
**R A I N B O W
H I S T O R Y
P R O J E C T**

RAINBOWHISTORY.ORG



Celebrating Our 20th Year in 2020

2019 Annual Report

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Rainbow History Project (RHP) is to collect, preserve, and promote an active knowledge of the history, arts, and culture of metropolitan Washington DC's diverse LGBTQ+ communities. That can be accomplished only if our collection, volunteer corps, and programming reflect and represent the full diversity of those communities and their allies. It is therefore our fundamental policy to seek out the active participation and involvement of individuals of all backgrounds -- particularly those from under-represented groups -- who agree with and are committed to carrying out the goals of our organization.

OUR HISTORY

Frustrated by failed attempts to identify archives and sources of information on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender history in metropolitan Washington DC, Mark Meinke placed a notice in the Washington Blade for community discussion about the problem. On November 4, 2000 Charles Rose, Bruce Pennington, Jose Gutierrez, and James Crutchfield met with Meinke at the CyberStop Cafe, formerly at 1534 17th Street NW. The outcome of the discussions was to create RHP which would work to preserve our community's memories.

OUR WORK

Since our founding 20 years ago, we have recorded countless oral histories and amassed a collection of documents, manuscripts, and photographs for permanent storage at the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. Our main projects include: oral history interviews, walking tours, panel presentations, gathering materials about our history, recognizing our community pioneers, and research assistance.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RHP's activities are planned and organized by an executive board of directors. Board members are elected for two year terms. Elections are held at the Rainbow History Project's annual meeting. All dues-paying members are eligible to vote and to be elected to the Board. Current Board members are:

Rob Berger, Board Chair

Richard Haight Corporate Secretary

Jeff Gruber Treasurer

Cassandra Ake

Nathan Avant

Jeff Donahoe

Delan Ellington

Chuck Goldfarb

Jamal Gordon

Dane Ray

Glenn C Reimer

Bryan Schwartz

Vincent E. Slatt

Robert Michael Vanzant

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RHP CELEBRATES PRIDE

In 2019, RHP continued sharing its collection at various pride events in the Washington DC area under the leadership of Board Members Jeff Gruber and Nathan Avant. Volunteers for RHP graciously donated their time to promote our organization at Trans Pride, Black Pride, Youth Pride, and Capitol Pride. During these events, RHP shared items from its collection and gathered contact information with consent from people who are interested in supporting our organization. Attending these festivals gives RHP the opportunity to find folks of all stripes who share a common goal of collecting, preserving, and promoting the history of DMV's sexually diverse community.

RHP also participated in various other Pride Month events. RHP Board Member Delan Ellington staffed at table at the First Friday monthly arts walk at the Heurich House Museum and Board Chair Rob Berger was the speaker for a reception at the Clifford Chance law firm for the firm's Pride Month art exhibit.

RHP HONORS OUR VOLUNTEERS

In 2019, RHP held two volunteer appreciation and recruitment events at the DC Center to say thanks to our many volunteers, reconnect, and recruit new volunteers. RHP also nominated our super-volunteer, Donald Burch III, for the Capital Pride Bill Miles award for volunteer services and Donald was honored with this award at Capital Pride.

RHP PROMOTES OUR STORIES

Throughout the year, RHP participates in a variety of events:

RHP co-sponsored an event to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising with RHP Board Member Vincent Slatt serving as the moderator.

RHP Board member Robert Michael Vanzant spoke to the Seniors Group at the LGBT Community Center about his life in DC from his arrival in DC from the rural South in 1974 until 1991. Former RHP Chair Philip Clark also spoke to the Seniors Group at the DC Center on DC LGBT history.

RHP Board Members Cassandra Ake, Chuck Goldfarb, and Jeff Donahoe staffed a table at the Capital Area Chamber of Commerce annual networking event.

RHP Board Members Rob Berger and Delan Ellington staffed a table at the annual D.C. History Conference "Communities & Characters" at the University of the District of Columbia.

RHP Board Member Jeff Donahoe staffed a table at an event to celebrate Humanities DC's 40th anniversary and shared information about a Humanities DC grant that helped preserve the photographs in the Gertscehn collection.

RHP Board Member and Archives Chair Vincent Slatt participated in an orientation session for the public to learn about the LGBTQ+ Collections and Resources in the collection of the Historical Society of Washington DC.

RHP celebrated LGBT History Month by sending five weekly emails to the RHP email list to celebrate our Community Pioneers and sharing this same information on our social media accounts.

RHP Board Member Rob Berger staffed a table at a U Street History event - Remembering You Community Archiving Initiative.

RHP IS IN THE NEWS

WUSA-TV Channel 9 News Reporter John Henry, did a story on the rise and fall of Dupont Circle as a gay neighborhood with the assistance of RHP, Former RHP Chair Philip Clark and RHP Community Pioneer Craig Howell. You can find the story [here](#). Two Washington Post articles mentioned RHP and our work. The Post mentioned RHP walking tours in a Pride Month article [here](#). The Post mentioned RHP in article about Community Pioneer Eva Freund [here](#).

RHP PRESERVES OUR PHOTOS AND RECORDS

In 2019 we saw a major achievement in the reopening of the Historical Society of Washington DC. After many months of renovations, it has been re-branded the DC History Center and is once again open to researchers. No new collections were donated to RHP this past year, although conversations with a few prominent potential donors are ongoing. Work on the Cheryl Spector collection under the supervision of RHP Board Members Vincent Slatt and Nathan Avant has begun with a plan to digitize her films. With the help of several volunteers, 980 film boxes have been reviewed and a master list has been created to aid in coordinating the workflow. This is a massive project that will take several years of work to begin the long process to preserve her collection of slides, photos and movies and make them accessible.

RHP COLLECTS OUR ORAL HISTORIES

In 2019, RHP began planning for a major new project to collect and preserve the story of the ClubHouse. The ClubHouse, a DC after hours club from 1975-1990 catered mostly to a Black queer clientele. It was known internationally for its sound system, had legendary DJ's, and helped introduce house music to DC. The ClubHouse hosted the Children's Hour and many political events and was an important incubator for AIDS activism. It was the first home for Us Helping Us - an organization offering support to Black men living with HIV/AIDS, and hosted the first AIDS Forum for Black and Third Worlds Gays. As a part of this project, RHP will collect at least 15 audio oral histories and up to five videotaped oral histories from people associated with the ClubHouse and its amazing story. RHP Board Member Bryan Schwartz led

efforts to apply for a BHT Foundation grant to underwrite the costs of collecting video oral histories.

Additionally, under the leadership of oral history leaders Jeff Donahoe and Bob Dardano, volunteers collected about a dozen new oral histories on topics including the history of Whitman-Walker Clinic, the founding and early years of Adventuring, and the Cinema Follies.

RHP ADDS NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND A NEW CHAIR

In 2019, RHP said goodbye to RHP Board members Eric Gonzaba, Esther Hidalgo and Kate Ruane. We thank them for their dedication and many hours of service. To expand our Board and increase our Board diversity, we conducted a public call for new Board Members and added four new Board Members - Delan Ellington, Dane Ray, Jamal Gordon, and Glenn C Reimer. After presiding as the Chair and devoting countless hours leading RHP for six years, Chuck Goldfarb stepped down as Chair and continues his valued service to RHP on the Board.

RHP CONNECTS THE COMMUNITY WITH WALKING TOURS

RHP continues to offer walking tours of two historic DC LGBT historic neighborhoods, Capitol Hill and Dupont Circle. In 2019, more than 100 locals and visitors learned the role these neighborhoods played in creating social and cultural life in DC over the decades. Board Member Jeff Donahoe conducted four Dupont Circle walking tours, and former RHP Chair Philip Clark led three well-attended Capitol Hill walking tours, including two in September as a part of the annual WalkingTown DC events. A highlight of the year was a Dupont tour for more than 20 attendees of an international professional conference. The tour ended at Annie's Paramount Steakhouse, where an Annie's staff member shared stories about the restaurant's important role in the DC gay community.

In 2019, RHP assisted a seminar class at the University of the District of Columbia as they developed a historic LGBT walking tour as a class capstone project. RHP's Jeff Donahoe spoke with the class of about six students and discussed readings with them, took them on a Dupont Circle tour, and attended the tour they created of LBGT landmarks in Bloomingdale and Columbia Heights.

RHP RAISES FUNDS TO PRESERVE OUR HISTORY

2019 was a great year for the RHP fundraising committee, led by Board Member Bryan Schwartz. Through the work of the committee, donations can be made by check, by PayPal (via www.rainbowhistory.org) or by Venmo (@Rainbow-HistoryProject). In May the committee initiated efforts to purchase of a pop-up banner and stickers featuring RHP's new logo. These important additions to our "event toolkit," were purchased with donor funds and will be used to promote organization and its activities at future public events. The committee also draft a grant application to the BHT Foundation focused on collecting oral histories for the Clubhouse project. A \$1,610 grant was awarded in January 2020. The committee also created a new palm card outlining RHP's various activities and volunteer opportunities distribution at public events. If

you are interested in assisting with grants and/or other fundraising related duties, please contact Bryan Schwartz (bschwartz9@gmail.com).

RHP ASSISTS RESEARCHERS

RHP continued to help researchers find sources both within the RHP collection and outside the collection. We also gave various organizations permission to use photos for which we hold the intellectual property rights. Our assistance involved working with groups ranging from the Historical Society of Washington to CNN Digital Productions to individual researchers.



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