexual Persons](#)."

**1979** First openly gay judge appointed (Los Angeles, CA).

**1980** First Harry Benjamin Standards produced for therapists working with transgender persons.

BBC broadcasts "A Change of Sex" about an MTF.

Aaron Fricke takes Paul Guilbert to his high school prom after winning a lawsuit against the school.

Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence debuts.

**1980 & 1981** The Executive Council of the UCC adopted the "[Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Revision](#)", where it affirmed its moral and legal commitment to support and implement a program of Equal Employment Opportunity.

**1981** First reported cases of what came to be called AIDS.

*The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* published.

**1982** Wisconsin enacts first statewide gay civil rights legislation.



Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) founded.

Gay Men's Health Crisis formed.

**1983** Congressman Gerry Studds comes out; first federal official to come out as gay while in office.

The 14<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed these resolutions:

- "[Report of the Task Force for the Study of Human Sexuality](#)." This resolution urged that attention and support be given to the development of proposals and programs to end sexual violence against men, women and children, regardless of their sexual orientation.
- "[Resolution Recommending Inclusiveness on Association Church and Ministry Committees within the United Church of Christ](#)."
- "[Resolution in Response to the Concerns of Same-gender Oriented Persons and their Families within the United Church of Christ](#)."
- "[Resolution on the Institutionalized Homophobia within the United Church of Christ](#)."

**1984** FBI releases 7,500 pages of information gathered over 30 years of watching gay groups.

Martina Navratilova's female lover publicly sits in her "box" at Wimbledon and the French Open.

Berkeley (CA) becomes first U.S. city to extend domestic partnership benefits to lesbian and gay employees.

San Francisco Department of Public Health closes the city's bathhouses.

**1985** NAMES Project memorial quilt for AIDS victims launched.

First school for openly lesbian and gay teenagers opens in New York City (Harvey Milk School).

Rock Hudson comes out, admits he has AIDS.

The 15<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed the "[Resolution Calling on United Church of Christ Congregations to Declare Themselves Open and Affirming](#)." This resolution encourages a policy on nondiscrimination in employment, volunteer service and membership policies with regard to sexual orientation; encourages the congregations of the United Church of Christ to adopt a nondiscrimination policy and a Covenant of Openness and Affirmation of persons of lesbian, gay and bisexual orientation within the community of faith.



**1986** U.S. Supreme Court rejects challenge to state sodomy laws.

**1987** Second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights; Names Project AIDS Memorial.

What becomes BiNet USA formed.

ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) formed.

The 16<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed the "[Resolution on the Right to Privacy](#)." This resolution urges individuals, congregations, Associations and Conferences to work for repeal of current laws which make private consensual sexual behavior a crime.

**1988** National Coming Out Day launched.

**1989** Jazz musician Billy Tipton dies and is revealed to be FTM.

First Lambda Literary Awards given.

The 17<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed the "[Resolution Deploring Violence against Lesbian and Gay People](#)."

**1990** First National Bisexual Conference held in San Francisco.

Federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act passed; first law extending federal recognition of gay men and lesbians.

U.S. restrictions against gay immigrants lifted.

**1991** First Black Lesbian and Gay Pride celebration held in Washington, D.C.

Amnesty International decides to work on behalf of those imprisoned for consensual same-sex acts.

Karen Thompson named Sharon Kowalski's legal guardian after an eight-year fight.

The 18<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed the "[Resolution on Virginia Privacy Laws](#)". This resolution urged the decriminalization of private and non-commercial sexual activity between consenting adults.

The 18<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC also passed the "[Resolution on Affirming Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Persons and their Ministries](#)."

**1992** World Health Organization removes homosexuality from its classification of illnesses.



Press for Change founded in Britain to work for trans people's equal rights.

Colorado voters ban state and municipal rights laws for lesbians and gay men.

**1993** Intersex Society of North America founded.

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" U.S. military policy adopted.

Brandon Teena and two SOFFAs murdered in Nebraska.

March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation held.

The 19<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed the "[Resolution Calling on the Church for Greater Leadership to End Discrimination against Gays and Lesbians](#)".

The 19<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC also passed the "[A Call to End the Ban against Gays and Lesbians in the Military](#)" resolution.

**1994** Olympic gold winner swimmer Greg Louganis comes out.

At U.S. insistence, United Nations suspends observer status of the International Lesbian and Gay Association.

**1995** First U.S. conference for FTMs.

President Clinton names the first-ever White House liaison to the gay and lesbian communities.

Million Man March has no openly gay speakers.

**1996** Congress passes Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), forbidding federal recognition of (and benefits for) married same-sex couples.

The Directorate of the Office of Church in Society of the UCC voted for "[Equal Marriage Rights for Same-sex Couples](#)."

The Board of Directors of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries of the UCC voted for "[Equal Marriage Rights for Same Gender Couples](#)."

**1997** South Africa becomes the first country to enact a constitutional ban outlawing sexual orientation discrimination.

"Rolling Stones" article details failure of John Money's John/Joan case from the 1960s.

The 21<sup>st</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed the "[Fidelity and Integrity in all Covenanted Relationships](#)" resolution.





**1998** Matthew Shepard murdered in Wyoming.  
First open lesbian elected to federal legislative office (Tammy Baldwin).

The Executive Council of the UCC called for the "[Passage of Hate Crimes Legislation](#)". In this, they called for immediate passage of the Federal Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1998 and urged all United Church of Christ members to communicate support for this legislation to their congressional representatives.

**1999** Britain bans discrimination against transgender people.

Texas post-op MTF Christine Littleton ruled legally male and not the legal widow of her husband.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed the "[Prevention of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth Suicide](#)" resolution.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> General Synod of the UCC also passed the "[Affirming and Strengthening Marriage](#)" resolution. This resolution affirms that the standard for sexual and relational behavior for members of the United Church of Christ is fidelity and integrity in marriage and other covenanted relationships, in singleness and in all relationships of life.

**2000** British ban against lesbians and gay men serving in the military is lifted.

Britain outlaws discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

Vermont offers civil unions to same-sex couples.

**2002** MTF teenager Gwen Araujo murdered by sex partners, in California.

**2003** Massachusetts Supreme Court rules it is unconstitutional to deny marriage to gay and lesbians.

U.S. Supreme Court strikes down remaining state sodomy laws.

The 24<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC passed the "[Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender People within the United Church of Christ and Supporting their Civil and Human Rights](#)" resolution.

The 24<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC also passed the "[Reaffirming the United Church of Christ's Denouncement of Violence Against Lesbian and Gay People and Calling for the Inclusion of Transgender people within that Anti-violence Statement](#)" resolution.

The 24<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the UCC also passed "[The United Church of Christ and the Boy Scouts of America](#)" resolution. This resolution encouraged the Collegium and other settings of the church to urge the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America to



adopt a membership policy that does not discriminate based on sexual orientation, and that allows for the reactivation of membership of persons who were previously excluded solely on that basis.

**2004** In the United Kingdom, transgender people are allowed to change the gender on their birth certificates.

Massachusetts was the first state to legalize same-sex marriage.

The Executive Council of the UCC released a "[Call to Action and Invitation to Dialogue on Marriage](#)" during their April meeting.

**2005** New Zealand first country to outlaw employment discrimination and hate crimes on the basis of gender identity.

"[Equal Marriage Rights for All](#)" resolution passed by the 25th General Synod of the UCC.

**2006** South Africa begins recognizing gay marriages.

Bishop Ronald Warren of the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) filed formal charges against ELCA pastor, Rev. Bradley Schmeling, because of his committed relationship with Rev. Darin Easler.

**2007** House of Representatives passed The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (also known as the Matthew Shepard Act).

In a bipartisan vote of 60 to 39 the Senate accepted cloture which ended debate on the companion bill, the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Act, and then moved to approve it by a voice vote -- attaching it as an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2008 Department of Defense Authorization bill.

The US House decided to divide ENDA into two pieces of legislation – one focusing on sexual orientation and the other on gender identity.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed its own version of ENDA moving forward legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, but not gender identity and expression.

**2008** 15-year-old Lawrence King was shot and killed, a day after a verbal exchange with 14-year-old Brandon McInerney and his friends. King, an eighth-grader who identified as gay and occasionally wore makeup, high heels and other feminine attire to E. O. Green Junior High School, was shot in the head while in class at school.

The Equal Housing and Employment Act (EHEA) was introduced into both chambers of the Ohio Legislature (SB 305 and HB 402) with bi-partisan support.



Rally at National Center for Transgender Equality Lobby Day to end transgender discrimination.

The [UCC Florida Conference](#) passed a resolution at its annual meeting in opposition to a proposed constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

California Supreme Court overturns ban on same-sex marriage; gay-marriage opponents bid to get proposed amendment on ballot.

**2009** The General Synod of the UCC has joined an [Amicus Curiae](#) brief (friend of the court brief) with both California-Nevada Conferences, the California Council of Churches and others in support of the petitioners claiming that Prop 8 should be ruled invalid.

The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act / Matthew Shepard Act (LLEHCPA) was introduced in the 111th Congress by Representatives John Conyers (D-MI) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) in the House, and the Matthew Shepard Act was introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) in the Senate.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) was introduced in the 111th Congress by Representatives Barney Frank (D-MA) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) in the House with 117 original co-sponsors.

"[Affirming Diversity/Multi-Cultural Education in the Public Schools](#)" resolution passed by the 27th General Synod of the UCC. This resolution urges churches to assist public school efforts to protect children and help them understand people of other races and sexual orientation.

The House of Representatives passed LLEHCPA (H.R. 1913) by a vote of 249-175.

Representative Ellen Tauscher (D-CA) introduced HR 1283, or the Military Readiness Enhancement Act (MREA).

A fully inclusive House version of the ENDA ([H.R. 3017](#)) was introduced by Rep. Barney Frank on, with 152 co-sponsors.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts sued the US government over the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which was enacted in 1996.

A fully inclusive version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) was introduced in the Senate with bipartisan support. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon), joined by Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), introduced the bill, which would ban employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.



**2010** In Washington, D.C., Mayor Adrian Fenty signed into law the [Religious Freedom & Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009](#), and marriage licenses became available on March 3, 2010. This amendment act allows same-sex couples to marry in the city itself.

Maryland's Attorney General declared that although Maryland does not issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, the state is able to provide marriage rights and benefits to same-sex couples married outside of Maryland.

The UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns expanded its criteria for new Open and Affirming (ONA) Statements to include gender identity and gender expression effective July 14, 2010.

Please edit: 1972 The Rev. William R. Johnson became the first openly gay minister to be ordained in the United Church of Christ.

