A QUEER HISTORY OF DALLAS: THE FORMATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND INTEGRATION OF BIG D'S LGBT COMMUNITY, 1965-2005

by

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by

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The University of Texas at Dallas, 2019

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A Queer History of Dallas contributes to the historiography on LGBT communities by focusing on a community for which very little history has been written. It shows how the organizations that queer people in Dallas founded provided them with a sense of community. This organizational history demonstrates that queer men and women in Dallas were adept at forming social, religious, political and cultural organizations. In addition to being skilled at creating vital community-based institutions, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) women and men proved effective at modifying those organizations when it was necessary to do so. Since queer people in Dallas were efficient at forming and maintaining community-based organizations, several of them endured for decades. By 2005 these decades-long organizations included the Cathedral of Hope (CoH), Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance (DGLA), and Turtle Creek Chorale (TCC). This dissertation not only demonstrates how the organizations that LGBT people formed in Dallas brought together a sizeable number of men and women linked by their group identity as queer people, but it also shows how LGBT women and men carved out a geographic community for themselves in the Dallas neighborhood of Oak Lawn. Queer men and women faced discrimination when they began to move to the area in the early 1970s. Even though LGBT people experienced resistance to their

congregating in Oak Lawn, they continued to move to the neighborhood in large numbers. Since so many queer people inhabited Oak Lawn, by 2000 its zip code contained the highest number of same-sex households of any in the state of Texas. In addition, this project shows the important part that religion played in Dallas' queer community. Progressive ministers, both straight and gay, played a vital role in helping form a visible LGBT community in Dallas. From the mid-1960s, when four straight ministers joined the first gay social organization in Dallas called the Circle of Friends (COF), to 2005 when the Reverend Dr. Jo Hudson was elected the first female pastor of the CoH, religious leaders played a significant part in the life of Dallas' queer community.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ACT UP	AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APA	American Psychiatric Association
ARC	AIDS Related Complex
ASD	AIDS Services of Dallas
AZT	azidothymidine
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CoH	Cathedral of Hope
COF	Circle of Friends
CRH	Council on Religion and the Homosexual
DGA	Dallas Gay Alliance
DGLA	Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance
DGPC	Dallas Gay Political Caucus
DISD	Dallas Independent School District
DMA	Dallas Museum of Art
DOB	Daughters of Bilitis
DPD	Dallas Police Department
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FDA	Food and Drug Administration

GLVF	Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund
GOOD	Gay Organization of Dallas
GOP	Grand Old Party
HHS	Health and Human Services
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KS	Kaposi's sarcoma
MCC	Metropolitan Community Church
MCCD	Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas
NACHO	North American Conference of Homophile Organizations
NGTF	National Gay Task Force
NOW	National Organization for Women
NTSU	North Texas State University
OLCC	Oak Lawn Counseling Center
PWA	Persons with AIDS
PWAC	People with AIDS Coalition
PWACD	People with AIDS Coalition of Dallas
SBC	Southern Baptist Convention
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SIR	Society for Individual Rights
SMU	Southern Methodist University
STD	sexually transmitted disease
TCC	Turtle Creek Chorale

TCU	Texas Christian University
UCC	United Church of Christ
UFMCC	Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches
UNT	University of North Texas
USO	United Service Organizations

INTRODUCTION

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community in Dallas is a sizable one. While there have been histories written on LGBT communities in cities such as New York, San Francisco and Philadelphia, surprisingly the story of the LGBT community in Dallas has never been told. The LGBT population in Dallas has a history that is just as compelling as any of those located on the East and West coasts of the United States. Beginning in the 1960s, the Dallas LGBT community underwent many significant changes that ultimately led to its integration and acceptance into the broader Dallas community. It even scored a major legal victory just as the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) crisis hit the United States in the early 1980s. In addition to striving for social and political integration, LGBT women and men in Dallas developed a distinct and identifiable community for themselves in the Oak Lawn neighborhood.

There have been several histories written about the city of Dallas in the past two decades; professional historians authored five of these books and a Dallas journalist wrote one..[1] Taken as a whole, these histories discuss Dallas as a city in which business has always been important. Each book explains how the Dallas business ethic intersected with politics and the city's power structure, as well as race relations. Yet in spite of these books, it is clear that the city remains an understudied historical subject, especially when one considers its age and size.

[1] Darwin Payne, *Big D: Triumph and Troubles of an American Supercity in the 20th Century* (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 1994); Patricia Evridge Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996); Michael Phillips, *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006); Harvey J. Graff, *The Dallas Myth: The Making and Unmaking of an American City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Edward H. Miller, *Nut Country: Right-Wing Dallas and the Birth of the Southern Strategy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015); Jim Schutze, *The Accommodation: The Politics of Race in an American City* (Secaucus: Citadel Press, 1986).

My dissertation makes an original contribution to the existing historiography on the city of Dallas by focusing on a segment of the population omitted from the above studies—LGBT people. *A Queer History of Dallas* is an organizational history that shows how organizations founded by queer people in Dallas provided them with a sense of community. This aspect of *A Queer History of Dallas* is similar to John D' Emilio's *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* and Marcia Gallo's *Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Rise of the Lesbian Rights Movement*. However, the main trait that differentiates *A Queer History of Dallas* from Gallo and D' Emilio's work, is that it focuses solely on Dallas' queer community and its organizations, while D' Emilio and Gallo cover lesbian and gay organizations across the United States.

My dissertation also contributes to the historiography on LGBT communities in the South. Although there are not many scholarly gay histories set in the southern region of the United States in the post-World War II period, there are some notable ones. One is *Lesbian and Gay Memphis: Building Communities behind the Magnolia Curtain* by Daneel Buring which explores the topics of class, race, and sexuality from World War II to 1990. *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* by John Howard is set in the Deep South (Mississippi), and is largely a rural story focusing on 1945-1985. Even though *A Queer History of Dallas* shares obvious traits with Buring and Howard's books in that it is a queer history situated in the South, there are certain elements that make *A Queer History of Dallas* quite different from the two aforementioned gay southern histories. For example, the majority of *Men Like That* occurs in a rural setting. *A Queer History of Dallas* is set in a large southern city. *Men Like That* devotes a good amount of time to documenting sexual encounters between men. Some of those encounters are explicit. *A Queer History of Dallas*

does not cover as many sexual encounters between people of the same sex. Another major difference between *A Queer History of Dallas* and *Men Like That* is that Howard focuses solely on men within the pages of his history, while *A Queer History of Dallas* expends a significant amount of time on lesbians. Finally, *Men Like That* concludes before the AIDS crisis takes hold in Mississippi. *A Queer History of Dallas* thoroughly examines the affect that AIDS had on Dallas' LGBT community in the 1980s and 1990s. [2]

Even though *Lesbian and Gay Memphis* is set in a southern city, Dallas is a much larger and cosmopolitan city than Memphis. Both of the histories include the element of religious fundamentalism. Even though religion is featured in *Lesbian and Gay Memphis*, religious leaders did not play a significant role in building a visible LGBT community in Memphis as they did in Dallas. *Lesbian and Gay Memphis* devotes an ample amount of space to lesbians within its pages just as *A Queer History of Dallas* does. Since *Lesbian and Gay Memphis* ends at the height of the AIDS crisis in 1990 and *A Queer History of Dallas* concludes well after effective AIDS medications were discovered in the mid-1990s, readers witness how LGBT people in Dallas came through the AIDS crisis, unlike in *Lesbian and Gay Memphis*.

Welcome to Fairyland: Queer Miami before 1940 by Julio Capó, Jr is another recent gay southern history worth mentioning, even though it covers the pre-World War II period. This engrossing narrative explores Miami during the first four decades of the Jim Crow era. Capó paints a fascinating picture of the city as a hedonistic tourist destination for white people. Even though *Welcome to Fairyland* thoroughly documents the various exploits of well-to-do tourists, it is not

[2] Daneel Buring, *Lesbain and Gay Memphis: Building Communities behind the Magnolia Curtain* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997); John Howard, *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

only a book about boosters and wealthy, white individuals seeking pleasure. It is also a story about the people of color who helped build *Fairyland*, and who worked in a variety of ways to make Miami a desirable place to visit prior to the Second World War. In addition, *Welcome to Fairlyland* is also a transnational work. Since Miami is located in southern Florida, individuals from the United States easily and often mingled with people from the Caribbean.. Miami provided Capó with the opportunity to examine race, class and sexuality in a new and fascinating way in *Welcome to Fairyland*. [3]

There are several notable LGBT community histories that focus on the East and West coasts of the United States. Even though *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* by George Chauncey is set in the period prior to World War II, it is worth discussing the book because it is an important gay community history. In *Gay New York* Chauncey shows how a vibrant gay community formed in New York City at the turn of the twentieth century, as well as how it thrived as the twentieth century progressed. Within the community that Chauncey presents, working- and middle-class gay men developed creative ways to categorize themselves and the other men who inhabited their community. This labeling of individuals within the gay community influenced the kinds of sexual relationships which developed, as well as other interactions these men had with each other. *Gay New York* shows how gay men socialized at bars, bathhouses and drag balls. This history also demonstrates how Greenwich Village and Harlem became gay enclaves in the early twentieth century. *Gay New York*

[3] Julio Cápo, Jr., *Welcome to Fairlyland: Queer Miami before 1940* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

not only shows that gay men were visible in New York City before the Second World War, but also demonstrates how they did not live sad lives isolated from each other[4] .

Marc Stein's book *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972* (2000), is another community history set on the East coast. It is different from *Gay New York* in that it devotes a good amount of space to lesbians. In addition to including gay women, *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves* also spends time on gay people of color. Since this history roughly covers the same time frame as *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, it focuses on some of the same early gay rights leaders that D' Emilio identifies because some of these early homophile and gay rights leaders were from or based in Philadelphia[5] .

A notable history set on the West coast takes a different approach to a city that is known for having a large gay population. Nan Alamilla Boyd's *Wide Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* (2003), presents the history of queer San Francisco from the turn of the twentieth century through 1965. Boyd examines a number of homophile organizations that were created in the post-World War II era in San Francisco. In addition, she demonstrates that gay bars in San Francisco were important to early gay political activism. Boyd also shows how gay bars were vital to the formation of San Francisco's queer community. However, even though Dallas had gay bars that existed as far back as the 1940s, they did not play a significant role in the formation of Dallas' queer community. This is likely because Dallas was more repressive than San Francisco with regard to gay men and lesbians from the 1940s through the 1960s. Given the reality

[4] George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

[5] Marc Stein, *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

for gay people in Dallas during that time, their community did not form around gay bars even though queer people frequented such establishments. [6]

Finally, historian Timothy Stewart-Winter sets his history of queer people in the Midwest in the post-World War II period. *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* begins in the 1950s and concludes in the early part of the twenty-first century. Like *Queer Clout*, *A Queer History of Dallas* concentrates on a major American city that is not located on the East or West coasts of the United States. Both works also portray LGBT people as highly politically motivated. Yet *Queer Clout* differs from *A Queer History of Dallas* in that more black gay activists worked with white activists in Chicago than they did in Dallas in the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, even though Stewart-Winter focuses on religion in *Queer Clout* it played a much bigger role in the history of Dallas' LGBT community.[7]

A Queer History of Dallas makes a significant historiographical contribution by showing how straight and gay ministers played an important role in helping to form a visible queer community in Dallas. In addition to demonstrating the contribution that religious figures made to the formation of Dallas' LGBT community, *A Queer History of Dallas* illustrates the important role the Cathedral of Hope played within Dallas' queer community since 1970. Historian John D' Emilio has noted there are very few LGBT histories that deal with religion. He calls for more of them for two reasons: we need a more complete history of the communities and we need to counter the conception of homosexuality as a sin. The role of the church is typically associated with the

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6 Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

7 Timothy Stewart-Winter, *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

African-American civil rights movement, but it played an important role in the gay civil rights movement as well.[8]

Even though *A Queer History of Dallas* is an organizational history, more than anything else it functions as a social history by including a wide variety of LGBT individuals. African American, Latino, and white men and women are represented within the pages of this project. While the majority of individuals covered within this dissertation are middle-class, some of the people who will be featured more prominently came from a working-class background. Since this history runs from the mid-1960s to the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, it focuses on individuals who not only identify as lesbian, gay and bisexual, but it also includes transgender people.

This project also contains some elements of cultural history. It not only examines the conservative culture in which gay men and women began to organize their community in Dallas in the mid-1960s, but it also details the various cultural events, traditions and forms of expression that queer people created in the 1970s and 1980s. Some examples include the Gay Pride Parade, drag queens and drag shows, Razzle Dazzle Dallas (a yearly social), and the Turtle Creek Chorale (gay men's chorus). This dissertation demonstrates that from the 1970s through the early 2000s. LGBT women and men in Dallas overcame discrimination, police harassment, hate crimes and the ravages of AIDS as they worked to develop and maintain their own vibrant community and culture.

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[8] James Waller, "Wanted: LGBT Religious History," *The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Religious Network: A Resource Center and Information Clearinghouse for the History of LGBT Religious Movements*, April 16, 2004 – This short article explains that John D' Emilio stated the need for comprehensive historical research on LGBT religious movements in the United States from the mid-twentieth century through today. http://www.lgbtran.org/Papers/WantedLGBTReligiousHistory.pdf accessed December 19, 2015.

Since *A Queer History of Dallas* focuses on LGBT people from the 1960s through the early 2000s, it discusses sodomy laws and analyzes the ways in which those laws impacted queer people in Dallas. Sodomy laws and their effects are related to my theoretical framework on those topics. *A Queer History of Dallas* relies on Michel Foucault's view that sex is an expression of complex and dynamic power relations within society.[9] My project demonstrates that the state of Texas had significant power over queer people regarding their ability to reveal their sexual orientation and/or act upon it because of sodomy laws. Gay individuals could lose their jobs, professional credentials, and even custody of their children if their sexuality was made public. When Texas enforced its original sodomy law, Article 524, prior to 1970, gay people (mostly men) were given lengthy prison sentences when caught engaging in sexual activity with someone of the same sex. *A Queer History of Dallas* demonstrates that after the Texas legislature enacted penal code section 21.06 in 1974, which was aimed specifically at gay men and lesbians, gay people in Dallas resisted and challenged the new sodomy law.

A Queer History of Dallas is informed by religious scholars such as Gary David Comstock, Heather R. White and Patrick S. Cheng. Even though *A Queer History of Dallas* utilizes these religious scholars, as well as some others, Cheng's work underpins the project by discussing how queer theology works in the life of the Cathedral of Hope (CoH) and its congregants. Cheng is not only thorough in explaining queer theology, but he also discusses the topic with clarity.[10]

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[9] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 83 and 97-98; Clare O'Farrell, *Michel Foucault* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2005), 101-103.

[10] Gary David Comstock, *Gay Theology without Apology* (Eugene: WIPF & Stock, 2009); Heather R. White, *Reforming Sodom: Protestants and the Rise of Gay Rights* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Patrick S. Cheng, *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* (New York: Seabury Books, 2011).

Cheng offers three definitions of queer theology. He writes, "First, in light of the umbrella or collective term definition of 'queer,' queer theology can be understood as LGBT people 'talking about God.' In other words, queer theology is a shorthand term for theology that is done by and for LGBT people. Thus, instead of writing the phrase 'talk about God by and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning people as well as our allies' over and over again, we can simply use the term 'queer theology' as a shorthand." Cheng's second definition of queer theology is related to a transgressive theological approach. Cheng explains, "Second, in light of the definition of 'queer' as transgression, queer theology can be understood as a theological method that is self-consciously transgressive, especially by challenging societal norms about sexuality and gender. Thus, queer theology refers to a way of doing theology that, in the words of the magnificent, brings down the powerful and lifts up the lowly. In particular, this theology seeks to unearth silenced voices or hidden perspectives." In *A Queer History of Dallas*, I show that progressive, gay and straight ministers helped to unearth silenced voices within the city of Dallas. Cheng's final definition of queer theology is about erasing boundaries. Cheng comments, "Third, in light of the definition of 'queer' as erasing boundaries, queer theology can be understood as a way of doing theology that is rooted in queer theory and that critiques the binary categories of sexuality (that is, homosexual v. heterosexual) and gender identity (that is, female vs. male) as socially constructed. In other words, queer theology argues that the discourse of classical Christian theology ultimately requires the erasing of the boundaries of not only sexuality and gender identity, but also more fundamental boundaries such as life vs. death, and divine vs. human." Here, Cheng argues that Christian theology itself is a queer undertaking because it also challenges and deconstructs—through radical love—different kinds of binary categories that on the surface appear

fixed. This third point is important because it highlights the idea that if Christian theology is a queer undertaking then queer people are not incompatible with Christianity.[11]

A Queer History of Dallas utilizes the word queer to describe people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. This work also uses the term to describe female impersonators or drag queens. Queer theory informs the use of the word queer in this dissertation, and it relies on the definition provided by queer theorist Annamarie Jagose,

> "Broadly speaking, queer describes those gestures or analytical models which dramatize incoherencies in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire. Resisting that model of stability—which claims heterosexuality as its origin, when it is more properly its effect—queer focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire. Institutionally, queer has been associated most prominently with lesbian and gay subjects, but its analytic framework also includes such topics as cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery. Whether as transvestite performance or academic deconstruction, queer locates and exploits the incoherencies in those three terms which stabilize heterosexuality. Demonstrating the impossibility of any 'natural' sexuality, it calls into question even such apparently unproblematic terms as 'man' and 'woman.'"[12]

Thus *A Queer History of Dallas* employs the word queer to describe any person who does not adhere to what are considered "normal" gender or sexual behaviors for someone who was born biologically male or female. The term is also utilized to describe a person who lives his/her life as the opposite of the biological sex to which he or she was assigned at birth. Queer also includes people who received gender reassignment surgery.

In the 1970s politics became important to Dallas' newly visible queer community. From that period forward, queer people in Dallas viewed politics as being vital to helping improve their

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[11] Cheng, *Radical Love*, 9-10.

[12] Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 3.

lives in the city. Queer men and women in Dallas did not take a radical approach to politics, nor did they try to redefine it. Instead, they took a pragmatic approach to politics by working within the existing political system. Politically-minded queer people urged and registered other queer people to vote, formed a gay political organization in the mid-1970s, increased the number of precinct chairs in Oak Lawn in order to have influence within city government, and ran for city-wide office so they could influence policy that was created within the city. *A Queer History of Dallas* will show that queer men and women had success by taking this practical approach to politics.

Chapter 1 spans the years 1965-1972. It argues that from the mid-1960s through the early 1970s, LGBT individuals in Dallas came out of the shadows and for the first time, with a significant amount of help from straight progressive ministers, formed a distinct and visible community that was organized around the first social and religious organizations that queer men and women founded. The Circle of Friends (COF) was a social organization that was formed on January 1, 1965. Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas (MCC Dallas) was a Christian church with a special outreach to gay men and lesbians. It was founded on July 30, 1970.

Chapter 2 covers the years 1972-1976. It argues that this period represents years of tremendous change for Dallas' fledgling queer community. The COF and MCC Dallas evolved as they continued to provide gay men and lesbians in Dallas with a sense of community, and worked to improve the lives of queer people within the city. During these years Dallas' LGBT community became more political when the first gay political organization formed in Dallas. These developments happened as queer people in Dallas created a distinct and identifiable neighborhood for themselves. During this period of time, the COF and MCC Dallas transformed as they

continued to provide queer men and women with a sense of community. One way the COF evolved in the 1970s was by becoming more political and urging people to vote. The organization set up voter registration booths in different locations in Dallas. MCC Dallas provided its congregants with a sense of community when it started performing holy unions for same-sex couples in the early 1970s. By the 1970s Dallas' queer community became more political. In the middle of that decade the Dallas Gay Political Caucus (DGPC) was formed. As the aforementioned developments occurred, queer people started to create a distinct and identifiable for community for themselves in the neighborhood of Oak Lawn.

Chapter 3 focuses on the years 1976-1979. The chapter argues that from the spring of 1976 through 1979 queer men and women in Dallas continued to focus on politics as they considered it to be one of the main avenues to bring about social change for queer people in Dallas. As politics reached a new level of importance within the queer community, one of the community's leaders became the first openly gay person to run for a seat on the Dallas City Council. While this was happening, queer men and women in Dallas continued to build a community in Oak Lawn. During this time the DGPC explained what the new organization's goals were for queer people in Dallas. As all of this political activity took place, queer men and women continued moving to Oak Lawn in significant numbers. By the end of the 1970s, the neighborhood was known as the gay part of town in Dallas.

Chapter 4 covers the years 1980-1984. It argues that the early to mid-1980s was a high point for LGBT individuals in Dallas because the queer community continued its development by creating more organizations and businesses that would be important in helping to entertain, support and sustain the community. During this period of time, queer men and women in Dallas also

experienced a major legal victory with *Baker v. Wade* as a result of the bravery of one of their community's leaders. In addition to these developments, Dallas' LGBT community created an enduring cultural tradition. Even though Dallas' queer community had a lot to be proud of and celebrate during this time, it was also forced to think about and deal with some serious issues such as hate crimes and the arrival of AIDS that threatened both its safety and very survival. At the start of the 1980s MCC Dallas and the DGPC reached some important milestones. Around this time Dallas' queer community witnessed the arrival of one of its first cultural organizations—the Turtle Creek Chorale (TCC). The Oak Lawn Counseling Center (OLCC) also formed in the early eighties. The most significant development of this period was the decision in *Baker v. Wade* in 1982. This was the case in which Texas' sodomy law, penal code section 21.06, was ruled unconstitutional.

Chapter 5 concentrates on the period from 1984 to the early 1990s. The chapter argues that the mid-1980s to the early 1990s represent the darkest period in the history of the LGBT community in Dallas, mainly because of the AIDS crisis taking hold there. Besides dealing with the scourge of AIDS, many within Dallas' queer community faced discrimination on different fronts, as well as the continued horror of hate crimes. Even though women and men within Dallas' LGBT community encountered a wide array of challenges during this period, they endured by utilizing both existing and new organizations to help sustain their community. Queer men and women did this with the invaluable help of those who were allies and supporters of the LGBT community. By the mid-1980s the OLCC had altered itself in order to educate and help those dealing with AIDS. In 1985 the AIDS Resource Center was founded; it was the first organization within Dallas' queer community that focused solely on AIDS. During this dark period in the history

of Dallas' LGBT community, several straight female allies stepped up to assist the community in a variety of important ways.

Chapter 6 spans the entire decade of the 1990s. The chapters argues that in the 1990s Dallas' queer community finally started to be integrated into various organizations, positions and policy within the city of Dallas that LGBT individuals had been denied access to until that time. As this occurred, several existing organizations within Dallas' queer community such as the Cathedral of Hope, Dallas Gay Alliance, and Foundation for Human Understanding were altered in various ways to meet the needs of the people that they served at that particular time, while a new organization, The Walt Whitman Community School, formed for queer students and queer families. During this period the ban on lesbians and gay men becoming Dallas police officers was lifted as a result of a lawsuit that Mica England filed in 1989. In 1990 MCC Dallas was remamed the Cathedral of Hope which reflected the vision that the congregation had for its growing church. In the mid-1990s Jose Plata became the first openly gay person elected to the Dallas school board. In 1997 the Walt Whitman Community School was opened in Dallas.

A Queer History of Dallas examines several themes. One theme is criminalization in relation to queer people and Texas' sodomy laws. Second, stigmatization is examined at different points in this work. Sodomy laws stigmatized individuals in Dallas' queer community, and AIDS stigmatized those who were afflicted with the disease. Third, Dallas' gay rights movement was in conversation with the national gay rights movement.. Finally, *A Queer History of Dallas* demonstrates that visibility was good for queer men and women when they were able to use it to educate others about homosexuality, demonstrate what it meant to be gay and lesbian, and receive

a positive response.. Yet visibility could also be dangerous in that it increased the potential for harassment and violence against gay people (especially gay men in Dallas).

I am aware that community can be defined in a variety of ways for queer people. For example, community can be defined as bar culture. It can also be defined in more sexual ways. An example of this is the leather community which is a sub-community within the queer community. I chose to write an organizational history about Dallas' queer community because I believe that more than anything else the organizations that queer people in Dallas founded provided them with the greatest sense of community. I believe this because the organizations described in this work brought together a large number of women and men who were linked by their group identity of being queer. These queer men and women who were brought together by their group identity built vital community institutions in Dallas that helped to form, develop, sustain and integrate a visible community of LGBT people into the broader Dallas community. In addition to creating vital community organizations for themselves, queer people also carved out a geographic community within the city of Dallas.

CHAPTER I

HOMOPHILES AND PROGRESSIVE MINISTERS FORM A QUEER COMMUNITY IN A SOUTHERN METROPOLIS

Prior to the mid-1960s the conservative, southern city of Dallas had no gay social organizations. The city also had no gay churches or political organizations. Even though gay men and lesbians lived in Dallas just as they did in other major cities across the United States, most gay people in the city were closeted. Since gay women and men in Dallas did not have their own organizations before the mid-1960s, and gay individuals were mostly invisible to people who were not gay, as well as to each other a good part of the time, an identifiable gay community did not exist in Dallas. That reality began to change for lesbians and gay men in the 1960s. From the mid-1960s through the early 1970s, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals in Dallas came out of the shadows and for the first time, with a significant amount of help from straight progressive ministers, formed a distinct and visible community for themselves that was organized around the first social and religious organizations that queer men and women founded.[1]

The mid-1960s marked a turning point for gay men and women living within the city of Dallas. This was the period in which the city saw the arrival of its first gay social organization. On New Year's Eve 1964, five gay men gathered at a home in Dallas discussed forming a gay social group. Phil Johnson came up with the idea. Johnson wanted to form a social organization for gays in Dallas similar to the groups that existed in Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. After waiting for more than a decade for a gay social organization to start in the city of Dallas, Johnson

[1] Phil Johnson, An Oral History Interview, Conducted by Gerald D. Saxon, December 17, 1980 and January 2 and 28, 1981, (Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas), hereinafter, (DPL), 49 and 59-60; Harvey J. Graff, *The Dallas Myth: The Making and Unmaking of an American City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 294.

decided to form one. He ran the idea by the four friends assembled at his home, and they agreed that it was a great idea to form a gay social group. Thus, the Circle of Friends (COF) was formed as 1964 became 1965. The group's name came from the fact that five friends joined together and decided to form the social organization. When the Circle of Friends was created on January 1, 1965, it was not only the first gay organization in Dallas, but it was also the first gay organization in the state of Texas.[2]

It was fitting that Phil Johnson came up with the idea to create the Circle of Friends, because he had entered a creative world that included openly gay people at a young age and appreciated it. Johnson was a white, gay man who was born in Dallas in the mid-1920s. After graduating from high school, Johnson did a stint in the military, completed two years of college, and lived in New York City for a short time from the late 1940s through the early 1950s. It was during that time that Johnson was introduced to gay society. Johnson had moved to New York in 1949 with the hope of working in Broadway shows. He auditioned for a good number of shows while in New York. Even though Johnson put a great deal of time and effort into trying to land a successful Broadway show it did not happen. The closest he got to that goal was being part of two unsuccessful Off-Broadway shows. In addition to trying to start a career in the theatre, Johnson enrolled in dance school. He studied at the Sherman School of Dance which was located in Carnegie Hall. Johnson studied dance the entire two years that he was in New York City.[3]

While pursuing a career on Broadway and studying dance Johnson lived in Greenwich Village. He stated that while living there among other gay people he learned that being gay did not

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[2] Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 49-50.

[3] Ibid, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 49.

necessarily mean that one lived a life that was sad, lonely, and miserable like he had been taught to believe. Instead, Johnson witnessed gay individuals who were cheerful, warm, outgoing, and productive. Johnson said that witnessing the lives of these gay people in Greenwich Village made for a very happy time in his life.[4]

The experience that Johnson had while living in New York City after completing his military service is one that many gay male and lesbian veterans discovered following the Second World War. Many gay veterans decided to abandon small towns and join the majority of other gay veterans who settled in American cities, where they enjoyed tolerant conditions. Historian Allan Berube explains why cities were so appealing to gay veterans: "Gay male and lesbian veterans who moved to the cities found an anonymity, independence, and safety in numbers allowing them to lead gay lives without the scrutiny of unsympathetic family members and small-town neighbors who could condemn them or threaten their livelihood. They created their own circles of friends and risked going to the growing numbers of postwar lesbian and gay bars." Moving to cities after World War II provided gay veterans with the opportunity to create lives for themselves that the majority could not have constructed in their hometowns. Even though Johnson came from a large city, New York City and Dallas were vastly different from each other in the late forties and early fifties because Dallas did not have a recognizable gay neighborhood similar to Greenwich Village.[5]

After Johnson returned to Dallas in the early 1950s, he started joining gay organizations located on the east and west coasts of the United States. Johnson became a member of ONE, Incorporated in early 1953. When Mattachine of San Francisco formed, Johnson joined. After the

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[4] Ibid, 6.

[5] Allan Berube, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 244 – 245.

Janus Society was founded, Johnson became a member of that organization. He also joined Mattachine of Washington, D.C. Johnson became a long-distance member of these organizations because they offered him a way of staying connected to gay individuals who were organizing with the purpose of improving the lives of gay people, and because a group like those did not exist in Dallas.[6]

When the Circle of Friends was formed, its members did not have lofty goals for the organization. The COF was created as a social club where gay people could meet and interact with other gay individuals without going to gay bars. When the Circle of Friends was in its infancy, the one-chapter organization believed that it was too small to register a significant amount of voters or change any laws. The COF also thought that it was not large enough to challenge the police. Members of the Circle of Friends did not believe the group could do the kinds of things that gay organizations in other big cities accomplished.[7] Yet even though the Circle of Friends was not ambitious with regard to its goals, the COF's formation proved to be significant because it was unusual to see an organization like this created in a highly conservative, southern city in the mid-twentieth century. The members formed the COF in both a place and time when many groups like it did not exist. So, even though the Circle of Friends quietly started with a small amount of members, its formation was a notable development.

At the start of the decade, Dallas was a traditional southern city in transition. Following years of civil rights protests, court cases, racist violence, the denial of voting rights, discrimination in both employment and housing, Jim Crow in public accommodations, and school segregation,

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[6] Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 6 and 49.

[7] Ibid, 49.

some of downtown Dallas' businesses were nominally desegregated along with the city's public schools. As the city slowly made progress, moving beyond its Jim Crow past, tragedy struck. In late 1963 Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President John F. Kennedy and seriously wounded Governor John B. Connally while they visited Dallas. Kennedy's assassination followed years of increasingly public and dangerous displays of right-wing ideologies within Dallas. Congressman Bruce Alger and retired General Edwin Walker were among the main instigators. Many influential supporters also pushed right-wing agendas from behind the scenes in Dallas. Prior to the assassination of President Kennedy there had been organized attacks on Vice President Lyndon Johnson and Senator Adlai Stevenson in Dallas. By the time the Circle of Friends formed, the city had already acquired a national reputation for its strong support for right-wing, anti-liberal politics, and for tolerating actions outside the judicial and political systems.[8]

As Dallas entered the mid-1960s it became a prosperous city working to improve its image after the assassination of President Kennedy. In 1964 Dallas had more headquarters for million-dollar oil companies than any other city in the United States. In that same year Erik Jonsson, Texas Instruments' co-founder, was elected mayor of Dallas. He took office with the agenda of promoting harmonious growth to rehabilitate the city of Dallas and its damaged reputation. Goals for Dallas at the time included constructing a new City Hall and building a regional airport. By 1965 Dallas and Ft. Worth had agreed to construct a new regional airport to serve both cities.[9]

From the early to mid-sixties, Dallas slowly worked to divorce itself from its entrenched Jim Crow system and made these changes due to internal pressures. The social changes of the early

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8 Graff, *The Dallas Myth*, 294; Bill Minutaglio and Steven L. Davis, *Dallas 1963* (New York: Twelve, 2013), 313-324.

9 Ibid.

1960s did not happen because city leaders were in a rush to make Dallas an example of a progressive city. These changes had more to do with keeping social order and maintaining the city's image than anything else. The assassination of President Kennedy hastened Dallas' attempt to move into a more modern,civil era because the city desperately needed a makeover after being the site of such a tragic event in the nation's history. Even though Dallas made strides to improve its reputation as a radical, far-right city following the assassination, it still remained a highly conservative place where it was not wise or safe for gay men and women to be open about their sexual orientation. Doing so in the early-to-mid 1960s meant leaving one's self open to serious repercussions such as violence and discrimination. The atmosphere in Dallas during this period, though not unique to the city of Dallas, helps explain why the Circle of Friends did not believe it could achieve the kinds of things that gay groups in other prominent cities accomplished at that time.

In addition, conservative politics, Christianity and religious participation contributed to Dallas' conservatism in the 1960s. In fact, some argue that religion and religious participation influenced the conservative environment in Dallas more than politics. For example, at the beginning of the decade when the Circle of Friends was founded, *New Yorker* writer and author John Bainbridge referred to Dallas as the "religious capital" of Texas. At midcentury, Dallas County contained the largest churches in the United States for three of the mainline Christian denominations. First Baptist Church had 12,000 members, Highland Park Methodist Church had 8,750 members, and Highland Park Presbyterian Church had 5,200 members. By 1960, more than half of the nearly one million people inhabiting Dallas County were members of one of 900 Protestant churches in the area. In addition to these substantial numbers for mainline churches in

Dallas County, Holiness and Pentecostal denominations within the county also boasted impressive numbers in the early 1960s. In fact, these two denominations expanded more quickly than the mainline churches in Dallas County during this period.[10]

Records show that religious leaders in Dallas did not make many public statements about homosexuality in the 1960s. Dallas religious leaders started speaking out about the topic in the 1970s when homosexuality became more visible within Dallas and the rest of society. Beginning in the late 1960s, major Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church began to issue increasingly condemnatory doctrines and proclamations against lesbian and gay church members throughout the United States. Partly this was in response to gay members becoming more politicized and speaking out within their churches. Despite the accompanying growth of gay and lesbian affiliate groups throughout the US., such as Methodist Affirmation and Episcopal Integrity, mainline church policy proved decidedly antagonistic against gay people during that time. When conservative religious leaders in the city of Dallas made public statements against homosexuality in the 1970s, they made very it clear that engaging in "homosexual" acts was one of the gravest sins that one could commit.[11]

A critical religious development in the post-World War II period also greatly influenced how society viewed homosexuality. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible debuted shortly after the Second World War in 1946. The New Testament version of this new translation of the

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[10] Edward H. Miller, *Nut Country: Right-Wing Dallas and the Birth of the Southern Strategy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 23-24; "John L. Bainbridge, Author, Is Dead at 78," *The New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/1992/11/13/obituaries/john-l-bainbridge-author-is-dead-at-78.html accessed January 15, 2017.

[11] John Howard, *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 242; Miller, *Nut Country*, 146-147 and 150.

Bible was published first, followed by the entire Bible being released in 1952. Leading scholars from seminaries and top universities had worked for more than ten years on what was described as "'the greatest Bible in 341 years.'" The new Bible promised to match the "'timeless beauty'" of the King James with "'more accurate and easier to read prose.'"[12] Religious and queer studies scholar, Heather R. White, explains what this new, easier to read version of the Bible meant for gay men and lesbians. She notes,

> "that accessible idiom, for the first time, directly condemned 'homosexuals' in I Corinthians 6:9. In a list of grievous sinners, where the older KJV referenced the "'effeminate'" and "'abusers of themselves with mankind,'" the new translation now directly named 'homosexuals.' The new term foreclosed older meaning, including masturbation ('self-abuse') and non-procreative heterosexual sex, which Protestant authors encouraging healthy sexuality routinely insisted were inaccurate misperceptions of the text's true meanings. Readers of the RSV found clear evidence of the insistent advice: what was condemned in the Bible was now plainly homosexuality."[13]

Whereas the King James Version of the Bible had not directly referred to "homosexuals," the Revised Standard Version did. This new translation placed an even greater burden on gay men and lesbians, both religious and non-religious, because the text that many considered the word of God now blatantly condemned homosexuality.

In the 1960s gay men and lesbians throughout the United States were well aware of the stigma related to admitting that he or she was gay or lesbian. Even though a good number of lesbians and gay men throughout the U.S. were treated with a certain amount of disgrace, and carried a significant amount of shame, the stigma related to homosexuality was much stronger in more conservative, southern places such as Dallas because religion played such a big role in the

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[12] White, *Reforming Sodom*, 34-35.
[13] Ibid.

lives of southerners. Religious teachings not only influenced how southerners viewed homosexuality, but those teachings also had an impact on how many heterosexual southerners treated gay people in daily life.

In general, life was challenging for lesbians and gay men throughout the country in the 1960s. Same-sex sex was illegal in every state but Illinois. There were no federal, state, or local laws that protected gay men or lesbians from being fired or denied housing. The country had no openly gay politicians. There were no identifiably gay characters on television shows. If Hollywood produced a movie with an important "homosexual" character, the character was typically killed or committed suicide. In general, there were no openly gay public school teachers, policeman, lawyers, or doctors. Also, no political party included a gay caucus.[14]

In addition, the medical field did its part in propagating the stigma associated with homosexuality during and after World War II. Prior to the 1940s, the medical model played a small role in society's understanding of homosexuality. Before the forties, medical professionals elaborated on the topic mainly within the pages of specialized journals. However, the psychiatric screening of inductees ordered by the federal government during the Second World War placed the psychiatric profession into the lives of millions of American citizens. During the 1940s Americans increasingly came to view human sexual behavior as a binary; one was either healthy or sick. Homosexuality fell into the latter category. The federal government categorized homosexuality as an illness during World War II as a means of preventing gay people from engaging in what it considered to be perverse sex acts. The GI Bill of 1944 permitted the federal government to enforce what it considered "normal" heterosexual behavior. The US. government

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[14] David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 1-2.

took this approach during the war to ensure that American society continued to remain orderly and "normal" after the war ended. Medical guides directed at a lay audience expounded on the phenomenon of same-sex orientation as well as the possibilities of curing it. In the decade and a half after World War II, legislatures in more than half the states in the union looked to psychiatrists for solutions to the problem of sex crimes, and they passed sexual psychopath laws that officially recognized homosexuality as a disease that threatened society.[15]

Doctors experimented on patients in a variety of ways in their search to cure them of this malady when homosexuality was designated as a socially-threatening disease in the mid-twentieth century. The procedures that doctors utilized ranged from the relatively benign such as psychotherapy and hypnosis, to the more severe which included aversion therapy and electroshock, to the extreme such as hysterectomy, castration, lobotomy, and the administration of untested drugs.[16] The various methods that doctors employed to cure their patients of homosexuality demonstrates just how serious of an illness they considered it. The fact that homosexuality was considered a disease, and that doctors sometimes utilized extreme procedures to cure it, added to the stigmatization of one being admittedly lesbian or gay in the mid-twentieth century. The tendency to view lesbians and gay men as sick because of their sexual orientation was not only something southern gay individuals experienced, but it was a reality for gay men and women throughout the United States for many years following the Second World War.

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[15] John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 17; Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 133-140.

[16] D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 18.

Gay people not only had to deal with religious discrimination and being labeled mentally-ill by the medical profession, but they also had to contend with the idea of being viewed as a threat to national security. In the years following the Second World War, both Cold War politics and the fear of the spread of Communism bred high levels of insecurity, paranoia, and intolerance throughout the American public. During that time lesbians and gay men were looked upon with a great deal of disdain and suspicion. Historian John D' Emilio elucidates what the atmosphere was like in the United States with regard to gay individuals and their alleged ties to Communism:

> "According to extreme anticommunist ideologues, left-wing teachers poisoned the minds of their students; lesbians and homosexuals corrupted their bodies. Communists bore not identifying physical characteristics. Able to disguise their true selves, they infiltrated the government…They exhibited loyalty only to a political ideology and a foreign power that inspired fanatical, unreasoning passion. Homosexuals too could escape detection. Coming from all walks of life, they insinuated themselves everywhere in society, including the highest reaches of government. Allegedly slaves to their perverted desires, they stopped at nothing to gratify their sexual impulses. The satisfaction of animal needs dominated their lives until it atrophied all moral sense. Communists taught children to betray their parents; mannish women mocked the ideals of marriage and motherhood. Lacking toughness, the effete, overly educated male representatives of the Eastern establishment had lost China and Eastern Europe to the enemy. Weak-willed, pleasure seeking homosexuals—"half men"—feminized everything they touched and sapped the masculine vigor that had tamed a continent. The congruence of the stereotypical communist and homosexual made scapegoating gay men and women a simple matter."[17]

This detailed description of how gay individuals were perceived in the 1950s makes it clear why they were treated with such scorn and distrust. Politicians, federal leaders, and the public often portrayed gay men and women as enemies of the state during the early-Cold War period.

Since gay people were considered a danger to national security in the 1950s, U.S. officials took drastic measures to deal with the perceived threat. In April 1953, just weeks after President

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[17] Ibid, 48-49.

Dwight D. Eisenhower was inaugurated, the new president issued an executive order that barred lesbians and gay men from all federal jobs. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), charged with investigating the loyalty of all current and prospective employees, started a broad system of surveillance to keep gay individuals off the federal payroll. In a period when the military's role in American life was growing quickly, the armed forces sharply increased its purges of gay men and women from the ranks. Yearly discharges from the military doubled in the 1950s, and rose another fifty percent in the early 1960s.[18]

It is clear why there was no visible gay community in Dallas in the 1960s; the southern city was socially, politically, and religiously conservative. In addition, gay people were considered mentally-ill and a threat to national security, and same-sex relations were illegal in the state of Texas, just as in the overwhelming majority of the United States at the time. For all of these reasons, lesbians and gay men in Dallas remained closeted. In the 1960s gays in Dallas kept their sexual orientation secret so they could live safe and peaceful lives. By remaining closeted, gay men and women in Dallas protected themselves and kept their dignity intact.

After the five gay men formed the Circle of Friends in Dallas at the start of 1965, they decided to approach the state of Texas for a charter, looking to make the organization more official. A friend of Phil Johnson's, a gay attorney named Clayton "Red" Fowler, stated that the group should not pursue a charter from the state because he warned Johnson there would be harsh consequences for starting a gay social organization in Texas with official state recognition in the form of a charter. Johnson listened to his friend's counsel and decided against pursuing the charter.

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[18] John D' Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 293; David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 123-124.

Indeed, Houston was the first city in which a gay organization in Texas obtained a charter from the state. In 1968 the Texas Homophile Educational Movement (THEM), founded by Rita Wanstrom, requested and received a charter. It is not clear if members of THEM suffered any negative consequences, but clearly the group must have believed it was worth it. It is also possible that not many people paid close attention to the founding of THEM.[19]

The formation of the Circle of Friends was not only significant because it was the first gay organization in Texas, but its founding also was important because the creation of the club brought Dallas and the state of Texas into the homophile movement. The founders of the Mattachine Society first used the word homophile in Los Angeles because they believed the new term, which incorporated the Greek word for love, would help counter the stereotype that many held of gay individuals as being obsessed with sex. In addition to selecting a positive name for their movement, early homophile leaders struggled to find ways for members of their groups to develop a strong group consciousness free of the negative attitudes that gay people usually internalized. Founders of early homophile groups argued that gay individuals were indeed different from the heterosexual majority. The founders also affirmed the uniqueness of gay identity, promoted a vision of a gay culture with its own positive values, and endeavored to transform the shame of being gay into pride for being part of a minority group with its own contributions to the human community.[20]

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[19] Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 50-51; "Circle of Friends Documents," University of North Texas Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Archive, hereinafter, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 5: Organizations, Box 477, Folder 1;"Steps in Time," *This Week in Texas*, January 29, 1987, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 64, Folder 53.

[20] Carter, *Stonewall*, 18; D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 58.

The homophile movement in the United States started in the early 1950s and lasted through the 1960s. During that time the movement championed gay and lesbian rights in a period of dramatic social, cultural and political change. Most individuals who participated in same-sex sex did not necessarily think of themselves as gay or lesbian, and most gay men and women did not become activists, but thousands participated in homophile political projects. Inspired by various struggles, which included the civil rights and women's movements, lesbian and gay activists utilized multiple tactics and strategies to achieve their goals.[21]

Participants in the homophile movement had a wide range of political and sexual orientations. The movement included Marxist leftists and conservative libertarians, proponents and opponents of gender transgression, feminists and misogynists, and supporters and critics of sexual radicalism. Even though most of the people who participated in the homophile movement were lesbian, gay, or bisexual, some were straight.[22]

Since the homophile movement lasted for two decades, it went through several phases. In the period from 1950-1953 the dominant orientation of the movement was leftist. One goal that homophile organizations emphasized during this early period included unifying gay individuals by addressing the isolation that many of them experienced. Early homophile activists addressed the loneliness that a good number of gay people endured by promoting a feeling of belonging among gay individuals. Another goal that early homophile activists focused on was educating gay and straight people about homosexuality. Homophiles believed that education benefitted gay and heterosexual individuals in society. Another goal that early homophile activists pursued was

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[21] Marc Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 41.
[22] Ibid.

leadership. Some homophiles stressed that it was necessary to have an "'enlightened leadership'" for other gay individuals to follow. Homophiles who stressed this believed that such leadership would provide the rest of society with an example for other gay people to follow, as well as a more dignified standard upon which the rest of society could base a more intelligent and truthful view of the nature of homosexuality.[23]

From 1953-1961 the homophile movement was predominantly liberal. Historian Marc Stein explains the difference between the leftist and liberal periods in the homophile movement when he writes,

> "Although the movement continued to feature diverse political orientations, the new leadership was more liberal than leftist. The homophile leftists of the earlier period had viewed their work as consistent with U.S. radical traditions and international revolutionary politics, but the ascendant liberals worked within the frameworks of patriotic Cold War nationalism. The founders had emphasized popular mobilization, public education, and political action; the new leadership focused on public education and social service. The earlier movement had believed in the importance of working with experts and elites to change public opinion, but the new one made this a higher priority and was less interested in alliances with other movements. The earlier leadership had tended to view homosexuals as a distinct cultural minority; the new one downplayed differences between homosexuals and heterosexuals."[24]

The liberal period of the homophile movement was defined by a more assimilationist approach to politics and movement activity.

Between 1961 and 1969 the homophile movement diversified and become more radical. During this period new homophile groups were established. Influenced by the civil rights movement, some of these organizations called for more aggressive direct action tactics, more bold defenses of homosexuality, and more forceful emphasis on civil rights for gay people. Even though

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[23] Ibid, 41 and 46.
[24] Ibid, 41 and 52.

the homophile movement remained small compared to other major social movements, and did not achieve the kind of mass mobilization that happened after the Stonewall riots occurred (which is credited with igniting gay liberation at the end of the sixties), homophile activism in the 1950s and 1960s lead to important achievements. It laid the foundation for the movement's future successes and failures.[25]

Three important homophile or gay and lesbian civil rights organizations formed in the U.S. during the 1950s: the Mattachine Society, ONE, Inc., and the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB). While ONE was located in Los Angeles, by 1955 both the DOB and the Mattachine Society were based in San Francisco. The Mattachine Society and DOB relied on the volunteer labor of a small group of friends and like-minded activists. Both organizations held monthly meetings open to the public, and both groups worked toward the integration of gay people into mainstream society. Even though the DOB and the Mattachine Society were not the first gay emancipation organizations in the United States, they were the first to develop a national identity and help shape the creation of organizational chapters in other major cities. Through monthly publications, press releases, and the effective use of social and scientific experts to speak on their behalf, homophile groups projected themselves as the voice as well as the public representation of gay individuals in the U.S.[26]

When the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis formed in the 1950s, they started as small social groups just as the Circle of Friends did in the mid-1960s. A man named Harry Hay

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[25] Ibid, 41 and 66.

[26] Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide Open Town: a Queer History of San Francisco to 1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 162.

provided the impetus for the formation of the Mattachine Society. That group was started in Los Angeles in 1950. The Mattachine Society, like the COF, was founded by five gay men. A young Filipina woman named Rose Bamberger initiated the founding of the DOB. There were eight lesbians who made up four couples that originally came together to discuss forming the Daughters of Bilitis. Even though the Circle of Friends was never as big as the Mattachine Society or the DOB, and it never became as well-known as the Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society did in homophile circles, the founding and the evolution of the COF was similar to the other two groups. Just as the Mattachine Society and DOB evolved, and became more political, the Circle of Friends would eventually take the same route.[27]

Another significant fact is that when the Circle of Friends was formed in the mid-1960s there were not many organizations like it in the United States. In the spring of 1969, prior to the Stonewall riots, approximately fifty homophile groups existed in the U.S.[28] At first thought, this might seem like a large number, but given the United States' population in the late sixties this number is not really high since most homophile groups were not very large. With regard to the COF, the fact that the organization was one of less than fifty similar organizations when it was established in 1965, it is not the only noteworthy characteristic. When the Stonewall riots occurred, the Circle of Friends was nearly five years old.

In 1965 when the Circle of Friends was founded, it was a momentous time for the homophile movement. During that year a number of individuals within the movement engaged in

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[27] Ibid, 165-166; Marcia M. Gallo, *Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Rise of the Lesbian Rights Movement* (Emeryville: Seal Press, 2007), 1-2.

[28] D' Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 238; Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 67.

a more activist stance and picketed at various locations throughout the United States. During that spring and summer, militant homophile activists demonstrated at the Civil Service Commission building, the Pentagon, the State Department, the White House, and, on the fourth of July, Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The demonstrations organized by the homophiles were tiny in comparison to the civil rights marches in the early 1960s and the first wave of antiwar protests that occurred in the spring of 1965. For example, on the same day that the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) attracted 20,000 people to an antiwar protest at the Washington Monument, only three women and seven men picketed at the White House for gay rights. At a repeat performance that fall at the White House, the number of individuals demonstrating for gay rights had only risen to forty-five. Even though the number of men and women that took part in the gay rights protests was not high, the significance of the involvement of those who participated cannot be underestimated given the open avowal of their homosexuality.[29]

Homophiles picketing at major governmental and historical sites in the mid-1960s not only engaged in bold acts, but those demonstrations also produced some notable results. For example, the day before the picketing of the State Department, Secretary of State Dean Rusk took a question from a reporter on the department's policy with regard to employing gay individuals. In addition, the Civil Service Commission finally agreed to meet with Mattachine Society representatives after members of the Mattachine Society marched in front of its offices the previous day. The homophile demonstrations also garnered some much coveted media attention. Cameras from the ABC television network filmed the White House protests of May 29 and local affiliates, in at least nine

[29] D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 164-165.

states, used the footage in their newscasts. Also, the wire services sent out a story that was picked up by newspapers in several cities across the United States. So, even small public actions could make known to many gay men and lesbians the existence of a gay rights movement.[30]

The demonstrations that homophile activists staged in 1965 marked a watershed moment for gay men and lesbians. Those protests were the first time that gay people organized and picketed at major governmental and historical sites. Those demonstrations also marked the first instance that the national media covered gay individuals protesting for their rights as citizens. By the mid-1960s, members of homophile organizations had been promoting the idea of gay people as a minority group for a decade and a half. In 1965 a small number of homophile activists finally took to the streets to protest, just as other political movements did in the 1960s.

Besides organizing demonstrations at major governmental institutions and historical locations in 1965, some homophile activists made bold, new statements about homosexuality. Historian Marcia M. Gallo relates one such statement when she writes, "In March of 1965, the Mattachine Society of Washington became the first homophile organization to take the position that 'in the absence of valid evidence to the contrary, homosexuality is not a sickness, disturbance, or other pathology in any sense, but is merely a preference, orientation, or propensity on [a] par with, and not different in kind from heterosexuality.' This was a fresh perspective, a radical stand."[31] The previous statement that the Mattachine Society of Washington issued was radical because it was the first time that a homophile group publically declared that homosexuality was

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[30] Ibid, 165.

[31] Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 104.

not an illness, and it did so without waiting for the approval of the medical profession. The homophile group situated in the nation's capital made it clear that it believed that homosexuality was an orientation equal to and not less than heterosexuality.

When the Circle of Friends was established at the beginning of 1965, the group was anything but radical. In fact, it intentionally kept a low profile. Johnson stated that at first, members of the COF were highly paranoid about people knowing that the group existed. Because of this the Circle of Friends only held small pancake and theater parties. Even though the COF started out as a low-key social group that did not undertake a wide variety of events, it still served as an outlet where gay men could get together socially in a safe, private setting.[32]

Members of the Circle of Friends also did not want to draw attention to the group when it originally formed because Dallas police harassed homosexuals who socialized with each other in both public and private places. For example, in the fall of 1961, Dallas police arrested 29 men at a party in East Dallas. The arrests were the result of a raid that occurred at a two-story, brick apartment house on Junius Street. On a Friday night in October, the Dallas police learned that gay individuals were going to attend a party. After hearing about the gathering, an undercover officer was sent to a lounge in East Dallas to investigate the beginning of the party. While at the bar, a gay man invited the undercover agent to join the party at the apartment house.[33]

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[32] "Remembering Stonewall," *Dallas Voice*, Vol. 17, No. 8, June 23, 2000, 6 and 13-14, **https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth615482/m1/14/zoom/?resolution=3&lat=3612.5&lon=1705.5** accessed April 1, 2018, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu.

[33] "29 Nabbed In Raid on Apartment," *The Dallas Morning News*, October 29, 1961, "Police Nab 29 In Raid on Party in East Dallas," *The Dallas Times Herald*, October 28, 1961, UNT LGBT Archive, Jack Evans and George E. Harris Collection (The Dallas Way), 1980-2012, Box 8, Folder 6.

Once the party started, it ended up being a lively and well-attended event. It was estimated that between 60 and 70 people had been at the gathering at one point. Many of the partygoers quickly left after the manager threatened to call the police because of the noise coming from the apartment. The manager eventually delivered on the threat to call law enforcement. When the police arrived to what Lieutenant Frank Dyson called "a gathering of homosexuals," they began to arrest the startled partygoers. Two men, ages 37 and 25, were charged with sodomy. The remaining men were booked on lesser moral charges. The men who were arrested represented a wide variety of occupations. One person was an out-of-town newspaperman and another was a former California minister. Others listed occupations included an airlines ticket agent, bank clerks, artists, decorators, dancing instructors, and a machine operator. One woman was arrested and then released by detectives after questioning. The police described the woman as being "just a sightseer" at the gathering.[34]

Dallas law enforcement had spent a lot of time trying to access parties like the one they raided in East Dallas. Lt. Dyson stated that the raid happened after vice squad officers had tried for several weeks to infiltrate such gatherings. The men at the party were arrested at 1:30a.m. on Saturday, and most of them were released on bond by Saturday afternoon.[35]

The raid of the party in East Dallas shows just how oppressive the environment was for gay people in Dallas in the 1960s. The police constantly watched gay individuals. The police spied on gay people at bars and sometimes in their own homes. The Dallas police also put a great deal of time and effort into monitoring and arresting gay people. The fact that an undercover policeman

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

was sent to a lounge in order to infiltrate a party demonstrates why many gay people tried to avoid gay bars. They did not want to accidentally be involved with a police officer in that way. Gay men and women also did not want to be arrested in a bar because depending on the job they held, they could probably lose it. The raid on the apartment in East Dallas illustrates just how difficult it was for gay men and lesbians to have and maintain a sense of community for themselves in Dallas in the 1960s.

The tool the Dallas police utilized the most to harass gay individuals in both public and private places was the Texas sodomy law. During the 1960s, police in the city of Dallas arrested hundreds of individuals as they aggressively enforced the state's sodomy law. For example, from 1963 to mid-1969 Dallas police made an average of 69 arrests a year. Arresting that many people over a five and half year period demonstrates how much time and resources the Dallas police put into enforcing Texas' sodomy law.[36]

Texas' definition of sodomy was an expansive one. Sodomy was defined in Article 524 of the Texas Penal Code. The article defined sodomy as all oral and anal sex, bestiality, and being stimulated by a minor. In 1969 Article 524 had been a law in Texas for a century. The sodomy law carried a stiff penalty for those convicted. One could be confined in the penitentiary for no less than two years, and no more than fifteen years. Texas' sodomy law gave the state a great deal of power over gay men and lesbians in the 1960s. The power that the state of Texas held is an illustration of the French philosopher and theorist, Michel Foucault's, theory about sex and power. Foucault's view is that sex is an expression of complex and dynamic power relations in society.[37]

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[36] Joyce Murdoch and Deb Price, *Courting Justice: Gay Men and Lesbians v. The Supreme Court* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 159.

It is clear that being convicted of sodomy had a major effect on one's life. A conviction not only brought a great deal of shame to the person found guilty of the crime, but it also carried a significant legal penalty. Being arrested for and convicted of sodomy could potentially ruin an individual's life. All of this helps to explain why the Circle of Friends was initially paranoid about too many people knowing about the group's existence. Members of the COF did not want to have their meetings raided by the police, and be accused of committing sodomy while having sexless social gatherings. Members of the Circle of Friends did not want to have their group and its members treated like those who attended the party in East Dallas, and so many other gatherings of gay people in the 1960s.

About a year and a half after the Circle of Friends was formed, the organization began to receive support from an unlikely group of men. These individuals were straight progressive Dallas ministers from mainline churches within the city. In the summer of 1966, after visiting San Francisco, Doug McLean, a young Methodist minister in Dallas, ran an advertisement in a gay newspaper based in San Francisco, *Cruise News and World Report*, asking if there were individuals in Dallas who were interested in forming a homophile group with McLean. McLean wanted to start a group in Dallas similar to the Society for Individual Rights (SIR) in San Francisco. The SIR was a homophile organization that was formed in 1963. Its founders started the group because they believed that San Francisco needed a politically effective gay male membership organization. One thing the SIR stressed from its founding was the idea of community. Phil Johnson happened to subscribe to the paper that contained McLean's ad. Shortly after reading the

[37] Ibid; Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 538; Arthur S. Leonard, *Sexuality and the Law: An Encyclopedia of Major Legal Cases* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 58; Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1* (New York: Vintage 1990), 83 and 97-98.

advertisement, Johnson contacted the minister about the Circle of Friends which he had already started with his four friends in 1965.[38]

After Johnson and McLean made their connection, McLean met with the men of the COF on numerous occasions to discuss details relating to the group. Once those details were worked out, a constitution was drafted. Shortly after the Circle of Friends completed its constitution, McLean introduced three other Dallas ministers who were interested in being part of a homophile group to the COF. The three clergymen were Bill Bearden, Ed Coursen, and Robert "Bob" Hobus. Bearden and Coursen were Presbyterian and Hobus was Lutheran. Bearden, Coursen, and Hobus joined the Circle of Friends shortly after they were introduced to the group. These three ministers, along with McLean, had already been working together in a new apartment ministry. They created this ministry to reach young adults in Dallas who did not attend church regularly. Johnson stated that the four clergymen referred to themselves as "street ministers." He added that the ministers believed in taking Christ to the people instead of waiting for people to go to the big churches in Dallas. The street ministers were also comfortable working with individuals who were outside of the mainstream.[39]

When the four clergymen joined the COF, the organization was able to do some things that it had not done before. One of those things was meeting on church property. Once the COF started

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[38] Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 51; "McLean: A Ministry of Listening," *The Dallas Morning News*, March 1, 1966, News Bank: The Dallas Morning News Historical Archive 1885-1977, Dallas Public Library Electronic Database; "The Ampersand - Circle of Friends Monthly Newsletter," 02/1970, The Dallas Way (Small Collections), Marion Hayes Papers (The Dallas Way) 1968-1970, 1991, 1993, Box 1, Folder 15; Boyd, *Wide Open Town*, 203; D' Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 190-191.

[39] Ibid; UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 5: Organizations, Sub-Series 8: Multiple Organizations, Box 477, Folder 1; "Teams Study Changing Attitudes," *The Dallas Morning News*, October 17, 1966, "Progress Reported in New Ministry," *The Dallas Morning News*, April 30, 1967, News Bank: The Dallas Morning News Historical Archive 1885-1977, Dallas Public Library Electronic Database.

gathering on property owned by the church, they stopped being paranoid about people finding out about the organization. This is because COF members no longer had to worry about the possibility of the Dallas police raiding their meetings. Another thing that COF members were able to do after the four ministers joined the group was to meet and fellowship with other non-gay groups of people from Dallas. The COF could do this because the clergymen would often have parties to which they would invite the Circle of Friends, as well as other groups of people.[40]

Around the time that the COF began meeting on church property, the group started sending copies of its newsletter to the Dallas Public Library. Sending the newsletter to the library was another way to increase the visibility of the COF in Dallas. Donating the newsletters to the library was also a form of outreach. The newsletter let gay men and lesbians who may have felt isolated know that they were not alone, and that there was a gay organization in Dallas where they could safely meet and interact with other gay people.[41]

By the late 1960s, the Circle of Friends became a member of the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO) which meant that Dallas' gay civil rights movement was officially in conversation with the national gay civil rights movement. Though records show that the COF was a member of NACHO by 1967, it is not exactly clear when the COF joined the conference. Phil Johnson was the first president of the COF, and he represented the organization at NACHO's gathering in Washington, D.C. in 1967. The groups that would eventually form NACHO first came together in early 1966, when representatives of fifteen homophile organizations convened in Kansas City with the intent of reestablishing working

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[40] Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 52-53.
[41] Ibid, 52.

interrelationships among the various homophile groups. Some of the homophile leaders who went to Kansas City arrived there with well-defined goals—to create a tightly structured national body, bound by a militant philosophy, that would allow the movement to communicate with one voice and act on a unified agenda.[42]

Although homophile militants did not obtain their goal of a single national homophile organization, the Kansas City meeting—and annual conferences held each summer for the remainder of the decade—allowed the militants to attain much of the substance, if not the form, of what they wanted. In August 1966 movement groups created North American Conference of Homophile Organizations, a loose federation that encouraged common projects. Under NACHO's auspices they established a national legal fund that financed a number of court cases, including challenges to the exclusion of gay immigrants, bar closings, and the rights of gay military personnel. NACHO sponsored a variety of protests. Simultaneous demonstrations across many cities maximized the chances of obtaining press coverage. The conference also produced studies of gay individuals and the law, as well as of discrimination in employment. Finally, NACHO's regional meetings became an effective means of starting homophile organizations in areas that still remained outside of the domain of the movement.[43]

In the summer of 1968 two Circle of Friends members attended the fourth NACHO meeting in Chicago, Illinois. Their names were Pete Peters and Paul Russell. The two men were also a long-term couple. Peters and Russell not only attended the meeting, but they also served on the new organizations committee. The gathering that Peters and Russell attended happened to be

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[42] D' Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 197-198; "The Ampersand - Circle of Friends Monthly Newsletter."
[43] Ibid.

a special one. At that meeting, Frank Kameny, famed gay rights leader, authored the statement "Gay is Good." Kameny said that he was inspired to create the statement after watching Stokely Carmichael lead a Black Power rally on television. At that rally Carmichael declared that "Black is Beautiful." In making that statement Carmichael urged African Americans to see the beauty in their race and take pride in it. Kameny saw the "Gay is Good" statement as a way of insisting that "'homosexuality is good—positively, and without reservation.'" Kameny's retort borrowed the slang term "'gay'" to reference the new positive identity. Kameny argued that the phrase would help "'establish in the homosexual community and its members feelings of pride, self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth.'" Kameny's statement was the only item endorsed unanimously at that year's fractious meeting.[44]

When the Circle of Friends joined NACHO, it marked the moment when Dallas' gay civil rights movement officially entered into a conversation with the national gay civil rights movement. After the 1960s, Dallas' movement for gay rights would remain in conversation with the national movement for several decades. This means that certain leaders from Dallas' movement would be in contact with movement leaders from other cities and states. For example, some of Dallas' gay rights leaders would work with gay rights leaders in other cities in Texas, as well as with leaders in other states in order to show support, work to change laws, protests, or simply celebrate.

The year 1969 marked an important turning point for the gay rights movement.. The Stonewall riots in New York occurred during the summer, leading to a major shift in the movement. The police raided the Stonewall Inn, a private club on Christopher Street in New

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[44] Minutes for Fourth North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO) Meeting, August 12-17, 1968, 2 and 8-9, William B. Kelley & Chen K. Ooi Collection, Geber/Hart Library and Archives, Chicago, Illinois; Richard C. Vincent, *A Journey to the Light* (Unpublished Manuscript, Dallas, Texas, 1992, 1998) , 84 – This source is in author's possession; White, *Reforming Sodom*, 95-96.

York's Greenwich Village, in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969. The raid prompted several days of rioting by thousands of New Yorkers. As was the case with many lesbian and gay bars in that period, the Stonewall was owned as well as operated by men with connections to organized crime who made payments to the police to avoid raids and closures. At the time of the raid, the Stonewall Inn was one of New York City's most popular gay bars, in part because of its reputation for dancing and drugs.[45]

The Stonewall Inn had a wide variety of patrons. The majority of individuals who frequented the bar were working- and middle-class whites, ranging from the teens to the thirties. Even though whites were the majority, a significant number of African Americans and Latinos also went to the Stonewall. Gay men, lesbians, transsexuals, drag queens, street queens, sex workers, as well as others who transgressed gender and sexual norms, frequented the bar. On the night of June 28, the police lost control of the raid when patrons and passersby—gay, lesbian, straight, and trans—fought back with words, wits, and weapons in what became a gay power riot. During the next few days, thousands of New Yorkers fought the police for control of the streets near the Stonewall Inn. Over the next few years, thousands of LGBT activists battled one another over the meanings of the Stonewall uprising.[46]

The Stonewall riots are significant for several reasons. They are arguably the first time such a wide range of LGBT individuals rebelled against the police at one time. Another notable point about the uprising is that a number of straight individuals participated. A final noteworthy fact about the riots is that they lasted for several days. Even though there had been other acts of

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[45] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 79.
[46] Ibid, 79-80.

resistance carried out by LGBT individuals in the 1960s, such as the sit-in at Dewey's in Philadelphia in 1965, the Compton's Cafeteria riot in San Francisco in 1966, and gay bar demonstrations in Los Angeles in 1967 and 1968, there had not been one of the same scope as Stonewall.[47]

The Stonewall rebellion helped transform the gay rights movement into the gay liberation movement. The uprising at the Stonewall Inn showed LGBT people all over the United States that a diverse group of individuals had an investment in helping gay people free themselves from oppression. The Stonewall riots also demonstrated that LGBT women and men could stand up to those in power and obtain a certain level of victory. These things together gave queer individuals new ways to think about how to bring change to their lives.

In Dallas in 1969, Ruth "Rob" Shivers became a member of the Circle of Friends. Shivers joined the COF with her partner, Myra Rae Deverse. Both women were white, and both of them identified as lesbian. Based on available records about the COF in the 1960s, it is not clear if Deverse and Shivers were the first lesbians to join the organization. One fact that the record does show is that Shivers accomplished a great deal during her time as a member of the COF. Shivers, like Phil Johnson, was a southerner. She was born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1930. Shivers lived a full and productive life prior to joining the Circle of Friends. She attended nursing school where she graduated with honors. Shivers also studied at a theological school, although the name of that institution cannot be found. After attending the religious school, Shivers spent ten years working as a full-time minister and evangelist. In these positions she worked in a variety of places, including

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[47] Ibid, 81.

a one-room school and three years in the Kentucky mountains. While accomplishing various goals for herself, Shivers also married a man to whom she was wedded for six years, and had a son.[48]

In May of 1962 Shivers left the ministry and moved to Dallas. This is when she came out as a lesbian for the second time in her life. Shivers first came out when she was eighteen, but she had given up that part of her life when she was "saved" in 1952. After moving to Dallas, Shivers continued to be highly productive. She worked at a psychiatric hospital for a good while. Shivers also wrote for a local black newspaper, *The Dallas Post Tribune*. As a writer for that newspaper Shivers was widely read and admired by the African-American community. In 1968 Shivers met her partner, Myra Rae Deverse. The two were married in a religious ceremony by a straight minister in August of 1969. Even though one record states that Shivers had a son, it does not say whether she took him to Dallas with her.[49]

Though one document reveals that Shivers had a son, she most likely left him with her ex-husband when she relocated to Dallas. This can be inferred for two reasons. One, Shivers came out of the closest a second time when she moved to Dallas in the early 1960s. During the time period that Shivers was married and became a mother, which was between the early fifties and early sixties, a good number of lesbians felt guilty about rearing children in lesbian households. These women felt this way because of the pervasive idea that children were better off in heterosexual families. Since it is possible that Shivers was a lesbian mother who believed that children did better in heterosexual families, there is a good chance that she left her son with his father when she moved to Dallas. In addition, because of her sexual orientation Shivers was

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[48] Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. The Channel, Volume 2, Number 3, May 27, 1973, periodical May 27, 1973, 5-6; (https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc304834/m1/1/: accessed January 22, 2017), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu.
[49] Ibid, 6.

vulnerable to having her parental rights legally challenged by her ex-husband. Two, even though there is a decent amount of information about Shivers, her work and other pursuits, there is not much information about her as a mother.[50]

Richard Vincent also joined the Circle of Friends in 1969. He was a white, gay man. Unlike Phil Johnson and Rob Shivers, Vincent was a mid-westerner. He was born in Kirksville, Missouri in 1924. Vincent served in the military as a young man just as Johnson had. He also graduated from Purdue University with a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1947. Vincent, like Shivers, had received some religious training. Vincent, who had been baptized Catholic just before his college graduation, studied for the priesthood in the Franciscan Order in the 1950s. Even though Vincent received training to become a priest, he was never ordained.[51]

Vincent's account of his original attempt to become a religious leader and what happened after that initial attempt was not realized, shows a man who remained dedicated to making a positive impact in the lives of others. In 1953, after having worked as an engineer for six years, Vincent stated that he heard the call, "The irresistible call of Christ to follow Him." Vincent responded to that call by entering studies for the priesthood in the Franciscan Order – Order of the Friars Minor. While in that Order, Vincent lived a cloistered life. He had no contact with newspapers, radio, or television. After three years in the Order, Vincent became dejected due to the feeling that he should be a parish priest instead of a teacher, as he had been assigned. Because of this, he left the monastery. While awaiting his dispensation from his religious vows, Vincent

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[50] Daniel Winunwe Rivers, *Radical Relations: Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers & Their Children in the United States since World War II* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 28.
[51] Richard Vincent, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, March 14, 2006, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 1-3 and 16.

did construction work in a retreat house in Los Cruces, New Mexico. Once Vincent received his dispensation he returned to Los Angeles and resumed his career as an engineer. Outside of his work as an engineer, Vincent spent his time helping Mexican immigrants get situated in the United States by sponsoring them. Vincent paid all of the expenses for one immigrant through his high school years and at the University of Maryland. That individual went on to become a teacher in Maryland. Vincent sponsored Mexican immigrants from 1960 to 1968.[52]

In 1970 lesbians and gay men in Dallas and their allies continued the tasks of building a gay community within the city, and working to help others get a better understanding of this embryonic community bound together by its members' sexual identity. By 1970 the apartment ministers who had joined the COF in the mid-1960s were now part of the Dallas Young Adult Institute (DYAI). It is not clear when the ministers' group took on this new name. One thing that is evident about the DYAI, is that its ministers still remained dedicated to gay men and women in Dallas and the issues these individuals considered important. In the spring of 1970 the DYAI sponsored a conference titled "The Homosexual and Society." The event was promoted as the first of its kind in the Southwest. The conference lasted two days; it was held on April 17 and 18.[53]

The conference on "The Homosexual and Society" brought together professional people to discuss homosexuality. One speaker included Dr. Jerry Lewis, the executive director of Dallas' Timberlawn Foundation, Inc. The other speaker was Dr. Page Keeton, Dean of the University of

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[52] Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. The Channel, Volume 2, Number 3, May 27, 1973, periodical May 27, 1973, 12-13.

[53] "Homosexual To Be Topic Of Meeting," *The Dallas Morning News*, April 9, 1970, News Bank: The Dallas Morning News Historical Archive 1885-1977, Dallas Public Library Electronic Database; Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 83.

Texas Law School. In Dr. Lewis' talk, "What is Homosexuality?" he presented a review of current research on homosexuality. Dr. Keeton, chairman of the committee that worked on revising the Texas penal code, delivered an address titled "The Law and the Homosexual." In his talk, Dean Keeton analyzed the current legal situation of the "homosexual" in Texas and the United States. In addition to the two speakers, there were discussion groups on religion, employment, armed forces, legal issues, education, and counseling. In Richard Vincent's unpublished autobiography he states that Circle of Friends members attended the conference. However, he did not go into specifics about who the COF members were. The conference announcement mentioned Ed Coursen and Doug McLean of the Dallas Young Adult Institute. Reverend McLean, coordinator of the conference, announced that even though participation was by invitation only, persons who, by professional position, had concern with the topic of homosexuality were eligible to attend.[54]

The conference on homosexuality sponsored by the DYAI was important because of where it occurred, and given the topics that it dealt with in relation to homosexuality. This first-of-its-kind event in the region happened in the city of Dallas. The conference had as it speakers both a mental health and a legal professional. The professions both speakers represented were oppressive to gay people at the time the conference was held. Another noteworthy point about the conference is that it covered a variety of topics that were important to gay men and lesbians in the early 1970s. The conference dealt with issues that affected one's sexual orientation. Planning by the ministers at the DYAI demonstrates that they put a great deal of time and thought into organizing the conference on homosexuality. The fact that the progressive ministers put together such a

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[54] Ibid.

conference is another illustration of the supportive role they played in the formation of Dallas' LGBT community.

Even though *The Dallas Morning News* ran a detailed story about "The Homosexual and Society" conference prior to the event, the newspaper did not write a follow-up story on it. The day after the conference concluded, Dallas' other major newspaper, *The Dallas Times Herald*, did run a story discussing "The Homosexual and Society" conference. The paper revealed the location of the conference, the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas. The newspaper stated that seventy-five invited guests had been in attendance, and that some of those guests were "homosexuals." This corroborates what Richard Vincent stated in his autobiography about the attendance of COF members at the event. It makes sense that COF members attended because they had worked closely with the DYAI for several years by the time the conference happened in the spring of 1970. Plus, gay people were the subject of the conference. Based on statements that were made at the conference, the event seems to have been one that was supportive of gay people. For example, Dr. Lewis, the psychiatrist from the Timberlawn foundation, said about gay individuals, "There is no evidence to support the claim that all homosexuals are psychologically disturbed." He added, "There is much to suggest at the present time that sexual activity between consenting adults in private is not a legal matter." Both of the doctor's views relate that he was progressive in his thinking about homosexuality. In 1970 the majority of psychiatrists did not hold this view. There are no records related to the conference that indicate there were hostile speakers or exchanges at the event.[55]

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[55] "Little Change Seen in Texas Law on Sodomy," *The Dallas Times Herald*, April 19, 1970, UNT LGBT Archive, The Dallas Way Small Collections, Marion Hayes Papers (The Dallas Way) 1970, 1977, 1989, 1991, 1997, Box 1, Folder 16; Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 83.

In the same year the DYAI sponsored its conference on homosexuality, members of the COF started to think about forming a Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in Dallas. The Reverend Troy Perry, a Pentecostal minister who had been expelled from his denomination for being gay, founded the MCC, which was a Christian church that included a special ministry to gay men and lesbians. Perry formed the original church in Los Angeles in October 1968. Reverend Perry founded the church with twelve other people who were gathered in his living room. A few weeks before forming the church, Perry had placed an advertisement in *The Advocate*, a gay newspaper, to find out how many gay individuals would be interested in starting the kind of church that he envisioned. Once members of the COF became aware of the MCC, some of them paid visits to the church's founder. In late 1969 Rob Shivers and Myra Rae Deverse traveled to California for vacation. While they were there they met Reverend Perry. Shivers and Deverse were impressed with the minister. A few months later Richard Vincent and his partner, Victor Pass, went to Los Angeles on a business trip for Vincent and to visit Vincent's mother. While in Los Angeles, the two men visited with Perry, and they were also impressed with the minister. Pass and Vincentasked Perry how to go about starting an MCC in Dallas. Perry instructed them to go back and find out if there was enough interest in starting an MCC.[56]

In 1970, after several members of the COF had flown to California to meet with Troy Perry, about a quarter of the members of the COF decided that they wanted to start an MCC in Dallas. This decision was made at a meeting held in Rob Shivers' home. On the evening of July 30, 1970 twelve people from the fifty-member COF gathered in the front half of the duplex where Shivers

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[56] Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 84; Patrick S. Cheng, *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* (New York: Seabury Books, 2011), 29; Melissa Wilcox, "Of Markets and Missions: The Early History of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches," *Journal of Religion and American Culture* 11 (2001), 84-85; Richard Vincent, Oral History Interview, 4-7.

lived. The COF had met to have prayer and to discuss the possibility of starting a MCC in Dallas. Those in attendance were: Rob Shivers, Myra Rae Deverse, Patricia Ann (Pat) McCormick, Paul Russell, Pete Peters, Reverend Doug McLean, Phil Johnson, and three other unnamed COF members. Everyone who was present agreed that starting an MCC in Dallas would be worthwhile, however, only six of those who attended the meeting were in a position to be active and supportive of the undertaking. It is not clear exactly who the six COF members were that could devote the time and energy to forming an MCC, but they met the following week. In September of 1970 MCC Dallas was formally established as a mission. Rob Shivers functioned as the Worship Coordinator and Richard Vincent served as the Chairperson of the Board of Overseers. Since MCC Dallas was not a church, the worship coordinator's responsibilities included finding a meeting location and preparing some form of spiritual exercise in Bible study or homilies. The Board of Overseers did the tasks of a Board of Directors in a chartered church.[57]

Within a year the MCC mission in Dallas became Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas (MCC Dallas). The new church was chartered on May 23, 1971. When this happened, MCC Dallas became the eighth church in the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC). On the day that MCC Dallas was chartered, forty-six people participated in the ceremony. Of those who attended, thirty-nine were members. Since Myra Rae Deverse had died the previous Thanksgiving she was posthumously received as a member of the church. This gave MCC Dallas a total of forty charter members. The Reverend Louis Loynes of MCC Los Angeles represented the Fellowship at the Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas charter ceremony. On the day that MCC Dallas received its charter it became the first Christian Church

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[57] Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 84-87; Richard Vincent, Oral History Interview, 4-7.

in Dallas with a primary outreach to LGBT people. After MCC Dallas was established as a church, members voted on who would be the pastor. Rob Shivers, David Cardin, and Richard Vincent ran for the pastor's position. Vincent received more than 50% of the vote which made him MCC Dallas' first pastor.[58]

In the summer of 1972 Dallas' LGBT community had a major coming out party when it held its first Gay Pride Parade. Gay pride parades or marches became a tradition when LGBT activists in New York, San Francisco, Chicago and Los Angeles held street marches commemorating the one year anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion. When these events began, they were referred to as "'liberation'" or "'freedom'" marches. Over time they evolved into pride marches or parades. Even though they can be entertaining, gay pride parades are a form a political protests. Over the course of several decades gay pride parades and protest marches became important tools that helped to bring about not only awareness, but also significant political and legal changes within the LGBT community.[59]

The COF sponsored Dallas' first Gay Pride Parade. Rob Shivers, the COF's president, and a lesbian named Chris McKee, the COF's vice president, co-chaired and organized the parade. While the COF was planning the event, the group received its parade permit without difficulty from the Dallas Police Department. However, on the Thursday before the parade was set to take

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[58] "Dallas MCC Becomes #8," *The Advocate*, June 23 – July 6, 1971, Vertical File: Churches – Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas (DPL); Vincent, Oral History Interview, 7-8 and 15-16; "Church Gets Its Charter," *Dallas Times Herald*, May 24, 1971, Vertical File: Churches – Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas (DPL); Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 91-92 and 99.

[59] "200 'gay libbers' march downtown," *Dallas Times Herald*, June 25, 1972, Vertical File: Clubs & Organizations: Dallas Gay Pride Association, DPL.; Raymond A. Smith and Donald P. Haider-Markel, *Gay and Lesbian Americans and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2002), 43-44.

place, members of the Dallas City Council held an emergency meeting to consider rescinding the parade permit. Councilman Doug Fain was the most vocal opponent of the parade. Fain stated in relation to the parade, "'Homosexuality is hated like the seven year itch and people's tempers get out of hand over something like this.'" Fain implied that if the parade occurred, there would be anti-gay violence. After council members debated for close to an hour about whether or not to revoke the permit, a decision was made. City Attorney Alex Bickley informed the City Council that it had no alternative under the law but to allow the COF to keep its parade permit. Bickley explained that the COF had the constitutional right to have a Gay Pride Parade. Even though it might not have been Bickley's intention, he helped Dallas' newly visible LGBT community secure its first civil rights victory when he ruled that the Circle of Friends' parade permit would not be rescinded.[60]

After the issue with the parade permit was resolved between the Dallas City Council and the City Attorney, Dallas' queer community had its first successful Gay Pride Parade. The parade included a diverse group of participants. There were white people as well as people of color. There were straight and queer people. The event also included individuals of various ages. Several drag queens participated in Dallas' first Gay Pride Parade. While reflecting on that parade and the role that drag queens played in it, Phil Johnson commented, "These were drag queens, if you can imagine, in their gold lame dresses and their big boobs and their coiffured wigs - - these elaborate wigs - - and their elaborate make-up. They were there before us." According to Johnson the drag

[60] Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 60-63; Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 109-110; "Dallas Gay Pride Parade," "Dallas Gay Pride Parade," *Sisters* 3, no. 9 (1972): 18-20, http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/sfbagals/Sisters/1972_Sisters_Vol03_No09_Sep.pdf accessed January 23, 2017, Digital Collections, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, California; "Council upset, but can't halt homosexual parade," Vertical File: Clubs & Organizations: Dallas Gay Pride Association (DPL).

queens were adorned and ready to start that day's festivities before anyone else who was taking part in the historic event. In addition to people from the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex participating in the parade, delegations from Texas cities such as Austin, Houston and San Antonio attended the event. Individuals representing the states of Oklahoma and Iowa also participated in Dallas' first Gay Pride Parade.[61]

Even though the parade had no incidents of violence, it did have a few rowdy onlookers, and one highly judgmental participant. Some parade onlookers made catcalls as the parade moved through Downtown. Addie Barlow Frazier, a senior citizen who had ties to the Ku Klux Klan, marched at the end of the parade. Frazier carried a sign that quoted the Old Testament book of Leviticus. The chapter and verse was 20:13, which many fundamentalists and conservative Christians believe condemns gay people to death because of homosexual activity. The only thing that Frazier gained from marching in the parade was a good amount of attention from onlookers and the local media.[62]

The Gay Pride Parade was a momentous event for Dallas' fledgling queer community. The parade was the first of its kind not only in Dallas, but in the entire state of Texas. The Gay Pride Parade was important because it increased the visibility of lesbians and gay men within the city of Dallas. Even though the COF organized the parade, Chris McKee and Rob Shivers, two lesbians within the organization, co-chaired the event. The work that the two women did in planning the successful parade is an illustration of the important role that lesbians played in the early history of

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[61] "Dallas Parade Shows Gay Pride," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 1: Resource Center Records, Sub-Series 3: Clippings, Box 38, Folder 1; "Dallas Gay Pride Parade," *Sisters* 3, no. 9 (1972): 20; Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 61.

[62] "Dallas Parade Shows Gay Pride,"; Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 62; Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 110; Leviticus 20: 13 as quoted from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/r/rsv/rsv-idx?type=DIV2&byte=488363 accessed on April 20, 2018.

Dallas' LGBT community. Another point that made the Gay Pride Parade significant was the battle that waged within City Hall to determine if the event would actually happen. When the Dallas City Council attempted to rescind the parade permit, the district attorney reminded the council that the COF's right under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution guaranteed the organization could peacefully assemble and put on its Gay Pride Parade in the city. Dallas' queer community secured its first civil rights victory not by protest or a legal battle, but through Dallas' City Attorney.

This chapter has demonstrated that the years 1965-1972 were a transformative period of time for gay men and lesbians living in the city of Dallas. During that time gay women and men began to come out of the shadows and build a distinct and visible community for themselves within the conservative, southern city. The first step in building a queer community in Dallas came when Phil Johnson, a gay man, and four of his gay male friends decided to form the Circle of Friends on January 1, 1965. The COF was the first homophile organization in the state of Texas. In 1966 Reverends McLean, Coursen, Hobus, and Bearden, four straight progressive ministers, joined the COF. Things began to change for the better for the COF when the ministers joined the social group. The four pastors made it possible for the COF to have safe meetings on church property. The ministers also introduced COF members to other non-gay groups in Dallas. Most important, the progressive pastors organized a supportive and informative conference on homosexuality in 1970, which was the first of its kind in the Southwest.

In the early 1970s, gay men and lesbians in Dallas increased their visibility within the city when members of the Circle of Friends founded an MCC mission. After the mission had been in existence for just under a year, it became Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. In 1972 the

Circle of Friends organized Dallas' first Gay Pride Parade. In the process of putting on the parade the COF helped Dallas' newly visible queer community secure its first civil rights victory when the city of Dallas was forced to recognize the COF's right to have its parade.

Even though community can be defined in many ways, from the mid-1960s through the early 1970s, gay men and lesbians in Dallas formed organizations. organizations that brought together individuals who shared a queer identity. Dallas had gay bars during this period but the LGBT community did not grow out of these sites because bars were often raided, or there was the threat of a raid since the Dallas police put so much time into monitoring gay and lesbian individuals. This chapter has shown that the DPD also monitored gatherings of LGBT individuals in their own homes. All of this helps to explain why Dallas' queer community was born out of the first social and religious organizations that queer men and women founded in the city.

CHAPTER II

QUEER ORGANIZATIONS AND A NEIGHBORHOOD PROVIDE QUEER PEOPLE IN DALLAS WITH A SENSE OF COMMUNITY FROM THE EARLY TO MID-1970s

By the early seventies Dallas had a visible queer community that was organized around two queer organizations: the Circle of Friends and Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. The COF was a homophile organization which had been founded in 1965, and MCC Dallas was a Christian Church with a special outreach to gay men and lesbians that had been formed in 1970. The most high profile event that queer people in Dallas had collectively participated in by the early seventies was the first Gay Pride Parade. The COF organized the parade and held it during national pride week in the summer of 1972. This chapter argues that 1972 to 1976 represent years of tremendous change for Dallas' fledgling queer community. The COF and MCC Dallas evolved as they continued to provide gay men and lesbians in Dallas with a sense of community, and worked to improve the lives of queer people within the city. During these years Dallas' LGBT community became more political when the first gay political organization was formed in Dallas. These developments happened as queer people in Dallas created a distinct and identifiable geographic community for themselves.

In the summer of 1972, the COF was still going strong in Dallas. That summer, the Circle of Friends had put on Dallas' first Gay Pride Parade. Dallas' pride parade was also the first one that was held in the state of Texas. The parade proved to be a great success for queer people in the conservative southern city. A month prior to the parade, some members of the Circle of Friends had taken part in another important but low-key event that pertained to gay individuals. That was the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) annual convention which was held in Dallas. Some notable gay rights leaders and activists were present at the event. One leader was Barbara Gittings

and another was Frank Kameny. Phil Johnson and Chris Mckee were two COF members who attended the convention. The Circle of Friends had a booth at the event called "Gay, Proud and Healthy." McKee and Johnson worked the booth.[1]

The gay rights activists who attended the convention were not what was most notable about the event. What transpired at the convention is what was significant. There was a panel that discussed the topic of homosexuality. It was titled, "Psychiatry: Friend or Foe to Homosexuals? A Dialogue." Kameny and Gittings were panelists. Gittings was responsible for getting that year's most important panelist to participate at the convention. That person was a gay masked psychiatrist who was referred to as Dr. H. Anonymous. It would take twenty-two years for him to formally reveal that his name was Dr. John Fryer. In addition to the mask, the psychiatrist wore a huge wig and a baggy suit in order to fully conceal his identity. He also employed a special microphone to distort his voice. When the doctor spoke, he delivered a powerful message about what it was like to live as a closeted mental health professional. Dr. Fryer conveyed that he lived a life of repressive agony.[2]

In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses in the Diagnostic and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). When the APA made this change, homosexuality had been officially listed as a mental illness since 1952.

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[1] Marcia M. Gallo, *Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Rise of the Lesbian Rights Movement* (Emeryville: Seal Press, 2007), 176; *Sisters* 3, no. 9 (1972): 21, http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/sfbagals/Sisters/1972_Sisters_Vol03_No09_Sep.pdf accessed January 23, 2017, Digital Collections, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, California; "After Stonewall Postcard for PBS, Phil Johnson with Frank Kameny at the American Psychiatric Association Banquet in Dallas, Texas, 1972," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 1: Personal Collection, Box 64, Folder 3.

[2] Gallo, *Different Daughters*, 176; "Dr. John Fryer, 65, Psychiatrist Who Said in 1972 He Was Gay," *The New York Times*, March 5, 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/05/us/dr-john-fryer-65-psychiatrist-who-said-in-1972-he-was-gay.html accessed August 10, 2018.

Even though a good number of gay activists had worked for a years to have homosexuality delisted, it finally happened in the early seventies. The speech that Dr. H. Anonymous delivered at the APA's convention in Dallas is credited with influencing the organization's decision to finally make its critical change regarding gay people and mental illness. Even though no one from Dallas' LGBT community participated on the panel that included Dr. H. Anonymous, it is noteworthy that such an important APA convention relating to gay men and lesbians occurred in Dallas, and that some Circle of Friends members were present at the event.[3] The decision that the American Psychiatric Association made to remove homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses represents an early victory for the gay rights movement in the United States. When the APA delisted homosexuality, it helped to lessen the stigma that was associated with identifying as lesbian or gay.

The year 1972, the same year that the American Psychiatric Association held its convention in Dallas, was an election year. By that time, the Circle of Friends had become more political. For example, a COF flyer from 1972 urged gay men and lesbians to vote. The advertisement stated, "If you believe in gay rights register to vote!" Below that statement there were two lines that said that the voting message was a public service announcement of the new COF of 1972. Near the bottom of the flyer, there was another message telling people to look for Circle of Friends' voter registration booths. At the very bottom of the COF advertisement, there was an address where one could write in order to receive more information about the Circle of Friends, as well as a phone number that one could call. In the same section of the flyer, the COF explained that if someone

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[3] Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang), 171; Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 248; "Psychiatrist John E. Fryer," *The Washington Post*, March 10, 2003, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2003/03/10/psychiatrist-john-e-fryer/c357f160-54b0-4691-bfe5-e29b86206c62/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.01765d5aa9a2 accessed August 10, 2018.

wanted to become a member of the organization, they could enclose $10.00 to purchase a one-year membership. Even though the advertisement contained a good amount of useful information, some important information was missing. For example, the flyer did not state where COF voter registration booths would be located, or how long the booths would exist. Since the advertisement contained an address and phone number, maybe someone wanting the information that had been omitted from the flyer could obtain it by utilizing the contact information that was provided. The significance of the Circle of Friends' advertisement is that it shows that the organization was aware that important change for gay people was going to come through their political involvement. The COF's flyer illustrates just how much the organization had evolved since being founded as a social group in the mid-1960s.[4]

When the Circle of Friends became more political in the early 1970s it instituted a new practice regarding those seeking political office in Dallas. That practice was to send questionnaires to political figures asking them their views on homosexuality, and how the candidates would treat lesbians and gay men if elected to office. In 1972 the COF sent a questionnaire to Eddie Bernice Johnson who was running for the Texas House of Representatives from Dallas. Johnson was a young, middle-class African-American woman who had worked as a registered nurse. Prior to running for office, Johnson served on the nursing staff of the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Dallas for fifteen years. She was also a divorced mother of a teen-aged son. When Johnson received her questionnaire, she not only responded to fifteen political and non-political yes or no questions pertaining to gay people, but she also provided a detailed response in the section of the

[4] "An Advertisement Urging People to Vote and Telling Them How to Join the Circle of Friends–1972," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 5: Organizations, Sub-Series 8: Multiple Organizations, Box 477:C-G, Folder 12.

form where respondents could elaborate on particular issues. Since Johnson was a registered nurse who held degrees from St. Mary's College of Notre Dame in Indiana and Texas Christian University (TCU) in Ft. Worth, and had a specialty in psychiatry, her answers to the questionnaire carried a certain amount of weight.[5]

Johnson's comments revealed that she was a mental health professional who did not believe that homosexuality was a mental illness. She communicated this when she wrote, "I have worked in psychiatry for a number of years. I'm not one to condemn life styles [sic] of people that they are satisfied with as long as the rights of others are not infringed upon. I am not homosexual myself but feel this is [a] right or rather a choice open to people as a freedom." In addition to signaling that she did not think that homosexuality was a sickness, Johnson's answers to the yes or no questions related that she would treat gay and lesbian constituents fairly. As this work develops, it will show that Johnson would go beyond treating lesbians and gay men in a fair manner. She would become an important straight ally to Dallas' LGBT community.[6]

In the summer of 1973 the Circle of Friends organized Dallas' second Gay Pride Parade just as the organization had done the previous year. Chris McKee was the parade chairwoman. The congregation at MCC Dallas voted just as it did the year before to support and participate in the parade. Dallas' second Gay Pride Parade had a wide variety of participants just as the first pride parade did. The day's festivities were preceded by a dedication of the American flag and a memorial wreath in honor of those who had recently died in the New Orleans fire in the Upstairs

[5] "Woman Seeks Seat In House," March 12, 1972 and "Candidate 'Won on Issues'," June 5, 1972, *Dallas Morning News*, Newsbank: The Dallas Morning News Historical Archive 1885-1977, (DPL); "COF Questionnaire from 1972 – Eddie Bernice Johnson," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings – Subject Files, Box 74, Folder 11.

[6] "COF Questionnaire from 1972 – Eddie Bernice Johnson"

Lounge. The Upstairs Lounge was a gay bar where a fire had been intentionally set that killed a group of mostly queer people. The men and women who perished in the fire were attending an MCC church service since the bar functioned as a church on Sunday evenings. Even though the parade drew about one-third of the audience of the previous year, the parade was still a success. The turnout for the second pride parade was not as large as that of the first pride parade because the second did not garner as much media attention.[7] The COF's continued interest in organizing a second pride parade is an example of its interest in providing queer people in Dallas with a sense of community.

As the Circle of Friends became more political in the early 1970s, the organization continued to do the important work of educating people in Dallas about homosexuality. The COF did this by going to speak at institutions or before groups that were interested in learning about homosexuality from lesbians and gay men. For example, in the fall of 1973 the Circle of Friends went to Southern Methodist University (SMU) to discuss the topic of homosexuality and explain what the COF was and the work that the group did. The day after members of the Circle of Friends gave a talk in the Student Center Lounge that had been sponsored by the Student Activities Directorate, the SMU newspaper, *The Daily Campus*, interviewed them. The COF members who participated in the two events included Phil Johnson, who went by the pseudonym Steve at this

[7] "Letter from Chris McKee about Second Gay Pride Parade," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 5: Organizations, Sub-Series 8: Multiple Organizations, Box 477: C-G, Folder, 13; Richard C. Vincent, *A Journey to the Light* (Unpublished Manuscript, Dallas, Texas, 1992, 1998) , 123-124 – This source is in author's possession; Jim Downs, *Stand by Me: The Forgotten History of Gay Liberation* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 17-20 and 24; Phil Johnson: An Oral History Interview, Conducted by Gerald D. Saxon, December 17, 1980 and January 2 and 28, 1981, (DPL), 64.

particular event, and a lesbian couple, Pat and Zita. The two women did not use their last names for fear of harassment or worse.[8]

Members of the Circle of Friends covered a lot of ground in their interview with the university newspaper. Phil Johnson explained that the COF was originally formed as a social group—a place were gay people could meet besides gay bars or in dangerous bathrooms. He also told of how the Circle of Friends had become more political. Zita and Pat discussed how the gay community needed to establish a better vocabulary about itself, so that gay people could discuss themselves, their mates and other aspects of their community better. Near the end of their interview with *The Daily Campus*, COF members stated that one of the main goals of the gay rights movement was the removal of legal restraint on "homosexual" acts. As the interview was concluding, Pat discussed how members of the mental health community had begun to move away from the project of trying to cure homosexuality. She thought that was a move in the right direction.[9]

After being in existence for a decade, the Circle of Friends changed its name. In 1975 the COF became the Gay Organization of Dallas (GOOD). Phil Johnson stated that the group changed its name because it wanted to be more up front about the kind of organization it was, so it made a bold statement about being a gay group. Johnson said that GOOD's purpose was to help advance gay liberation in Dallas. Even though the Circle of Friends took on a new name, the organization basically functioned the way that it always had. It continued to mostly be a social and educational

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[8] "Homosexuals explain political, social problems," *The Daily Campus*, November 29, 1973, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings – Subject Files, Box 71, Folder 3.

[9] Ibid.

group. Records indicate that a good number of the people who had been part of the COF were also members of GOOD. This includes the straight progressive ministers Doug McLean and Ed Coursen who had been with the Circle of Friends since the mid-1960s. It is not clear when the ministers Bill Bearden and Bob Hobus ended their association with Circle of Friends. It appears to have happened in the early 1970s, because their names are not on COF/GOOD documents after that time.[10]

Shortly after adopting its new name, the Gay Organization of Dallas did a variety of things to engage with gay and straight people who were not involved with the gay community. For example, GOOD initiated a membership campaign. The organization placed advertisements in the *Iconoclast*, Dallas' alternative newspaper, and in the SMU and University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) campus newspapers. The ads yielded some positive responses from people who were interested in participating in the gay rights movement, as well as from those who sought information about gay issues. The Gay Organization of Dallas cooperated with other organizations in North Texas to provide speakers to various groups. Groups that GOOD spoke before were at the Dallas County Junior Colleges, SMU, and UTA.[11] The work that GOOD did to engage with more gay and straight people in Dallas, and to educate them about the gay rights movement and other gay issues is another illustration of how the organization worked to improve the lives of queer people in Dallas. In theory, if more people were well informed about lesbians and gay men, they would be less fearful of them, and they could have healthy interactions and relationships with

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[10] "'G.O.O.D. News' (GOOD)," March 22, 1975, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings – Subject Files, Box 74, Folder 11; "GOOD Membership List from November 1975," Box 74, Folder 11.

[11] "'G.O.O.D. News' (GOOD)," March 22, 1975.

queer people. If straight individuals got to know gay people and developed respect for them, they would eventually see gay men and lesbians as equals who deserved the same rights that straight people had.

Even though some people and organizations in Dallas had gotten use to the idea there were visible gay organizations in the city, as well as hearing from representatives from those groups, some individuals within Dallas still would not tolerate them. For example, after members of the Gay Organization of Dallas spoke at Richland College, a school that was part of the Dallas County Community College System, students complained. Those who made complaints were upset by the thought of "open gay" individuals speaking on campus. After students voiced their disapproval of openly gay people giving talks at their school, the Chancellor of the Community College System issued an edict. The Chancellor stated that atheists and openly gay individuals were not allowed to speak on the campuses.[12]

Richland College students objecting to openly gay people visiting their school to speak about homosexuality shows that Dallas was still a conservative city in the mid-1970s. When one considers the various social movements that occurred in the sixties and seventies, and how young people were heavily involved with or led most of them, it is interesting to see that some college students were outraged about openly gay people coming to their campus to discuss homosexuality. The Richland College students' response is not so surprising since Dallas was once referred to as the religious capital of Texas. The chancellor's response to the students' complaints also underscores how conservative the atmosphere of Dallas was in the 1970s. The chancellor's barring of atheists and openly gay speakers from the Dallas County Community College System shows

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[12] Ibid.

that the school system did not foster a culture of free thought, individuality, or tolerance. The chancellorhad assumptions about what his students believed, and who they were. For example, when he issued his edict, he did not consider the fact that atheists and gay individuals were students in the Dallas County Community College System. The aftermath of GOOD members speaking at Richland College shows that gay individuals in Dallas had a lot of work to do with regard to helping to change how straight people in the city viewed them.[13]

The Gay Organization of Dallas did not last as long under its new name as the organization had lasted under the name Circle of Friends. The new organization lasted a little more than a year. The group had its last meeting in the spring of 1976. It is not clear why GOOD came to an end. It might have been because the organization was not growing, or it may have ended because the majority of the group were no longer interested in putting more time and energy into the Gay Organization of Dallas. Even though it was probably a somber occasion when the organization decided to stop meeting, the group had much to be proud of because it had accomplished a great deal in the decade of its existence. As this work has shown, the COF was the first gay organization not only in Dallas, but also in the state of Texas. The Circle of Friends had a direct connection to the formation of the first gay religious organization in Dallas, Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. The COF organized the first and second Gay Pride Parades in the city of Dallas. In addition, the Circle of Friends and GOOD did a great deal of important work in educating non-gays about lesbians and gay men, and the issues that were important to them. So, the Circle of Friends/Gay

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[13] "John L. Bainbridge, Author, Is Dead at 78," *The New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/1992/11/13/obituaries/john-l-bainbridge-author-is-dead-at-78.html accessed January 15, 2017.

Organization of Dallas ended up playing a vital role in the formation of Dallas' LGBT community.[14]

As the Circle of Friends evolved in the 1970s and continued to provide gay men and lesbians with a sense of community and helped improve the lives of queer people in Dallas, Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas did the same things in this period. Shortly after MCC Dallas became the eighth chartered church in the United Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in the spring of 1971, Reverend Richard Vincent selected Rob Shivers to be his assistant pastor. By the time that MCC Dallas was chartered, the church had been renting the Porch Chapel at the First Unitarian Church of Dallas on Normandy Avenue for nearly six months. The MCC mission settled there after holding services at several different locations in a span of just four months. Shivers had arranged for the MCC group to use the Porch Chapel as its regular meeting place.[15]

Since MCC Dallas was a Christian church with a special outreach to gay men and lesbians, it provided certain things to gay people in Dallas in the early 1970s that other Christian churches in the city did not offer. For example, in the spring of 1972, Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas had its first holy union between Robert "Bob" Burchfield and Evan "Lucky" Luckett. The couple had been together for five years before deciding to have their union blessed by God. Reverend Vincent conducted the ceremony for the two men.[16]

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[14] "GOOD Meeting Information for 1976," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings – Subject Files, Box 74, Folder 11.
[15] Richard C. Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 97 and 100; Mark Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door: American Religion in the Age of the Counterculture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 52.

[16] Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 105-106.

In the fall of 1972 MCC Dallas purchased its first building. This was a major accomplishment for the young church. After being a guest at the Unitarian church for nearly two years, MCC Dallas finally had a permanent home. The property that MCC Dallas acquired was located at 3834 Ross Avenue in East Dallas. The building had originally operated as maternity hospital. Since the building resembled an old castle, congregants gave it the nickname "Castle in Ruins." When MCC Dallas bought the property it was in extreme disrepair and required a great deal of work. Even though, the congregation at MCC Dallas was happy to have its own building. Members of the congregation demonstrated how pleased they were to have their own property by putting a great deal of time and energy into physically repairing the church themselves.[17]

Some gay bars in Dallas contributed to the purchase and repairs of the building that MCC Dallas acquired. They did this by holding fundraisers within the bars. Phil Johnson organized some groups who performed plays and put on other programs in order to raise money that went toward the purchase, as well as the cost of repairs, of MCC Dallas' new property. These events were held in various gay bars. A variety of people participated in the plays and programs to raise funds that benefitted MCC Dallas. Some of those individuals were members of the church and others were not.[18] The fact that gay bars held fundraisers to support MCC Dallas shows that the owners and managers of those establishments believed the young church was an important organization to

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[17] Richard Vincent, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, March 14, 2006, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 29-30; Mark Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door: American Religion in the Age of Counterculture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 52; Dennis Michael Mims, "Cathedral of Hope: A History of Progressive Christianity, Civil Rights, and Gay Social Activism in Dallas, Texas, 1965-1992," Master's thesis, University of North Texas, 2009, 44; "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance," May 11, 1981, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 62, Folder 68; "The Gay Part of Town: Out of the Closet, Into a Community," *This Week in Texas*, July 19 – July 25, 1996, 49, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 1: Personal Collection, Box 64, Folder 58.

[18] Vincent, Oral History Interview, 24; Phil Johnson, An Oral History Interview, Conducted by Gerald D. Saxon, December 17, 1980 and January 2 and 28, 1981, (DPL), 60.

support within Dallas' fledgling queer community. The people who were not members of MCC Dallas, and participated in the programs and plays that raised money for the church, also demonstrated that they thought MCC Dallas was worth supporting.

During the same time period that MCC Dallas purchased its first building, a fascinating event occurred that involved the church's senior pastor. In the fall of 1972, Reverend Richard Vincent, the minister who stressed that he was not political activist, officiated a history-making wedding. Vincent did this when he joined two men in marriage in Houston. This union represents the first time that two people of the same sex were legally married in the state of Texas. The wedding between William "Billie" Ert and Antonio Molina occurred on October 5, 1972 at the Harmony wedding chapel in Houston. Prior to the ceremony, Ert who was originally from the region between Buffalo, New York and Toronto, Canada, easily obtained a marriage license for the couple. The thirty year-old made a living as a female impersonator or drag queen; he performed in posh supper clubs in major cities in Canada and the U.S. under the name Mr. Vicki Karr. Ert also worked as a hair stylist. At one point he was a hair stylist for the actress Jayne Mansfield. Ert was in drag when he went to get the marriage license. The female clerk who issued the license stated that Ert's frosted, shoulder-length wig made the clerk believe that Ert was a woman. This explains how two men ended up with a marriage license.[19]

Antonio Molina was a thirty-three year-old former high school football player from Brownsville, Texas. After graduating from high school, Molina enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He

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[19] Vincent, Oral History Interview, 35; "Male Pair Becomes Legally Married," *The Dallas Morning News*, October 6, 1972, Newsbank: The Dallas Morning News Historical Archive 1885-1977, (DPL); "Unlikely Gay Marriage Pioneers Tied Knot in Houston," November 28, 2014, *The Houston Chronicle* http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/texas/article/Unlikely-gay-marriage-pioneers-tied-knot-in-5923174.php accessed September 23, 2016.

worked as a shipping clerk when he married Ert in the fall of 1972. Ert and Molina had met in Chicago in 1967 and been together for a number of years when Reverend Vincent married the two. When Molina met Ert he probably could not have imagined that they would be legally married several years later, and that Ert, a highly convincing female impersonator, would be the main reason why the marriage was possible.[20]

The fact that Ert was able to easily obtain a marriage license for himself and another man because he presented himself as a woman demonstrates connections between the categories of sex, gender and sexuality and how they function in society. Historian Joanne Meyerowitz explains how by the end of the twentieth century, an earlier understanding of sex had been replaced by three categories of inquiry and analysis: "'biological sex' referred to chromosomes, genes, genitals, hormones and other physical markers, some of which could be modified and some of which could not; 'gender' represented masculinity, femininity, and the behaviors commonly associated with them; and 'sexuality' connoted the erotic, now sorted into a range of urges, fantasies, and behaviors."[21] Because Ert appeared to be a feminine, heterosexual woman when he went to get a marriage license, it was assumed that he was a biological woman. Ert's ability to easily acquire a marriage license demonstrates the power of both appearance and performance in relation to the categories of sex, gender and sexuality.

Richard Vincent's role in the union between Ert and Molina was somewhat peculiar because Vincent went beyond conducting a holy union for the couple. He claimed that he was not

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[20] "Male Pair Becomes Legally Married,"; "Unlikely Gay Marriage Pioneers Tied Knot in Houston"

[21] Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 3.

an activist. Prior to marrying Molina and Ert, Vincent had been in the practice of performing holy unions, and that was the way that he referred to those ceremonies. In fact, when Ert called Vincent to ask if he would perform their marriage ceremony, Ert informed the minister that he had gotten a legal marriage license. Ert was also quite clear about how he obtained the document. Ert told Vincent that he was dressed in women's clothing on the day that he got the license, and that Ert did not enter his sex on the form, so the clerk entered the data as female. Even though Vincent knew of the details related to how the men got their marriage license, he still conducted the ceremony. The minister did have one important requirement that the couple must meet before he would marry them. Vincent said that he would have to counsel them first. So, a few days later, Ert and Molina went to Dallas for pre-marriage counseling with the minster. Vincent stated that after meeting the couple and determining that their love for each other was sincere, he agreed to go to Houston to conduct the ceremony.[22]

The marriage ceremony for the two men was destined to receive a lot of media attention. On the night of the wedding, a television station recorded it. The local news station in Houston did not waste any time in sharing the ceremony with the public. Ert and Molina's wedding was broadcast on the local news the same night it occurred. As a result, the County Recorder's office refused to record the legal document for the marriage the following day.[23]

The marriage between Ert and Molina garnered international media attention. The story of the union between the two men made front page headlines from El Paso to East Asia. Molina's hometown newspaper, *The Brownsville Herald* even covered the same-sex marriage. The paper's

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[22] Richard C. Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 116.
[23] Ibid.

story included a photo of the beaming couple in their wedding attire holding their marriage certificate. This moment of wedded bliss the couple experienced would be brief, because the marriage would be challenged once Texas officials learned about it.[24] It is important to note that there does not seem to be any information about how people in Dallas responded when they heard about the marriage between Ert and Molina. The newspaper story carried by the *Dallas Morning News* at the time was from the United Press International. The story discussed the wedding but did not mention Vincent's role in it. In addition, Vincent did not mention the reaction of people he knew in Dallas to the wedding, either in his unpublished autobiography or the oral history that he participated in years later.

A couple of days after the marriage ceremony, Reverend Vincent talked to the Los Angeles-based gay newspaper, *The Advocate*. Vincent told the paper, "'We marry souls, not bodies.'" The minister added, "'They met the requirements as set forth by the church; they love each other, and they had a license, as I signed it. As far as I'm concerned, they are married in the eyes of God and in the eyes of Texas.'" Vincent's comments to *The Advocate* communicated that he was making a political statement when he married Ert and Molina, because marriage between people of the same sex was not legal at the time.[25]

After officials in the state of Texas learned that two men obtained a marriage license and had been legally married, they had to figure out a way to deal with the situation. County clerk, Delfin Marek, refused to formally record Ert and Molina's marriage certificate. Molina responded by filing a lawsuit. He argued that state law did not explicitly prohibit gay marriage because it said

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[24] "Unlikely Gay Marriage Pioneers Tied Knot in Houston"; "Male Pair Becomes Legally Married"
[25] Ibid.

any two "'persons'" could enter into a union. The Texas Attorney General, Crawford Martin, disagreed with Molina's argument and issued a ruling that said marriage in the state of Texas was intended for opposite-sex couples only because the law included such words as "'husband'" and "'wife.'" The Harris County District Attorney, Carol Vance, referred to Ert and Molina's marriage license as "'a worthless piece of paper.'" The attorney general said that Ert could be sent to jail for two to five years for signing his name on a document marked "'woman's name.'" Shortly after that, a district judge threw out the lawsuit that Molina had filed. As a result of the same-sex marriage between Molina and Ert, the Texas marriage law was amended in 1973. The legislature agreed to replace "'persons'" with "'a man and a woman'" in the updated law.[26]

Those in power did not ignore Reverend Vincent's participation in Texas' first same-sex marriage. The vice squad chief of the Houston Police Department threatened to press charges against Ert, Molina, and Vincent for performing the marriage ceremony, and obtaining a document by false pretense. Luckily for Vincent and the couple that never happened.[27]

The brief marriage of Molina and Ert is historically significant for Dallas, Houston and the State of Texas for a number of reasons. One, it was the first time that two men were legally married to each other in the state of Texas. Two, Ert was able to easily obtain a marriage license because he was a gender-transgressive man who passed as a woman. Three, the marriage forced lawmakers in Texas to deal with an issue that they had not considered before Ert and Molina were joined in matrimony. Lawmakers amended Texas' marriage law to explicitly state that only a man and woman could enter into a marriage with each other. Four, the first same-sex marriage in Texas had

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

a direct link to Dallas' fledgling queer community because Reverend Vincent counseled the couple in Dallas before going to Houston to join the two men in marriage. Vincent's participation in the first marriage between two men in Texas, regardless of how ill-advised it was, is another example of Dallas' LGBT community being linked to important firsts for LGBT women and men in the state of Texas. In addition to being the first same-sex marriage in Texas, the marriage that Vincent officiated was an early one in the long battle for marriage equality that would last for several decades in the United States.

About a year after Reverend Richard Vincent joined two men in marriage for the first time in the state of Texas, Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas experienced a somber first in the life of the church. On November 15, 1973, the church held its first funeral at its first permanent home for a colorful, African-American man named Billie McAllister. He was a southerner born in West Palm Beach Florida on July 18, 1911. Over 100 people attended the funeral; the racial makeup of those who attended the service was not given. The funeral was most likely integrated because MCC Dallas was a predominantly white and queer congregation. Plus, McAllister was a beloved performer at mostly white, gay bars. McAllister has an interesting biography. He had a long career as a performer. For part of it, McAllister appeared as a male. At some point, he began to work as a female impersonator. McAllister's drag name was Madame Fertilizer. M July 18, 1911. As a young performer, he worked in small-town medicine shows. Later, McAllister performed in minstrel shows in New York City. In time, the entertainer reversed his minstrel role, and while using white makeup he presented a parody of a black person imitating a white individual. .[28]

[28] Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 127.

For several decades, McAllister travelled the United States doing a variety of performances. At one point, he lived in Kansas City and applied for the position of a much needed chorus girl. He landed the role. McAllister held the job for only a week because after the producers discovered that he was not biologically a woman, they dropped him from the show. That experience did not slow down the entertainer. In fact, he worked continuously and made a decent living even through the Great Depression. McAllister also claimed to have worked with a young Pearl Bailey in 1936. He said that even though he had been rejected by the army, he performed with the United Service Organizations (USO) during World War II. It is not clear how McAllister presented himself when he worked with Bailey and performed with the USO. In addition to his live performances, McAllister also worked as a recording artist. His record labels always used his legal name.[29]

Billie McAllister moved to Dallas in 1964. He settled there after performing the role of Mistress of Ceremony at the Cotton Club Review of the 1964 Texas State Fair. After settling in Dallas, McAllister started performing at the gay bar called the Villa Fontana as Madame Fertilizer, just until before his death. Even though his employers at the gay bars prevented him from taking part in Dallas' first gay pride parade in 1972, he participated in the second parade the summer before his death.[30] Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas conducting a funeral for a popular, black drag performer within the gay community is an illustration of the church providing queer individuals with a sense of community.

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29 Ibid.

30 Ibid; James Thomas Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones: Queering Space in the Stonewall South* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 82.

Billie McAllister's integrated funeral is noteworthy for another reason. When McAllister died in the early seventies, churches in Dallas were still heavily segregated much like the city. It would not have been common for a predominantly white church to hold a funeral for a black person as MCC Dallas did. Following the *Brown v. Board* decision of 1954, some Protestant ministers in Dallas were highly vocal in promoting segregation. These clergymen not only objected to integrating schools, but they opposed mixing religions and integrating churches. For example, in 1955, Carey Daniel, pastor of First Baptist Church of West Dallas, vivified the biblical defense of segregation with the publication of *God, the Original Segregationist*, which sold a million copies. The pamphlet even appeared in abridged form in the *Dallas Morning News*. The popular piece argued that Satan was the original desegregationist.[31]

Another prominent Dallas minister also spoke passionately in support of segregation. W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, was a vehement spokesman for Dallas anti-Catholicism throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The minister was not only anti-Catholic, but he also spoke of Jews in derogatory ways. Criswell blamed the "'outsider'" Jews for working to integrate the city of Dallas and he warned that if Jews were not stopped, they would "'get in your family.'" When Criswell spoke of African Americans and Mexican Americans, he invoked images of filth and dirt. During that time, the outspoken minister attacked what he considered the "'spurious doctrine'" of the "'universal Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.'" The popular and influential minister held and promoted these racist and segregationist views for a long time. For

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[31] Edward R. Miller, *Nut Country: Right-Wing Dallas and the Birth of the Southern Strategy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 71-72.

example, Criswell promulgated the belief as late as 1979 that black people suffered from the "'curse of Ham.'" It is worth noting that Criswell's vitriolic statements made national headlines.[32]

The views and beliefs that conservative and fundamentalist ministers in Dallas expressed from the 1950s through the 1970s show that a church like Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas was an anomaly in Dallas in the early seventies. During the same time period that MCC Dallas engaged in progressive and inclusive acts, such as performing holy unions for same-sex couples and conducting an integrated funeral, other progressive and progressive-leaning religious organizations in the United States took a more liberal approach to issues relating to sexuality. For example, in 1969 the United Church of Christ (UCC) published the first collection of church-related essays by gay men and lesbians. In 1972 the UCC ordained into Christian ministry the first openly gay man. In the same year the San Francisco Board of Rabbis voted to support the legalization of all private sex acts between consenting adults. In 1973 the United Association of Hebrew Congregations accepted for membership a newly formed, predominantly gay and lesbian Los Angeles temple. In 1970 in a Catholic clerical journal, John McNeill, a Jesuit priest, questioned church teaching on extramarital sex and defended stable same-sex relationships. Three years later, the National Federation of Priests' Council officially commissioned a gay task force to create a model for extending Christian ministry to gay people.[33] It is important to highlight the aforementioned non-MCC religious organizations to demonstrate that MCC churches were not the only religious organizations in the U.S. that took a progressive approach to homosexuality in the

[32] Ibid, 73; W.A. Criswell as cited in Michael Phillips, *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001*(Austin: University of Texas Press), 133-134.
[33] Gary David Comstock, *Gay Theology without Apology* (Eugene: WIPF and Stock Publishers, 2009), 72.

early seventies. MCC Dallas was the only Christian church in Dallas with a special outreach to gay men and lesbians in the early 1970s.

In the winter following Billie McAllister's funeral at Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, Reverend Richard Vincent left the young church and the city of Dallas. He took a six month leave of absence from MCC Dallas and travelled to New Orleans, Louisiana to help with the aftermath of the tragic fire at the Upstairs Lounge. The fire happened on a Sunday evening in late June in 1973 and killed thirty-two people while they were attending a church service.. Vincent and his partner, Victor Pass, arrived in New Orleans on New Year's Eve 1973-74. Even though Reverend Vincent did not go to Louisiana until six months after the fire, he knew about it because he had received a call from a New Orleans MCC church member on the day of the fire. In his unpublished autobiography Vincent said about the call, "While the fire was still burning, I received a call from a church member. He was sobbing and almost hysterical. I did not go to New Orleans because the church had been reassigned to another district and I knew helpers would flood the city. I would only be in the way." Vincent stated that after doing much soul searching, he felt that he must answer the divine call to assist in New Orleans.[34]

When Reverend Vincent left MCC Dallas to lead the New Orleans church, he had recently been elected as an Elder within the UFMCC denomination. Becoming an Elder within the denomination also influenced Vincent's decision to relocate to Louisiana. Vincent commented, "As a newly elected Elder of the Fellowship, I realized that my responsibilities and duties now extended beyond Dallas. Dallas was home. We had a loving congregation that was active and

[34] Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 122 and 135-138; Jim Downs, *Stand by Me: The Forgotten History of Gay Liberation* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 17-20 and 24.

growing. I had no desire to leave the pulpit in Dallas."[35] Yet even though he was content being in Dallas, he felt obligated to assist where he was needed. At that time, Vincent was need in New Orleans.

Once Reverend Vincent arrived in New Orleans he served as that MCC's temporary pastor. Moving to Louisiana permanently was never part of his plan. Since Reverend Vincent did not go to New Orleans until six months after the fire, by the time he arrived, things had calmed down considerably among that congregation. Because of this, Vincent spent some of his time taking care of more practical matters. Reverend Vincent stated about some of his immediate tasks at the New Orleans church, "First, we had to pay the New Orleans church debts in some way. Since we had no money, I went directly to those we owed, explained the situation and asked that we be allowed to start anew in another location and pay them as we are able. They kindly agreed, so we moved to a small commercial location farther out on Esplanade. In that location we slowly started to grow and eventually paid off all our debts."[36]

While Vincent was in New Orleans, Reverend David Carden assumed the position of acting pastor at MCC Dallas. After Vincent's six month leave of absence concluded, Carden resigned as pastor of MCC Dallas. Once Vincent's time leading the MCC Church at New Orleans came to an end, he moved to Los Angeles to work full-time as an Elder.[37]

After not having a permanent senior pastor for nearly a year, Metropolitan community Church of Dallas got its second senior pastor. The Reverend James "Jim" Harris was elected as

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[35] Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 135
[36] Ibid.

[37] Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 135-138.

the new senior pastor of MCC in late 1974. Harris, like Vincent before him, led an interesting and full life before moving to Dallas. Reverend Harris was a gay white southerner, a native of Arkansas, and a progressive. Harris had a military background; he had served as a U.S. Army Reserve 1st Lieutenant. He had also been a member of the executive board of the Teamster's Union Local 208 at the same time that he had a job as a heavy duty truck driver. Harris' experience as a minister included working at two different MCC churches in California before moving to Dallas. He served at MCC Santa Monica and MCC North Hollywood. Prior to becoming a minister in the Metropolitan Community Church denomination, Harris had been a member of the Baptist church. While in that denomination, Harris was a minister of religious education and choral music. Harris' philosophy with regard to MCC Dallas and the people he wanted to reach was similar to that of Vincent. Harris wanted to reach individuals who had either been ignored or suppressed at their former churches. During an interview with the *Dallas Times Herald*, the new pastor shared that he was especially concerned for African Americans, Latinos, and women.[38]

Reverend Harris differed from Reverend Vincent in that he considered himself an activist. One of the first actions that Harris initiated while wearing his activist hat was to organize a demonstration against a local Dallas television station. After being in the city for just over a month, the minister led a group of gay people and their supporters in a protest march against ABC affiliate, WFAA-TV. The demonstration was in response to the station's decision to air an episode of the hit drama "Marcus Welby." The episode that Harris and the other protesters wanted to prevent from being televised dealt with the topic of homosexuality. The show focused on a gay man who

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[38] "Pastor Ponders Church's Image," *Dallas Times Herald*, October 20, 1974, Vertical File: Churches – Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas (DPL); "New Pastor Named at Dallas MCC," *Gay Paper of North Texas: Community News*, Vol. 1, No. 4 December 1974,Vertical File: Laws – Sodomy (DPL).

was a child molester. The episode suggested that the man's tendencies to molest were linked to his homosexuality and that his homosexuality could be cured. The group protesting the episode argued that it was insensitive to gay individuals and misrepresented them and their lifestyle. It is not clear whether the protesters were successful in getting the episode pulled from the schedule in Dallas, but it is worth noting that this episode provoked protests by gay activists throughout the United States. The protest that Harris organized is another example of how much the Dallas' gay rights movement was in conversation with the national gay rights movement. Harris' role in organizing and leading the protest against the television station, shortly after arriving in Dallas, showed that he was a much different kind of leader than Vincent with regard to his social activism. Harris set an example to other gay people in Dallas by demonstrating that they did not have to be pliant and could challenge negative depictions of themselves through protest, even in the conservative city of Dallas.[39]

As the COF and MCC Dallas evolved and continued to provide lesbians and gay men in Dallas with a sense of community, as well as worked to improve the lives of queer people within the city in the 1970s, queer individuals in Dallas created a distinct and identifiable neighborhood for themselves in Oak Lawn. By the late 1960s, Oak Lawn, a once fashionable neighborhood of impressive homes, had become an area where a number of hippies had taken up residence. Hippies and working-class people moved into affordable apartments which had been constructed in the middle of the century. Because so many counter-culture types inhabited Oak Lawn, hung out at Lee Park and smoked marijuana, and sometimes swam nude in Turtle Creek, some people viewed

[39] Ibid; Linda Holtzman, *Media Narratives: What Film, Television, and Popular Music Teach Us about Race, Class, Gender, and Sexual Orientation* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 301.

Oak Lawn as a hippie haven. Around this time on Cedar Springs in Oak Lawn, a high amount of prostitution occurred. One could drive down Cedar Springs day or night and see hookers standing on curbs and strolling the sidewalks waiting for their next customer to arrive. As the sixties turned into the seventies, gay people added to the diversity of Oak Lawn when they moved to the area. To be clear, Oak Lawn never became an all-gay neighborhood. This diverse section of town slowly became known as the gay part of town in the 1970s, when lesbians and gay men started moving to the area in large numbers. From this through the 1990s, Oak Lawn's population approximately consisted of one-third straight blacks, one-third straight Latinos, and about a third of gay men and lesbians of various races.[40]

When gay individuals began to move to Oak Lawn in the 1970s, their arrival was met with some resistance. For example, when some landlords noticed this trend in the early part of the seventies, they posted signs that read "No Queers" on their properties. In addition to resorting to such a bigoted and discriminatory practice, some landlords in Oak Lawn began renting only to women. For those who engaged in leasing apartments and houses to only women, they clearly had not considered the fact that lesbians were moving to the area too.[41]

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[40] "The Gay Part of Town: Hippies, Whores and Queers," *This Week in Texas*, 50-51, July 12,1996 – July 18, 1996, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 1: Personal Collection, Box 64, Folder 58.

[41] "Oak Lawn couple calls home oasis," *Dallas Voice*, Vol. 23, No. 40, February 16, 2007, 6, 14-15,https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth238948/m1/1/?q=Oak%20Lawn%20couple%20calls%20home%20oasis%20Dallas%20Voice%202007 accessed June 1, 2017, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu; "'No Queers' sign added to museum," *Dallas Voice*, Vol. 23, No. 45, March 23, 2007, 1 and 12, https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth238953/?q=No%20Queers%20sign%20added%20to%20museum%20date%3A2007-2007 accessed June 1, 2017, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu; Petra L. Doan, Ed., *Planning and LGBTQ Communities: The Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces* (New York: Routledge), 41.

When landlords began discriminating against gay people in Oak Lawn in the early 1970s, there were no laws or ordinances in Dallas that protected them from discrimination based on sexual orientation. As a result, gay individuals dealt with this discrimination the only way they knew how. They simply sought out and moved to apartments and houses in Oak Lawn where landlords and real estate agents agreed to rent or sale houses to lesbians and gay men. It is possible that some gay individuals who moved to the area decided to keep their sexual orientation a secret from their landlords or potential sellers in order to avoid housing discrimination. As a result of employing such tactics, gay people continued to congregate in Oak Lawn despite the resistance that they faced from some individuals. The fact that lesbians and gay men in Dallas had established a visible gay community is significant given that little more than a decade earlier queer people were spread across the city of Dallas and virtually invisible to the people that they lived among.

Besides moving to Oak Lawn in the early 1970s, gay individuals also began opening businesses in the neighborhood. The first gay-owned gay bar in Oak Lawn was the Bayou Club located on Rawlins Street which opened in 1970. Frank Caven who was from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania owned the bar. The Bayou Club had originally been a struggling bar called The Gilded Cage which operated in an old mansion. It is not clear if The Gilded Cage's clientele was gay. It probably was since gays had started moving to the area by that time. After Caven purchased The Gilded Cage, he made renovations to the club which included adding an expanded dance floor. After Caven remodeled the bar which now included the large dance space, Dallas had its first gay disco. The first gay-owned business in the area that was not a bar was Union Jack. It was a clothing store that moved to Cedar Springs Road in December of 1972. Union Jack had originally opened

in another location in August 1971.A man from Cambridge, England named Richard Longstaff owned Union Jack.[42]

When gay people began establishing businesses in the Oak Lawn neighborhood, they were not met with the same kind of bigotry as gays who took up residence in the area originally faced. Even though gay business owners did not experience a high level of resistance to setting up shop in Oak Lawn, there were some in the area who were not happy about the arrival of gay establishments. For example, when Longstaff opened Union Jack on Cedar Springs, the street that would later be referred to as "the strip" by Dallas' gay community, other businesses on the street were not particularly welcoming to the business that always marketed to the gay community. The establishment that had the hardest time with Union Jack's presence on Cedar Springs, and the growing popularity of the street , was a country bar, Adair's. Longstaff described Adair's as a "redneck" bar, and stated that he once ran a Pride promotion in his store window that included a drag queen and two go-go boys. Since the people at Adair's did not like the display, they called the police. Once the police arrived they discovered that the young men were dressed appropriately, and thought that the drag queen was actually a woman. Because of that, Longstaff was able to continue his promotion. As the street continued to change, Adair's finally gave up and moved to a new location.[43]

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[42] "25 Dallas Notables," *Dallas Voice*, Vol. 26, No. 1, May 22, 2009, 19, https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth239065/m1/19/ accessed July 1, 2017, University of North Texas Libraries, Digital Library; Richard Longstaff, Oral History Interview with Karen Wisely, August 4, 2013, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 1 and 9.

[43] "Union Jack celebrates 40th anniversary," *Dallas Voice*, Vol. 28, No. 10, July 22, 2011, 10, https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth239177/m1/10/?q=Richard Longstaff July 2011 accessed July 1, 2017, University of North Texas Library, Digital Library; Doan, *Planning and LGBTQ Communities*, 41.

The phenomenon of lesbians and gay men establishing a distinct neighborhood for themselves in the Oak Lawn section of Dallas in the 1970s occurred throughout the United States during that time too. Historian Leila J. Rupp explains this phenomenon when she writes,

> "Gay and lesbians neighborhoods —places where houses flew the rainbow flag, designed in San Francisco in 1978—sprang up across the country. Some had long histories such as Greenwich Village; Cherry Grove and the Pines on Fire Island, New York; Provincetown, Massachusetts; and Key West, Florida. Others, such as West Hollywood, California, Park Slope in Brooklyn, and even whole towns such as Northampton, Massachusetts, and Guerneville, California, developed gay or lesbian reputations. But even cities without a history of residential same-sex clusters tend to sport neighborhoods with such a reputation." [44]

Dallas in the 1970s definitely fit into the last category of sites that Rupp described.

As queer people in Dallas built a geographic community for themselves within the city, and experienced a new level of visibility, the Texas legislature created a law that would be a burden on gay men and women throughout the state of Texas. In 1974 Texas introduced its new sodomy law, penal code section 21.06. Unlike the state's previous sodomy law that included heterosexuals, the new law was aimed specifically at gay men and lesbians. In the revised penal code traditional sex "'crimes,'" including fornication and adultery were not illegal in Texas. Bestiality was against the law only in public. Sodomy was downgraded to a misdemeanor that came with a $200 fine. Penal code section 21.06 not only applied strictly to lesbians and gay men but it covered every kind of sex act they could perform. The new law made it illegal for gay people to perform oral or

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[44] Leila J. Rupp, *A Desired Past: A Short History of Same-Sex Love in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002, 180.

anal sex with their mouth, penis, or dildo. Penal code section 21.06 penalized gay men and lesbians if they were caught having sex in public or private.[45]

The previous sodomy law, Article 524, was repealed in 1970. A gay man named Alvin Leon Buchanan challenged that law in 1969. On February 4, 1969 Buchanan let another man perform oral sex on him in an open toilet stall of the men's restroom in Reverchon Park in Oak Lawn. Two vice squad officers, who had been spying on the men from a hidden perch, burst into the restroom and arrested the two men. After the incident, Buchanan contacted a young, gay attorney named Henry McCluskey. The ambitious attorney told Buchanan that he would help him make a federal case out of the incident, and take the case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. McCluskey and Buchanan set out to challenge Article 524 because it criminalized all sexual acts except heterosexual intercourse. McCluskey filed suit, *Buchanan v. State*, on behalf of his client on May 26, 1969. After McCluskey determined that a case involving restroom sex might be a hard sell at the Supreme Court, he expanded the complainants to include a married couple, Craig and Janet Gibson, and another gay man, Travis Strickland. Strickland stated that he only engaged in sodomy in the privacy of his own home.[46]

The federal judges who heard Buchanan's case were Sarah T. Hughes, Irving L. Goldberg and W.M. Taylor, Jr. On January 21, 1970, the judges delivered a unanimous decision. They ruled that the state of Texas could not outlaw sodomy within marriage because it encroached upon the "'private, consensual acts of married couples.'" The judges declared that Texas' sodomy law was unconstitutionally broad. This was the first time that a federal court had struck down a sodomy

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[45] Joyce Murdoch and Deb Price, *Courting Justice: Gay Men and Lesbians v. the Supreme Court* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 346; Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 539.
[46] Murdoch and Price, *Courting Justice*, 159; Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*, 538.

law. Judges Taylor, Goldberg and Hughes brushed aside the challenges made by the two gay men stating that they "'do not involve private acts of marriage relation.'" Federal rules permitted District Attorney Henry Wade of Dallas County to move directly to the U.S. Supreme Court and ask that the panel's decision be overturned. Strickland and Buchanan requested that the Supreme Court Justices expand the lower court ruling to protect them. The justices postponed a decision on the Texas cases until after they determined who had standing to bring suit in federal court. Then they ruled in 1971 that a person who had not been arrested, indicted, or threatened with prosecution could not challenge a state law's constitutionality in federal court. Also, an individual who was being prosecuted could not file a federal challenge until all state appeals had been exhausted. The Supreme Court Justices voted 8 to 1 to vacate the Texas sodomy ruling because of the new restrictions, and also Justice William O. Douglas had wanted to hear Buchanan and Strickland's plea.[47]

The Texas legislature wrote the final page of Buchanan's original challenge in 1974 when it introduced penal code section 21.06. Because of Buchanan's case, sodomy was reduced to a misdemeanor that carried a $200 fine. The crime of sodomy was narrowed to cover same-sex relations. So, Buchanan's original case helped make sure sodomy was no longer a crime for heterosexuals. However, his case did not do the same for gay individuals, where it only reduced the degree of the crime.[48]

The new sodomy law, penal code section 21.06, represented a major setback for gay men and lesbians throughout the state of Texas because it suggested the state did not believe that gay

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[47] Murdoch and Price, *Courting Justice*, 159-161.
[48] Ibid, 161.

people had the same right to privacy as straight individuals and the same right to personal freedom. Penal code section 21.06 is another example of Michel Foucault's theory that sex is an expression of complex and dynamic power relations within society. The enactment of penal code section 21.06 gave the state of Texas a significant amount of power over gay men and women regarding their ability to reveal their sexual orientation and/or act upon it. Because of the new law, lesbians and gay men could lose their jobs, professional credentials, and even custody of their children if their sexual orientation was made public, or if they were convicted of breaking the new sodomy law.[49]

When Texas introduced its new sodomy law in the mid-1970s, the state went in the opposite direction of a number of other states with regard to such laws, and gay rights in general. Historian Margot Canaday explains, "Starting in the 1970s, for example, numerous states and localities passed laws and ordinances prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation. In a few states, these new provisions protecting LGBT people from discrimination sat awkwardly alongside older and by then rarely used statutes prohibiting homosexual practices. Many states also began to remove sodomy laws from their books."[50] Like other states in the 1970s, Texas voided its century-old sodomy law at the start of that decade. However, unlike other states in the union,within five years Texas removed its original sodomy law from the books and created a new one. Also, Texas in general, and Dallas specifically, were far away from having provisions that protected LGBT individuals from discrimination. All of this underscores just how conservative the state of Texas was in the mid-1970s.

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[49] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1* (New York: Vintage 1990), 83 and 97-98; Joyce Murdoch and Deb Price, *Courting Justice: Gay Men and Lesbians v. the Supreme Court* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 346.
[50] Canaday, *The Straight State*, 259.

In the mid-1970s, shortly after the Texas legislature introduced penal code section 21.06, some members of Dallas' gay community attempted to create a gay all-political organization. These individuals held a meeting in the summer of 1975. There appears to be only one document that exists which memorializes the meeting of people who had wanted to start this organization in Dallas. The one-page document is titled "First meeting – 5th District Unnamed Political Caucus – 7/23/75." The record includes a list of names. One of the names on the list is Rob Shivers. Other names on the list, covered in this dissertation, include Reverend Jim Harris, Richard Longstaff, and Jerry Ward. The topic of the document is the City Council Race of 1977. Rob Shivers submitted the record for the meeting.[51]

The document for the political meeting held in the summer of 1975 reveals that the individuals who were at the gathering had already briefly discussed the day's topic before the meeting occurred. This can be inferred because the record related to it is quite detailed. While focusing on the 1977 City Council Race, the document discusses the method of selecting a candidate. It also covers what type of candidate the caucus would support. For example, it lists the choices of either an openly gay or straight candidate. The record includes the subjects of platform and issues. The document also covers voter registration, finance, and public relations. The information contained in the document from the political meeting relates that the group was serious about being involved in the next city council race in a deeper way than just casting a vote.

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[51] "Meeting Minutes of Unnamed Political Caucus, July 23, 1975," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 1: Personal Collection, Box 62, Folder 41.

The meeting and document also signals to a significant political development that would happen in Dallas in a couple of years, which would be an openly gay person running for city-wide office..[52]

Attempting to help start a gay all-political organization in the mid-1970s appears to be the final effort that Rob Shivers pursued in Dallas in connection to its queer community. It is not clear what Shivers did after 1975. One thing that is evident is she played a vital role in the formation of Dallas' visible LGBT community from the late 1960s through the mid-1970s. Shivers did this by helping to establish MCC Dallas in 1970, and assisting with organizing the gay pride parades of 1972 and 1973. The contribution that Shivers made to the formation of Dallas' queer community is a strong example of the important role that lesbians played in the community dating back to the sixties.

Although it is not clear why Rob Shivers and the others'political organization never got off the ground, Dallas' first gay all-political organization, the Dallas Gay Political (DGPC) formed in 1976. This work has shown that by the early 1970s the Circle of Friends promoted itself as an educational and political organization. The DGPC was formed with the purpose of focusing solely on politics in relation to gay men and women.[53]

Even though the DGPC's name clearly indicated that it was a gay organization, the two men who initiated the DGPC's founding were closeted. In fact, the two men were still closeted when Phil Johnson did a three-part interview in which he discussed the men in late 1980 and early 1981. While describing them Johnson commented, "...one man was a court reporter and he was very, very good-looking, very handsome young man, very masculine looking, the type of person

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[52] Ibid.

[53] "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance," May 11, 1981, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 62, Folder 68.

that you would never know was gay. He had been married. I'm not sure whether he had children or not." In describing the other individual Johnson said, "the other man is non-gay looking, too, and he's a picture framer, I believe. He frames pictures." In addition to being fairly detailed while describing these two men, Johnson was also cautious not to give away too much information since they were still in the closet. Even though several years passed before the identities of the two men who initiated the founding of the DGPC were made known to a large number of people, their names were revealed as Neal Nichols,the court reporter, and Jim Chumley,the picture framer.[54]

Nichols and Chumley initiated the DGPC's founding after they visited Houston, and met the leadership of that city's gay political caucus. Once the two men returned to Dallas , they shared information about their visit with their friends at MCC Dallas, including Reverend Jim Harris. This explains how he became a founding member of the DGPC. Besides being a founding member, Harris was also one of its board members. Since Chumley and Nichols were closeted when they initiated the founding of the DGPC, their early support of the organization was financial and in the background.[55]

When the Dallas Gay Political Caucus formed in the spring of 1976, the organization was clear about its purpose. In a detailed statement that explained the DGPC's cause, the Board of Executives wrote, "The DGPC is a perpetual non-profit corporation, chartered by the State of Texas. The Caucus's purpose is to pool the resources of the gay and straight community for the benefit and promotion of full equality under the law for all human beings regardless of affectional or sexual preference." In addition to explaining the new political organization's purpose, the

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[54] Phil Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 70-71; "Notes on Founding of DGLA," UNT LGBT Archive, Louise Young and Vivienne Armstrong Papers (The Dallas Way), 1975-2004, Series 1: Papers, Box 2, Folder 33.
[55] "Notes on Founding of DGLA"; Phil Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 70.

statement was also specific about the kind of work that the DGPC would undertake. On this topic the Board of Executives stated,

> "The Caucus will be active in voter registration, in voter education, and in opening channels of communication within the community. In keeping with its goals of voter education, the Caucus will conduct screenings of candidates running for various offices withing [sic] the Dallas city government. Candidates will be screened according to their responses to relevant questions and their receptiveness to the Caucus. All screenings will be conducted without concern for party affiliation. Responsive candidates will receive discreet aid (personpower) for their campaigns."

The DGPC's founding statement made it clear that the organization would work with straight individuals to ensure that all people were treated equally under the law. The new political organization also detailed how it would assist in registering and informing voters, as well as screening candidates in order to determine if they would receive support from the DGPC for their campaigns.[56]

This chapter demonstrated that the years 1972 to 1976 represent years of immense change for Dallas' fledgling queer community. The COF and MCC Dallas evolved as they continued to provide gay men and lesbians in Dallas with a sense of community, and worked to improve the lives of queer people within the city. The COF transformed as the organization became more political in the early 1970s. For example,t it urged people to register to vote and set up voter registration booths in Dallas. The group also continued to function as an educational organization. Members of the COF travelled around Dallas and other cities in the Metroplex area from the early to mid-1970s educating people about gay men and lesbians and the issues that were important to them. As a result, they helped to improve the lives of queer men and women in Dallas. COF

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[56] "Letter Pertaining to the Day that the DGPC was Formed," May 30, 1976, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 62, Folder 59.

members believed that if straight people understood gay men and lesbians better, they would treat queer people better than they had treated queer individuals in society in the past. In the mid-1970s, when the COF became the Gay Organization of Dallas in an effort to be more up front about being a gay organization concerned with gay liberation. GOOD existed for about a year before dissolving.

At the same time the COF transformed, MCC Dallas also evolved as it continued to work to improve the lives of queer men and women in Dallas and provide them with a sense of community. MCC Dallas gave queer people a sense of community by purchasing its first building, and demonstrated to queer men and women in Dallas that MCC Dallas was in the city to stay. In the early seventies MCC Dallas started performing holy unions. This was a special way to honor same-sex relationships. MCC Dallas commitment to conduct holy unions is not only another example of the church providing queer people with a sense of community, but also illustrates how the church evolved. During the time that Reverend Vincent began performing holy unions in the early seventies, he also officiated the first same-sex marriage in Texas. Even though Vincent claimed he was not an activist, his act of joining two men in marriage appears to contradict that claim.

As the 1970s progressed some members of Dallas' queer community became more political, such as Neal Nichols and Jim Chumley. These two closeted men initiated the founding of the DGPC which was the first gay all-political organization in Dallas. Reverend Jim Harris, the second senior pastor of MCC Dallas and a founding member of the DGPC, also served as one of the organization's first board members.

Finally, from the early to mid-1970s, some queer people in Dallas started to create a distinct and identifiable geographic community for themselves in Oak Lawn. In the early 1970s gay men and lesbians moved to the area in sizeable numbers. During thistime gay individuals established businesses in Oak Lawn. As that neighborhood began to transform in the 1970s, queer people in Dallas had a section of town that provided them with a sense of community.

CHAPTER III

POLITICS BECOME A DRIVING FORCE WITHIN DALLAS' QUEER COMMUNITY IN THE MID TO LATE 1970s

The period from 1972 through the spring of 1976 was one of tremendous change for Dallas' fledgling queer community. During that time organizations such as the Circle of Friends and Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas evolved as they continued to provide gay men and lesbians in Dallas with a sense of community, and worked to improve the lives of queer people within the city. In the mid-1970s Dallas' LGBT community became more political. During that time the first gay, all-political organization, the Dallas Gay Political Caucus, formed. Some queer people in Dallas also created a distinct and identifiable geographic community for themselves within the city. This chapter argues that from the spring of 1976 through 1979 queer men and women in Dallas continued to focus on politics as they considered it to be one of the main avenues to bring about social change for queer people in Dallas. As politics reached a new level of importance within the LGBT community, one of the community's leaders became the first openly gay person to run for a seat on the Dallas City Council. As this happened queer men and women in Dallas continued to build a community for themselves in the diverse neighborhood of Oak Lawn.

The Dallas Gay Political Caucus held its first meeting on the afternoon of May 30, 1976. Since Jim Harris was a founding member as well as board member of the new organization, he allowed the DGPC to hold its initial meeting at Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. Shortly after the DGPC was formed, Chance West became its first president and Helen Harvey served as the vice president.[1]

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[1] "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance," May 11, 1981, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 62, Folder 68.

Within a month of the DGPC's first meeting at MCC Dallas, Reverend Harris organized a rally for the new political organization. The gathering was held at Exall Park in East Dallas. Harris put a great deal of consideration into the event. For example, he made sure that the rally was held in the open and not near any restrooms, so that the Dallas police would not have any excuse to harass the event attendees by accusing them of trying to have sex in the restrooms. Even though the gathering was promoted as a political rally, it was a festive event that included a live band and free hot dogs and drinks.[2]

On the day of the rally a good number of people who attended were initially cautious about doing so. Phil Johnson explained how the crowd at the gathering grew,

> "They wanted to see, but they didn't know how the police would react: would the police arrest us? Would the police bloody our heads? Would the neighbors arrest us? But there were plenty of free hot dogs and all that music, so pretty soon after about thirty minutes, people started coming. We started throwing frisbees, and then the next thing you know, the place was just crawling with gay people, dancing, throwing frisbees, playing volleyball, having a good time, eating hot dogs, and drinking beer."[3]

Johnson relates that even though gay people eventually went to the rally and had a great experience, at first, they were careful about joining with a large number of gay men and women. By speculating on what event attendees considered before joining the gathering, Johnson communicated the thoughts many gay individuals had about congregating in large groups in Dallas in the mid-1970s. A full decade after Dallas' first gay organization was formed, many gay men and lesbians did not feel comfortable gathering in large groups out of fear that there could be serious consequences for doing so.

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[2] Phil Johnson: An Oral History Interview, Conducted by Gerald D. Saxon, December 17, 1980 and January 2 and 28, 1981, (DPL), 71-72.
[3] Ibid.

Since the Dallas Gay Political Caucus was an organization concerned with the way that politics and the law worked in the lives of gay people, it makes sense that Mary Jo Risher, a lesbian from the Dallas area, was the featured speaker at the rally. A year before the rally, Risher lost custody of her 9-year-old son because she was a lesbian. During Risher's custody battle with her ex-husband, her 17-year-old son testified that his peers had ridiculed him because his mother was a lesbian. The court testimony of Risher's teen-aged soon, as well as the bias that many people had against gay people at the time, are what caused Risher to lose custody of her young son. Risher's presence at the rally reminded those in attendance what a gay person could lose because of his/her sexual orientation being discovered. Risher's personal story also underscored why it was important for lesbians and gay men to be more involved in politics.[4]

In August of 1976 MCC Dallas relocated from East Dallas to Oak Lawn. The church moved because it had outgrown the building on Ross Avenue. Since the church had to relocate Reverend Harris believed that it was important for the MCC Dallas to be located in Dallas' growing gay neighborhood. The MCC Dallas congregation dedicated its new church home on 2701 Reagan Street in December 12, 1976.[5]

In the fall of 1976 the DGPC held a rally at MCC Dallas' new location. This particular gathering drew an overflow crowd of 450 people. The meeting included queer community leaders

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[4] "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance," May 11, 1981, UNT LGBT Archive, "Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 62, Folder 68;Daniel Winunwe Rivers, *Radical Relations: Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers, & Their Children in the United States since World War II* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 59; Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 241-242.

[5] "The Gay Part of Town: Out of the Closet, Into a Community," *This Week in Texas*, July 19 – July 25, 1996, 49, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 1: Personal Collection, Box 64, Folder 58; Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 142.

such as Chance West of the DGPC and Reverend Jim Harris of both MCC Dallas and the DGPC. Reverend Troy Perry attended the meeting because he was in town. The two items discussed at this meeting were connected: police harassment and Texas penal code section 21.06. During that time gay individuals in Dallas noticed an increase in police vice squad activity which involved gay people, as well as the harassment of gay individuals. Many linked the recent increase in police harassment to the new sodomy law that had been enacted in 1974. The gay men and lesbians who attended the rally stressed that it was important to have penal code section 21.06 removed from the books in Texas. They believed this was the only way to end police harassment of gay people. An attorney from the Dallas chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) named Fred Time attended this rally. When Time addressed those at the gathering he told them that the ACLU supported them in their stand against police harassment and Texas' sodomy law. Time added, "When one person's liberty is taken, all people's liberties are taken. All people have rights." Time's statement to those gathered at MCC Dallas communicated that the ACLU believed that gay people in Dallas and throughout the state of Texas had been treated unfairly, and that gay individuals should enjoy the same rights and freedoms as other people.[6]

Phil Johnson attended this gathering, just as he did the rally that the DGPC held during the summer. Johnson described how large the crowd was when he commented, "Well, there was this big rally at the MCC church. There were so many people in the church that every seat was taken. People were standing, lining the aisles. There were in the vestibule, they were on the front porch, they had loudspeakers on the front porch and on the parking lot and in the lot next door to it, so

[6] Mims, "Cathedral of Hope," 58; "Gay Rally Urges Fight of Discriminatory Laws," *The Dallas Morning News*, November 9, 1976, NewsBank: The Dallas Morning News Historical Archive 1885-1977, Dallas Public Library Electronic Database; "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance."

people could hear what was going on."[7] The large turnout for the meeting that the DGPC held at MCC Dallas shows that a good amount of queer people were concerned with police harassment, and that they wanted to rid Texas of the law that emboldened police to harass queer individuals. The fact that the rally was held at MCC Dallas demonstrates that the church was becoming more than a worship place for queer people in Dallas. MCC Dallas became a place for queer individuals to organize to discuss a variety of things that were important to them and their community. As a founding member and a board member of the DGPC, Jim Harris helped make MCC Dallas an important multi-purpose site within Dallas' queer community.

In 1977 Reverend Jim Harris took his political activism beyond protesting and being a founding member of the DGPC when he decided to run for the Dallas City Council. Harris made history when he made a bid for a council seat as the first openly gay person to run for city-wide office in Dallas. He ran in District 5 which covered East Dallas and Oak Lawn. During his council race, Harris stressed that he was not a gay rights candidate who would serve one segment of the community. His issues included rezoning in East Dallas, setting up programs for the elderly, and reducing prostitution in Dallas. Harris was against rezoning a portion of East Dallas because of the concern that blue collar workers who rented in the area would be displaced. Harris did not think that the city council was doing enough to rid Dallas of prostitution. Harris stressed how important equal rights were to him. Harris stated, "I am interested in equal rights for all people whether they

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[7] Johnson, An Oral History Interview, 73.

are white, black, Chicano, heterosexual or homosexual." Harris cast himself as an inclusive candidate who would be dedicated to serving people of various races and sexual orientations.[8]

When Harris sought a seat on the Dallas City Council he was not an underdog with regard to financial support and strategy. *The Dallas Morning News* reported that Harris secured strong financial backing. The paper also stated that a top consulting agency in Dallas worked with the minister's campaign. Even though *The Dallas Morning News* provided information about Harris' financial support and the consulting agency that worked on his campaign, the newspaper did not offer specific details such as the name of the consulting agency or how much money Harris had for his council race. When the city council race concluded in the spring of 1977 and the votes were tallied, incumbent William Cothrum defeated Harris. Cothrum received 6,470 of the votes cast and Harris captured 1,207.[9]

Although Harris did not succeed in obtaining a seat on the Dallas City Council his run was a gain for Dallas' queer community. When Harris ran for the council seat, he helped pave the way for queer people who might seek a seat on the city council in the future. Harris not only did this by being the first openly gay person to run for the Dallas City Council, but he also provided queer individuals with an example of how one could run an inclusive campaign as in openly queer person. Even though Harris did not make his sexual orientation the main issue during his bid for a council seat, he did run as an openly gay person who considered equal rights for gay people important. Besides supplying queer people with an example of how they could run for office in

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[8] "Harris Challenges Incumbent Cothrum in District 5," *The Dallas Morning News*, March 28, 1977 and "Final Tallies,"*The Dallas Morning News*, April 4, 1977, NewsBank: The Dallas Morning News Historical Archive 1885-1977, Dallas Public Library Electronic Database; Mims, "Cathedral of Hope," 58-59.

[9] Ibid.

Dallas in the future, Harris exhibited bravery by running for office in a city that was as conservative as Dallas in the 1970s. By seeking a seat on the city council as an openly gay man Harris made himself vulnerable to threats and physical violence, even though there is no evidence that Harris experienced threats or was a victim of violence.

In June of 1977 Jim Harris resigned from his post as senior pastor of MCC Dallas. Harris tendered his resignation a few months after running for the Dallas City Council. In the resignation letter that Harris submitted to MCC Dallas, he did not explain his decision to leave the church. His letter did not provide many details. The resignation later stated that Harris' resignation was to become effective on October 1, 1977. Even though the progressive clergyman and activist led MCC Dallas for only three year, Harris made a sizeable impact on the young church and Dallas' fledgling queer community during that time. It is not exactly clear where Harris relocated to immediately after he left MCC Dallas. However, he eventually settled in Shreveport, Louisiana.[10]

The late 1970s marked a turning point for Dallas' LGBT community with regard to its leadership. By 1977, most of the first group of men and women who had worked to form Dallas' queer community had either left the city, or had stopped being involved as leaders within the community. Richard Vincent had moved out of Dallas. Rob Shivers appears to have left the city; her name does not appear on documents related to Dallas' LGBT community after the mid-1970s. It is not clear what happened to Chris McKee either. Her name does not appear on records dated past the mid-seventies. Jim Harris left Dallas and moved to Louisiana. Also, Doug McLean's and Ed Coursen's names do not appear on documents dated after the mid-seventies. Records indicate

[10] Untitled Letter of Resignation from Reverend James C. Harris to the Congregation and Board of Directors of MCC Dallas Dated June 15, 1977, MCC Dallas Board Meeting Minutes Notebook November 1970-December 1979 (Cathedral of Hope, Dallas, Texas); Vincent, *A Journey to the Light*, 149.

that McLean and Coursen were still involved with the Circle of Friends when it became the Gay Organization of Dallas in the mid-1970s. Phil Johnson was the only leader within Dallas' LGBT community who was still around after 1977 and had been active since the 1960s..

Just as the first wave of gay and lesbian leaders and activists in Dallas stepped out of the spotlight or relocated by the late seventies, a new set of leaders and activists took their place. Many of the new gay leaders were heavily involved with the Dallas Gay Political Caucus. These individuals included Louise Young, Vivienne Armstrong, Steve Wilkins, Don Baker, William Waybourn, Bill Nelson, Terry Tebedo, Ann Brown, John Thomas, Dennis Plemmons and Mike Richards.[11]

Steve Wilkins was elected the second president of the Dallas Gay Political Caucus in June of 1977. Wilkins was born in Santa Barbara, California in the late 1940s. He attended high school and college in the state of Oklahoma. Wilkins relocated to Dallas in 1969. He worked as an interior designer. Wilkins is credited with creating "Dallas Way" which was a particular method of conducting business with Dallas city leaders and officials. Wilkins stated that since business was important within the city of Dallas, gay individuals should dress in business attire and carry briefcases when going to the mayor's office or when conducting business with another city official. Another component of the "Dallas Way" was getting things done through conversation rather than confrontation.[12] The "Dallas Way" was a practical and assimilationist approach to doing business and politics in Dallas.

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[11] William Waybourn, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, May 22, 2013, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 22-23, 30 and 35-36; Steve Wilkins: "Remembering One of Dallas' Founding Gay Activists," *The Week in Texas*, February 24 – March 2, 1995, http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/022495wilkins.html accessed October 25, 2018

[12] "Dallas Gay & Lesbian Alliance: Revisiting an Era: 1976-1982," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT

Even though Wilkins was not yet president when the DGPC laid out its four main goals for the organization, he was actively involved with formulating those goals. Those goals were: repeal Statute 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code; educate the whole community – gay and non-gay – as to the truths of homosexuality; establish city ordinances to protect the civil rights of gay men and women; provide community services for homosexuals in our city.[13] The four goals were both clear and ambitious. If the DGPC's goals were met the organization would have done a great deal to make queer people in Dallas equal to their straight counterparts. Obtaining these goals would also ensure that Dallas would have a vibrant queer community.

The year 1977 proved to be an eventful one for the DGPC and Dallas' queer community. One interesting thing that happened that year was that the fundamentalist singer and anti-gay activist, Anita Bryant, paid a visit to Texas. In June of 1977 Bryant was invited to sing for the American Bar Association in Houston. This was during the time that Bryant promoted her "Save our Children Campaign." Bryant called her campaign "Save Our Children" because she was crusading to save children from gay-rights advocates that she believed wanted "'to propose to our children that there's an acceptable alternate way of life.'" Bryant had already achieved success with her campaign by June of 1977. She had been successful at helping overturn a gay rights ordinance in Miami. The ordinance had only been approved six months earlier. When gay rights

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Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 65, Folder 37; Obituary for Steve Wilkins, *Dallas Voice*, January 1995, http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/022495wilkins.html accessed October 25, 2018; Petra L. Doan, ed., *Planning and LGBTQ Communities: The Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 43; Steve Wilkins can be heard in his own words describing "The Dallas Way" in the documentary *Finding Our Voice*. Don Baker can also been seen in the same documentary describing the "Dallas Way," *Finding Our Voice: The Dallas Gay & Lesbian Community*, Directed by Ginny Martin, 58 minutes, KERA-TV, 2000.

[13] "Dallas Gay & Lesbian Alliance: Revisiting an Era: 1976-1982,"; "Steve Wilkins: Remembering One of Dallas' Founding Activists," *This Week in Texas*, February 24 – March 2, 1995, Texas Obituary Project http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/022495wilkins.html accessed October 25, 2018.

activists learned that Bryant was going to be in Houston, they organized a protest against her. Some queer people from Dallas travelled to Houston to participate in the protest. Some of the individuals from Dallas who participated in the peaceful demonstration included Phil Johnson, Louise Young and Vivienne Armstrong.[14]

In the fall of 1977, Dr. Nolan Estes, the superintendent for the Dallas Independent School District (DISD), stated that there were no gay school teachers in Dallas. He said that if there were, they would be asked to resign immediately regardless of whether teacher had engaged in improper conduct. This sent many gay teachers into a private panic. Don Baker, who was a public school teacher at the time, went on television to challenge Dr. Estes' statement. Since Baker could lose if job if his identity was known, he did some of his interview in shadow and the other part was conducted with his back to his camera. In addition to Baker's interview, members of the DGPC sent letters to all Dallas City Council members, alerted the queer community, and they held private meetings with several school board members to discuss their concerns. Because of these actions by queer people in Dallas, Estes softened his choice of words and nothing came of the threat he originally made.[15]

In the late seventies Dallas Gay Political Caucus members participated in events they believed would further the cause of gay rights in Dallas. One such event was a televised debate which occurred in 1978 on the local public television station KERA channel 13. The debate

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[14] "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 62, Folder 68; Louise Young can be heard in her own words describing going to Houston to take part in the protest against Anita Bryant in 1977 in *Finding Our Voice*; Edward Berkowitz, *Something Happened: A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 152-153.

[15] "Estes softens gay stance," *The Dallas Morning News*, October 11, 1977 NewsBank: The Dallas Morning News Historical Archive 1885-1977, Dallas Public Library Electronic Database; "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance"; Don Baker's interview described here can be seen on *Finding Our Voice*.

focused on gay rights. DGPC members included Vivienne Armstrong, Louise Young, and Steve Wilkins. The other pro-gay panelists consisted of civil rights activist Juanita Craft, Tom Sime, and Ruthe Weingarten. The gay rights opponents included right-to-life advocate Paulette Standifer, Texas State Legislator Bill Ceverha, and Ft. Worth police Sergeant S.C. Hill. The debate was said to have been an intense one.[16] The debate provided DGPC members with the opportunity to educate others about gay men and women and homosexuality. By educating others the debate exemplified one of four goals that the DGPC laid out for the organization the year prior to the debate.

It was significant that Juanita Craft was both a supporter and debate partner for gay rights activists because of what she represented in civil rights in the city of Dallas and the state of Texas. Craft was born in the early Jim Crow era in Round Rock, Texas, just outside of Austin in 1902. Her grandparents had been slaves. Craft came from a middle-class background. Her father worked as a high school principal. Craft's mother was both a teacher and seamstress. Juanita Craft received her college education from Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College (now Prairie View A&M University) and Samuel Huston College (now Huston-Tillotson College) in Austin. Craft obtained her teaching certificate from the latter school. She moved to Dallas in 1925. In 1935 Craft joined the Dallas branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Joining the NAACP started a fifty-year career of civil rights activism and public

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[16] "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance"

service for Craft not only in Dallas, but throughout the state of Texas. When she participated in the debate Craft was in her second term on the Dallas City Council.[17]

Although the debate that Dallas' gay rights leaders participated in with those who opposed gay rights did not produce any immediate results for the LGBT community, the debate was an important event. The debate was another way for gay rights activists to increase their visibility within the city of Dallas. It was also another avenue for gay rights leaders to try to appeal to the hearts and minds of fellow Dallasites, as they logically argued why lesbians and gay men deserved equal rights. Taking part in the televised debate also illustrates one way that gay rights activists were able to use a platform that would reach a substantial number of viewers to speak against the discrimination which their community experienced. The presence of Juanita Craft, the long-time civil rights leader, on the side of the gay rights activists was also significant. Craft's participation in the debate communicated to viewers that there were African Americans who believed that civil rights not only pertained to race, but sexual orientation as well. Craft's part in the debate not only showed that she was one of the gay community's early allies of color in Dallas, but it also related that there was potential for blacks and gays within the city to build a political coalition.

As the decade of the seventies was nearing its end, queer people in Dallas continued to view politics as an avenue for bringing about significant social change for themselves. For example, Louise Young and other gay rights activists concentrated on the election of openly gay, Democratic, precinct chairs to establish a presence of gay individuals in the Texas Democratic Party. The most important goal related to this strategy was the overturn, by act of legislature, Texas

[17] Juanita Craft Biographical Information from Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fcr59 accessed on June 5, 2017; Darwin Payne, *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of an American Supercity* (Dallas, Three Forks Press), 430; Phillips, *White Metropolis*,168.

penal code section 21.06. By 1980 queer activists had "'fortified'" Oak Lawn's precinct chairs, all of whom were now Democratic and most of whom were openly gay, through the mobilization of the queer vote. This information about queer people in Dallas illustrates how they worked within the political system to bring about social change for themselves.[18]

Chapter 1 of this work stated that conservative ministers in Dallas did not speak publically against homosexuality until the 1970s. When those clergymen did make statements, they did so with ferocity. By the late seventies, a number of prominent, conservative ministers made declarations about various social issues. For example, the always outspoken W.A. Criswell commented on matters such as evolution, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and homosexuality. Even though Criswell made passionate statements condemning homosexuality in the late 1970s, another Dallas-based preacher, James Robison, appears to have made the most damning remarks about homosexuality and gay people. For example, the fiery Baptist minister called the assassination of Harvey Milk in 1978, the openly gay member of the San Francisco board of supervisors, God's punishment. Robison said, "'A homosexual is in the same class with a rapist, bank robber, or murderer.'" Robison's comments about Milk and gay people relate that he believed they were some of the lowest people in society. The minister placed gay individuals on the level of criminals simply because of who they were. Because Robison held this view, he believed that Milk's assassination was justified.[19]

In early 1979 an interesting development happened between Robison and Dallas' gay community. Robison had a weekly television show that aired on the WFAA station channel 8. On

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[18] Doan, *Planning and LGBTQ Communities*, 43.
[19] Miller, *Nut Country*, 146-147.

that program he made more disparaging comments about gay men and women, comparing them to child molesters and murderers. This time he did not easily get away with making such statements. This is because Campbell Read, head of the DGPC's Religion and Life Committee, requested equal time to respond to Robison's comments. Because of the Fairness Doctrine that was in place at the time on television, which provided people and groups with opposing views equal time to debate and make comments about issues, WFAA granted the DGPC's request to respond to Robison.[20]

After Read from the DGPC presented a televised response to the harsh statements that Robison had made about gay men and women, Channel 8 responded by pulling Robison's program from its schedule. After his show was cancelled, Robison hired attorney Richard "Racehorse" Haynes to represent him against the FCC. Robison and his attorney claimed the evangelist's freedom of speech and "'right to preach'" were violated by the cancellation of Robison's program. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) disagreed. It declared that Channel 8 was within its rights to end the Robison broadcast since the station had the power to decide its own programming. This is what the FCC decided in the matter twice. The agency came to the decision regarding Robison just after his show was cancelled, and the FCC reached the decision again in 1981 when the agency voted to deny Robison a hearing in his dispute with WFAA.[21]

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[20] "FCC denies Robison a full hearing in WFAA dispute," *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, February 26, 1981, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings – Subject Files, Box 71, Folder 18; "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance"

[21] "FCC denies Robison a full hearing in WFAA dispute," *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, February 26, 1981, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings – Subject Files, Box 71, Folder 18; "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance"

It is important to note that the DGPC never objected to Robison's preaching that homosexuality was wrong from a religious point of view. The group understood that Robison was allowed to have his own view of the issue. However, the DGPC protested Robison quoting *The National Enquirer* about gay people being child molesters. While speaking for the group after the FCC denied Robison a hearing in early 1981, Baker added that he interpreted the FCC decision "'as a victory for the American population and for our Constitution, because it means no one can distort the true meaning and substance of the First Amendment.'" One could interpret Baker's statement about the FCC's ruling as meaning that though American citizens have the right to free speech, that freedom comes with responsibility, and that if one says harmful words about others that are not true that person will face the consequences.[22]

During the late 1970s queer people in Dallas not only endured bigotry and discrimination from individuals like Robison, but some also experienced it within the queer community.. Discrimination against people of color and women had so gotten bad that the editor of the *Dialog*, the DGPC's newsletter, wrote an article about it. The piece was entitled "Cancer Eating at Gay Community." It discussed how when non-white people went to certain bars or discos, they were required to show multiple photo ID's to gain admission. At some discos and bars, women were either hassled or turned away for wearing jeans. Louise Young experienced this type of discrimination when she went to a new disco wearing jeans When reporters approached the gay bar owners and managers about these discriminatory practices, the managers and owners responded by saying that they had patrons who demanded certain people (such as women who were lesbian or straight, Latinos, and African Americans) be denied or granted limited admittance

[22] "FCC denies Robison a full hearing in WFAA dispute"

to their bars. The article explained that some lesbian bars practiced the same discrimination against gay men. "Cancer Eating at Gay Community" not only called out the discrimination, but it also urged those who discriminated to stop it. The piece also told those who witnessed discriminatory practices in bars to speak up about it and stop giving the bars business if they continued to discriminate against people.[23] "A Cancer Eating at Gay Community" shows that some queer people in Dallas were bigoted, just like some straight individuals. This fact illustrates that Dallas' queer community was not monolithic. Even though some of the leaders within Dallas' queer community promoted inclusiveness and equality, every queer man and woman in Dallas was not dedicated to those values.

The late 1970s also brought a large number of queer men and women together. In the summer of 1979 Dallas' queer community commemorated the Stonewall uprising through a number of events that were part of gay pride week. One tradition born out of that week's celebrations was Razzle Dazzle Dallas. The event happened at the Texas Hall of State at Fair Park on June 23, 1979. It was sponsored by the Dallas Gay Political Caucus. About 4,500 lesbians and gay men attended the festive event. The celebration included music, alcohol, balloons and people dressed in colorful costumes. It was said that the mood remained high throughout the five-hour party, and that it concluded without incident. Some who attended made statements like, "'Do you believe we are here,'" and "'I would never have believed when I came here as a [Boy Scout/Girl Scout/Campfire Girl/Little Leaguer] youngster that I would be here as a Gay person,'" or "'The Gays of Dallas have finally arrived.'" The comments that gay men and lesbians at Razzle Dazzle

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[23] "Cancer Eating at Gay Community," *Dialog*, May 1979, UNT LGBT Archive, "Louise Young and Vivienne Armstrong Papers (The Dallas Way), 1975-2004, Series 1: Papers, Box 1, Folder 61.

Dallas made relate that they could not believe that they were assembled at a large gay event in Dallas.[24] Based on the number of people who attended Razzle Dazzle Dallas, the celebration was a success. Like the two gay pride parades that the Circle of Friends organized during pride week in the early 1970s in Dallas, Razzle Dazzle Dallas was a cultural event that provided queer men and women with a sense of community. Razzle Dazzle Dallas endured for decades, even as it altered its purpose to meet the vital needs of some within Dallas' LGBT community.

Figure 3.1 Billboard Advertising the Lesbian and Gay Rights March on Washington
This photo is used courtesy of the UNT LGBT Archive at the Willis Library.

In the fall of 1979 gay rights activists from around the United States organized the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Figure 3.1 shows a billboard that the

[24] "Razzle Dazzles Dallas: 4,500 Attend Disco Party," *The Dialog*, July 1979, "UNT LGBT Archive, Louise and Vivienne Armstrong Papers (The Dallas Way), 1975-2004, Series 1: Papers, Box 1, Folder 61.

Dallas Gay Political Caucus utilized in Dallas to advertise the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. In addition to providing the title, date of the event, and a phone number to call to obtain additional information about the march, the advertisement depicts lesbians and gay men. joined hand-in-hand in unity. To be exact, there are two female figures and two male figures on the billboard. Even though none of the figures in the advertisement have facial features or hair, they are still portrayed as somewhat safe and mainstream. The lesbians and gay men on the billboard are nicely dressed and appear heteronormative. There is not much confusion about who the men and women are in the promotion. The DGPC probably decided to use this advertisement because it was a respectable way to portray gay men and women. The depiction of the people in the billboard was also non-threatening. The lesbians and gay men in the promotion for the march on Washington actually reflected the kind of people in Dallas who lead the city's gay rights movement at that time. Those leaders promoted the assimilationist Dallas approach or what was known as the Dallas Way. Gay leaders in Dallas at that particular time would not have employed gay leather men in chaps or militant "Dykes on Bikes" to promote their march on Washington.

The National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights was a truly historic event for gay women and men throughout the United States. It can be viewed as a massive coming out for LGBT individuals. When the march happened in the fall of 1979, tens of thousands of queer gathered in Washington D.C. The people who attended the march made four demands: 1) Repeal of all anti lesbian/gay laws 2) Pass a comprehensive lesbian/gay rights bill in Congress 3) Issue a presidential executive order banning discrimination based on sexual orientation in the Federal Government, the military and federally contracted private employment 4) Protect lesbian and gay

youth from any laws which are used to discriminate against oppress and/or harass them in their, homes, schools, jobs and social environments. People from Dallas' queer community attended the March. Some of those attendees included Bill Nelson, Terry Tebedo, Don Baker, Steve Wilkins, Louise Young, and Vivienne Armstrong. MCC Dallas sent a young associate pastor who was at the church in the late seventies to the march. His name was Bob Copestake. While Copestake was in Washington, he attended a church service at Metropolitan Community Church of Washington, D.C. He also had a meeting with an office aide to Dallas Congressman Jim Mattox. Mattox was considered an ally to Dallas' queer community. Mattox will be discussed further in chapter.[25] The fact that a fair number of queer leaders and activists from Dallas attended the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights is another example of how Dallas' gay rights movement was in conversation with the national gay rights movement.

As the year 1979 neared the end, Dallas gay rights activist, Don Baker, formally challenged Texas penal code section 21.06 by suing Dallas District Attorney, Henry Wade, to have the law repealed. Baker sued in federal court. Even though the gay men and lesbians who wanted the sodomy law repealed knew that it would be a major challenge, they were pleased with the plaintiff who challenged the law because Don Baker was considered to be the perfect plaintiff. Baker was a smart and articulate former schoolteacher. He had served in the Navy and was a devout Christian who had survived a rough, seven-year coming-out struggle. At the time that Baker filed his suit

[25] William Waybourn, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, May 22, 2013, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 35-36; "March on Washington 1979 Information," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 5: Organizations, Sub-Series 8: Multiple Organizations, Box 476, Folder 7;"Associate Pastor's, Director of Counseling Ministries, Monthly Report to Board," October 1979, MCC Dallas Board Meeting Minutes Notebook November 1970 – December 1979 (Cathedral of Hope, Dallas, Texas); Dennis Michael Mims, "Cathedral of Hope: A History of Progressive Christianity, Civil Rights, and Gay Social Activism in Dallas, Texas, 1965-1992," Master's thesis, University of North Texas, 2009, 66-68.

against Henry Wade, he was a 32-year-old graduate student and vice president of the Dallas Gay Political Caucus. Most challenges to sodomy laws in the pre-*Hardwick* era involved public sex. This was not the case with Baker. He did not have a criminal record and was prepared to bear witness to the harm that sodomy laws inflicted on gay people, regardless of whether they had been arrested. It would take three years before the federal court reached a decision in the *Baker v. Wade* case.[26]

As politics and political involvement reached a new level of importance within Dallas' queer community from the mid to late 1970s, and the community witnessed one of its leaders make history by being the first openly gay person to run for city-wide office, queer people in Dallas continued to build a community for themselves in the neighborhood of Oak Lawn. Queer men and women moved to the area in significant numbers just as they had done since the early seventies. Queer individuals also opened more businesses in the neighborhood. They made up such a significant percentage of the clientele at a Tom Thumb located on Cedar Spring in Oak Lawn that gay people referred to the store as "Mary Thumb." Near the end of the seventies, Oak Lawn contained 100 businesses that were owned and operated by gay men and lesbians. These figures were estimates provided by a real estate agent who specialized in Oak Lawn property. In late 1979 Oak Lawn was home to almost all of the city's twenty-five or so lesbian and gay bars. Oak Lawn's reputation as a growing gay neighborhood spread beyond Dallas. In an article published in *The Advocate* in late 1979, Lenny Giteck proclaimed Oak Lawn as "'the city's up-and-coming gayish

[26] Murdoch and Price, *Courting Justice*, 347, 349-350.

neighborhood.'" Giteck's comments relate that many gay men and women were building a physical gay community for themselves in Dallas.[27]

In 1979 Dennis Plemmons, a spokesman for the Dallas Gay Political Caucus, captured what Oak Lawn meant to many queer people in Dallas when he stated, "'It's our cultural hub. It's our social hub.'" Plemmons added, "'It's home. It's a place where you can go and quit worrying about the stereotypes and what other people are thinking of you. It's a place you can go and just relax and be yourself.'" Plemmons' description of Oak Lawn communicates why the neighborhood had become so special to gay men and lesbians. Plemmons' words also convey how Oak Lawn provided queer people with a sense of community.[28]

As stated in chapter 2, Oak Lawn was already a diverse neighborhood when gay people started moving to the area in significant numbers in the early 1970s. It was still quite diverse by the end of the decade. In 1979 Oak Lawn's population included whites, African Americans, Latinos, and some of the city's wealthiest people as well as some of the poorest. Yet even though gay men and women built a distinct and identifiable community for themselves in Oak Lawn throughout 1970s, the neighborhood was not a totally gay one.[29] Oak Lawn was known as the gay part of the town by the late seventies because it had the highest concentration of gay people who lived, owned businesses, and socialized there. One important thing to note about queer people and the communities they inhabited in the past, is how difficult it is to get exact counts of the LGBT

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[27] "Last Oak Lawn settlers brought controversy," *The Dallas Morning News*, December 9, 1979, UNT LGBT Archive, Louise Young and Vivienne Armstrong Papers (The Dallas Way), 1975-2004, Series 1: Papers, Box 2, Folder 17.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

population. This is because gay men and lesbians were not counted in the census. So, some of the numbers presented for queer people and their communities are based on estimates from real estate agents and those who leased apartments. For example, it was previously stated that 100 businesses in Oak Lawn were owned and operated by gay men and lesbians. The information was supplied by a real estate agent who specialized in Oak Lawn property.

This chapter has shown that from the year 1976 through 1979 queer people in Dallas increasingly focused on politics as they considered it to be one of the main avenues to help bring about social change within the city. After the DGPC was founded in the spring of 1976, Reverend Jim Harris organized the political organization's first rally which was a success. Besides being an event where a large group of queer individuals gathered and had a great deal of fun, the rally included as a featured speaker Mary Jo Risher, a lesbian from the Dallas area, who had recently lost custody of her young son because of her sexual orientation. Later that year the DGPC held a rally at MCC Dallas which hundreds of queer people attended. At this event, they discussed police harassment and the need to rid of Texas penal code section 21.06.

iIn the year 1976 MCC Dallas also relocated from East Dallas to Oak Lawn. The church moved to its new location because Reverend Harris believed that MCC Dallas should be located in Dallas' burgeoning gay neighborhood. Since Harris was a founding member of the DGPC and one of the organization's board members, he allowed the DGPC to hold its meetings at MCC Dallas. By letting the DGPC conduct its meetings at the church, Harris helped to increase MCC Dallas' significance within Dallas' queer community. During the mid-1970s MCC Dallas became a vital multi-purpose site within Dallas' LGBT community.

In the spring of 1977 Dallas' queer community witnessed one of its leaders and activists make history in the city of Dallas. Jim Harris became the first openly gay person to run for the Dallas City Council. Even though Harris' main issue was not gay rights, he ran as a candidate who stressed the importance of human rights for racial and sexual minorities. Though Harris did not win his bid for a council seat, the activist minister set an example of how an openly gay person could run an inclusive campaign for city-wide office in Dallas in the future.

By the late 1970s the first wave of gay leaders and activists in Dallas had stepped out of the spotlight or moved away as a new wave of queer leaders and activists came onto the scene. In the late seventies Steve Wilkins, the second president of the DGPC, created the "Dallas Approach" or "Dallas Way." Regarding the "Dallas Way," Wilkins stated that since business was important within the city of Dallas, gay individuals should dress in business attire and carry briefcases when going to the mayor's office or when conducting business with some other city official. Another component of the "Dallas Way" was getting things done through conversation rather than confrontation. Between 1976 and 1977, leaders within the DGPC outlined long-term goals that the organization had for Dallas' queer community. At the time, DGPC leaders believed that if the organization ultimately achieved its outlined goals, queer people in Dallas would be able to participate fully and equally in the life of the city. If the DGPC helped to accomplish the goal of repealing Texas penal code section 21.06, that accomplishment would positively affect every queer person in Texas.

As the decade of the seventies came to an end, queer people from across the United States attended the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. The DGPC advertised the march in Dallas. Several gay rights leaders and activists from Dallas attended the

historic march. Gay rights activists and leaders from Dallas participating in the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights is another illustration of how the gay rights movement in Dallas was in conversation with the national movement for gay rights. The first time the Dallas' gay rights movement entered into conversation with the national movement occured when the Circle of Friends was part of North American Conference of Homophile Organizations and members of the COF represented the organization at NACHO meetings starting in the late 1960s.

Shortly after the march on Washington, Don Baker filed a lawsuit challenging Texas' sodomy law. Baker brought the suit against Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade. Many gay rights advocates considered Baker to be the perfect plaintiff for the case. As the next chapter will show, it took three years for a decision to be reached in *Baker v. Wade*.

As politics achieved a new level of importance within Dallas' queer community from the mid to late 1970s, queer men and women continued to build a distinct and identifiable community in the diverse neighborhood of Oak Lawn. By the late seventies a good number of queer individuals not only inhabited Oak Lawn, but a significant amount owned businesses there. As the 1970s came to a close there were more than two dozen gay and lesbian bars in Oak Lawn. In fact, the majority of lesbian and gay bars in Dallas were located in that part of the city at that time. Oak Lawn came to be known as the gay part of town by the end of 1970s.

CHAPTER IV

MATURATION AND CONTESTED VICTORIES DEFINE DALLAS' LGBT COMMUNITY FROM THE EARLY TO MID-1980s

At the dawn of the 1980s, the city of Dallas had an established and recognizable lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. That community included Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. In 1980 the church was the queer community's oldest organization. At the beginning of the new decade, Dallas' first gay political organization, the Dallas Gay Political Caucus, was nearing its fifth year in existence. In addition to these vital organizations, Dallas' LGBT community had its own visible part of town, Oak Lawn, where a sizeable number of gay people lived, and frequented because of the gay bars and gay businesses. This chapter argues that the early to mid-1980s was a high point for LGBT individuals in Dallas because the queer community continued its development by creating more organizations and businesses that would be important in helping to entertain, support and sustain the community. During this period of time, queer men and women in Dallas also experienced a major legal victory that was the result of the bravery of one of their community's leaders. In addition to these developments, Dallas' LGBT community created an enduring cultural tradition. Even though Dallas' queer community had a lot to be proud of and celebrate during this time, it was also forced to think about and deal with some serious issues that threatened both its safety and very survival.

The start of the 1980s was a good time for the city of Dallas. The city entered the eighties experiencing a remarkable economic boom that began at the end of the previous decade. The Dallas area was so prosperous in contrast to other parts of the country that large amounts of out-of-work people rented trailers and hauled their belongings to the city to find employment. Between 1983 and 1984, 29.3 million square feet of new office space was created in the city of Dallas. That

somewhat meaningless figure becomes more meaningful by a comparison: it was equal to all of the office space in the city of Miami. The Metroplex, a then relatively new term, coined to include Dallas, Ft. Worth and the growing suburban areas, now ranked third behind New York and Chicago as headquarters for companies with more than one million dollars in assets.[1]

In this boom time of the late 1970s and early 1980s, Dallas witnessed the arrival of several impressive tax-supported ventures. The first such venture was the new Dallas City Hall designed by the Chinese-born architect I.M. Pei. The new city hall opened in 1978. The structure covered seven acres and cost seventy million dollars. The new eight-floor building was not only impressive to those who lived in Dallas, but also to Ada Louise Huxtable, an architecture critic for the *New York Times*, who declared Dallas City Hall one of the most important public buildings in the nation. Just across the street from the new city hall, a new library opened in 1982; it cost $42.7 million. The library, like city hall, had been conceived by former Mayor Erik Jonsson. The mayor saw the library as an attractive buffer that would complement the city hall building. Jonsson had co-directed the drive to raise private funds for the building, and the library was named in his honor. A year after the new Downtown library opened, the City Council approved creation of the Arts District, which would be located on a 60 acre tract of land along Ross Avenue. When the City Council approved the creation of the Arts District, its first occupant, the Dallas Museum of Arts (DMA), was almost ready to move into its new building.[2]

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[1] Darwin Payne, *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of an American Supercity in the 20th Century* (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 2000), 423.

[2] Ibid, 424; Harvey J. Graff, *The Dallas Myth: The Making and Unmaking of An American City* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 40 and 296; I.M. Pei American Architect, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* https://www.britannica.com/biography/I-M-Pei accessed July 7, 2018.

When the decade of the eighties began, things were also looking up for Dallas' LGBT community. By that time queer men and women had established a neighborhood, and they had community organizations which had existed for a considerable amount of time. At the start of the 1980s, Dallas' LGBT community experienced a level of visibility that it probably could not have imagined a decade earlier. These facts about Dallas' queer community illustrate the significant amount of progress that it had made since it started to organize, and joined the gay rights movement a decade and a half earlier. They also relate that Dallas' LGBT community entered the new decade with a good amount of potential for growth and success.

Shortly after the 1980s commenced, a small group of gay men in Dallas decided to form a new kind of organization. Phil Gerber, Rodger M. Wilson, and Don Essmiller came up with the idea to create a gay choir. The three men decided to form the chorus while having drinks one evening. Shortly after they conceived the idea of creating a gay choir, they advertised the new chorus. It is not clear how the men got the word out about the choir since there was no major gay Dallas newspaper when they formed the new organization. At first, the men who formed the chorus most likely promoted it by discussing it with their friends and acquaintances. Not too long after Gerber, Essmiller, and Wilson decided to form a gay choir, the Turtle Creek Chorale (TCC) was born. The chorus held its first rehearsal on February 19, 1980 at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Oak Lawn. There thirty-eight men participated in the initial rehearsal. One trait that made the chorale different from other organizations that had been created in Dallas' LGBT community was

that it was a cultural organization. The TCC started with the main purpose of bringing men together to create beautiful music through song.[3]

It is important to note that the Turtle Creek Chorale began as a closeted organization. This is another trait that made the TCC different from two popular gay organizations that were formed before it within Dallas' LGBT community. Those gay organizations were Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas and the Dallas Gay Political Caucus, and they both started as openly gay groups. The only other well-known organization within Dallas' queer community that began as a closeted one was the Circle of Friends. The COF started a decade and a half before the TCC, and it came out of the closet about year and a half after it was formed. The fact that the Turtle Creek Chorale started as a closeted organization helps to explain its name and why the word gay was not part of the choir's name. In the beginning, the TCC considered itself a musical organization that happened to be gay. Forming in early 1980, the Turtle Creek Chorale is considered one of the early gay men's choruses since many of the LGBT choruses throughout the United States started several years later in response to the AIDS crisis.[4]

According to Kenneth T. Cole, the former executive director of the national association of gay and lesbian choruses or GALA Choruses, there are three motivations for joining gay and

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[3] "Turtle Creek Chorale," August 25, 2015, The Dallas Way: A GLBT History Project, http://www.thedallasway.org/stories/written/written-stories/2015/5/10/turtle-creek-chorale accessed August 31, 2017; "Turtle Creek Chorale Celebrates Its 34th Anniversary," *Dallas Voice*, February 19, 2014, https://www.dallasvoice.com/turtle-creek-chorale-celebrates-34th-anniversary-10167780.html accessed August 31, 2017.

[4] "Gay and Lesbian Choruses – Then and Now," June 1, 2005, Chorus America, https://www.chorusamerica.org/advocacy-research/gay-and-lesbian-choruses-then-and-now accessed June 25, 2018.

lesbian choruses. Those motivations are community, politics, and artistic quality. When the Turtle Creek Chorale was formed in Dallas, the chorus focused on community and artistic quality.[5]

The Turtle Creek Chorale made its performance debut in the spring following its formation. On April 28, 1980, The Dallas Gay Political Caucus hosted a community meeting at the historic Trinity Methodist Church. It was at this meeting that the TCC gave its premiere performance. In June of the same year, the Turtle Creek Chorale made its formal concert debut at the Owens Fine Arts Center at Caruth Auditorium.[6]

The founding of the Turtle Creek Chorale gave Dallas' queer community one of its first cultural organizations. The TCC provided gay men within the city of Dallas a way to come together as a group and express themselves artistically. It also offered them an alternative way to socialize outside of the gay bars. As time progressed, the Turtle Creek Chorale would become one of the most enduring organizations within Dallas' LGBT community.

There is one more important fact to address about gay choruses like the TCC. Even though men's choruses outnumber women's choruses in the gay choral movement, the women's choirs were there from the start of the movement, serving as a kind of incubator for the entire gay choral movement. For example, Catherine Roma started the women's chorus, Anna Crusis, in Philadelphia in 1975. As of late spring 2005, GALA listed Anna Crusis as the oldest continuing gay chorus in the United States. Even though there are fewer gay women's choruses than there are

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[5] Ibid.

[6] "Turtle Creek Chorale," August 25, 2015, The Dallas Way: A GLBT History Project, http://www.thedallasway.org/stories/written/written-stories/2015/5/10/turtle-creek-chorale accessed August 31, 2017; "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance," May 11, 1981, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 62, Folder 68.

gay men's choruses and gay men's choirs are more popular, gay women's choruses have endured for decades.[7]

In addition to witnessing the arrival of the TCC in 1980, Dallas' Queer community saw Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas reach an important milestone. In the summer of 1980, MCC Dallas celebrated its tenth year in existence. Having survived for a decade, the church was the oldest organization in Dallas' LGBT community. By the time Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas celebrated its tenth anniversary, its average membership was around 350 people. The church's average attendance was just over 400. MCC Dallas had grown significantly since the church started as an MCC mission. Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas' attendance had increased so much that it started to experience overflow crowds. This development led to MCC Dallas purchasing additional land around the church for possible future expansion.[8]

In the same year that Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas celebrated its special anniversary, the church started a new ministry for an underserved segment of the LGBT community. This was a ministry for deaf people. Creating a ministry for the deaf was a way for MCC Dallas to ensure that queer individuals who could not hear were able to access the church's affirming and progressive Christian message. Since Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas had always stated that it was not a gay church, but a Christian church with a special outreach to

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[7] "Gay and Lesbian Choruses – Then and Now," June 1, 2005, Chorus America, https://www.chorusamerica.org/advocacy-research/gay-and-lesbian-choruses-then-and-now accessed June 25, 2018.

[8] *Cathedral of Hope 1970-1995: A Generation of Faithfulness 25th Anniversary Bulletin*, 20-21; "Coming to Our Own," Special Church Bulletin, Vertical File: Churches – Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas (DPL).

gay individuals, the new ministry for the deaf was beneficial to any deaf person who attended MCC Dallas.[9]

When Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas celebrated its tenth anniversary, the church's third senior pastor, Don Eastman, had been leading the church for two years. Eastman was a Midwesterner like MCC Dallas' first senior pastor, Richard Vincent. He was also white, like the two previous senior pastors of MCC Dallas. Eastman's home state was Iowa. Eastman received the divine call to the ministry when he was a young man. After answering that call, he attended Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri. Eastman graduated in 1966. Shortly after completing his religious studies, he became the pastor of an Assemblies of God church in the state of Wisconsin. Eastman led that congregation for six years before leaving. When he left the church, Eastman also left Wisconsin and returned to Iowa. Once the clergyman was back in his home state, he started working outside of the ministry. Eastman took a job with the American Lung Association. During that time, Eastman made another major change in his life; he came out of the closet. When he made this major life-changing decision, he resigned his credentials with the conservative Assemblies of God Church. In 1975, shortly after making these changes, Eastman started a new ministry with the Metropolitan Community Church denomination.[10]

Shortly after Reverend Eastman arrived at Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, he stated that one of his main objectives was to have a ministry that communicated to lesbians and gay men that their sexual orientation did not prevent them from having a positive relationship with

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9 Ibid.

10 "Oaklawn Church Ministers to Christian Homosexuals," *Dallas Times Herald*, May 6, 1978, Vertical File: Churches – Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas (DPL); *Cathedral of Hope 1970-1995: A Generation of Faithfulness 25th Anniversary Bulletin*, 27.

God. Eastman shared this during an interview with the *Dallas Times Herald* in the spring of 1978. During the newspaper interview, the pastor related that crisis counseling was a main focus at MCC Dallas. Eastman stated that he and the church's four deacons dealt with a variety of crises that were specific to gay men and women. Eastman and the deacons helped individuals deal with being rejected by their families because of their sexual orientation. They helped others cope with the discrimination of losing their employment because of being gay. Eastman and the MCC Dallas deacons also supported those who survived suicide attempts. Eastman shared that because he and the deacons helped individuals deal with such serious issues, the deacons were required to go through a year-long training program prior to ordination. Eastman explained that if he and the deacons who made up the counseling ministry at Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas were presented with problems that they could not deal with on a pastoral basis, MCC Dallas had four psychologists that it referred church members to who needed them.[11]

The crisis counseling that Reverend Eastman and the deacons at Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas provided to gay individuals is not only an example of queer pastoral care, but it is also an example of the radical love that is an important component of gay liberation theology. Theologian Patrick S. Cheng explains, "It is through the church—an external community of radical love—that LGBT people can minister to each other and find spiritual, emotional, and physical healing in community. As with other marginalized groups, LGBT people have unique pastoral needs." Eastman and the MCC deacons who comprised the counseling ministry demonstrated

[11] "Oaklawn Church Ministers to Christian Homosexuals"

radical love to the queer individuals that they counseled, as they helped them cope with a variety of serious issues that were related to their sexual orientation.[12]

Even though Reverend Eastman was clearly concerned with the well-being of queer men and women who worshipped at MCC Dallas, his personal experience with coming out of the closet most likely influenced the pastoral care that he ensured that individuals who attended Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas received. Sue Schrader, the former assistant to Eastman at the church from the early to mid-1980s, related what coming out was like for Eastman when she commented, "…Don said it was really tough coming out, that kind of thing. He was disenfranchised [sic] from his brother but his mother was supportive. His brother at that time - - I think eventually they got back together, but I don't know if that was after Don left Dallas…" Part of the reason why Eastman made sure that he and the deacons provided this kind of pastoral care to queer men and women at MCC Dallas was probably because Eastman could empathize with their plight. Reverend Eastman had been estranged from his twin brother, who was also a minister, because Eastman came out as a gay man. He knew like many of his congregants how it felt to be disconnected from a loved one because of his sexual orientation.[13]

Schrader was able to offer insight into what probably motivated some of Reverend Eastman's actions because she worked closely with him for several years. Schrader was a white lesbian who came to work at Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas in 1981. At that time, she was in her early forties. Schrader was a well-educated Midwesterner who came from South Bend, Indiana. She had an undergraduate and graduate degree. Schrader had been reared in a middle-

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[12] Patrick S. Cheng, *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* (New York: Seabury Books, 2011), 111.
[13] Sue Schrader, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, March 16, 2015**,** University of North Texas Oral History Program, 58-59.

class family. Prior to moving to Dallas, Schrader worked as an administrator at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. When Schrader originally arrived at MCC Dallas, she worked as a volunteer at the church before she was hired as Eastman's assistant. In her role at MCC Dallas assisting Eastman, Schrader stated, "…I was typing everything for UFMCC so I knew as much about MCC as anybody did...part of my job then was also like I had to put all the board packets together, all the membership class packages, you name it. Anything that was paperwork I would do." In Schrader's position at Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas she worked in close proximity to the senior pastor on a regular basis. So, she had a great deal of knowledge about the Dallas church's affairs, as well as its denomination's business.[14]

At the start of the 1980s, Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas was clearly thriving. In addition to having a healthy amount of members and strong regular attendance numbers, the progressive church was also focused on new ways of reaching and supporting different people. Besides all of this, MCC Dallas benefitted from the leadership of another dedicated senior pastor. When the new decade commenced, MCC Dallas was a healthy organization that continued to serve LGBT women and men and provide them with a sense of community.

The year 1980 was not only the start of a new decade, but also a presidential election year in the United States. In that year, American citizens had the choice to either re-elect Democratic President Jimmy Carter, or send Republican presidential candidate, Ronald Reagan, to the White House. Since Carter and Reagan had very different views about politics and the role of government, 1980 was a consequential election year.

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[14] Ibid, 1, 3, 6-9, 14-15, 44-45, and 47-57 and 59.

The 1980 presidential election was an important one for politically-minded gay people across the United States. Most gay men and women who were involved with or followed politics wanted Democratic President Jimmy Carter to win a second term. Gay individuals wanted a Carter victory because he and his White House did several things that elevated gay rights during Carter's term in office. The first action that the White House took to signal that it was sympathetic to the plight of gay people was to host a meeting of gay rights leaders in 1977. The meeting was organized by Carter's closeted public liaison Margaret "Midge" Constanza, her lover, Jean O'Leary, and Bruce Voeller. At the time, O'Leary and Voeller were co-chairs of the National Gay Task Force (NGTF). After the initial meeting with the gay group, there were a few follow-up meetings. Even though President Carter never met with the gay group, and the meetings did not yield any major policy results, the gay group's meetings in the White House carried a significant amount of symbolic weight with gay women and men. The meetings represented the first time that openly gay leaders had been invited to the White House to discuss issues that were important to the gay community. Besides having meetings with gay rights leaders, the Carter administration took some actions on behalf of gay individuals that were beyond symbolic. For example, in 1978 President Carter signed the Civil Service Reform Act into law. The Act prohibited discrimination against gay men and women in most federal civil service jobs. The Carter administration also endorsed the repeal of the law that barred gay aliens from visiting the U.S. In addition to the acts that the Carter White House took to demonstrate its support for gay people, the 1980 Democratic Platform contained a gay civil rights plank.[15]

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[15] Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 298-303; "Where Does President Jimmy Carter Stand on Gay Rights?," political advertisement paid for by Lesbian/Day Democrats of Texas, Vertical File: Churches – Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas (Dallas Public Library,

In the state of Texas, many gay voters had a strong desire for President Carter to win re-election. Three of Texas' gay political groups endorsed the president. These groups included the Dallas Gay Political Caucus' P.A.C., Houston Gay Political Caucus, and the Lesbian/Gay Democrats of Texas. These gay groups not only endorsed Carter's second bid for the presidency, but they also managed to get an item important to them in the Texas State Democratic Platform. That item called for the repeal of the state's sodomy law, penal code section 21.06.[16]

In November 1980 Republican Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States. The conservative Reagan's victory over President Carter signaled a political move to the right for the United States. The Republican Agenda during the 1980s and early 1990s concentrated on reducing many "big government" programs started by Democrats since 1933. The Reagan and Bush administrations worked to limit the role of federal courts and agencies in promoting civil rights and civil liberties, decrease government regulation of business and protection of the environment, diminish the social welfare system, and slash income taxes, especially for high-end earners. Presidents Reagan and Bush also worked to promote a conservative social ethic in such areas as gender roles, premarital sex, abortion rights, drug use, and the role of religion in public life.[17]

The Republican Agenda that was pursued after President Reagan was elected clearly did not include gay citizens or a number of issues that were important to them. Even though that was the reality for gay men and women in the United States, they did not go into an immediate panic

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Dallas, Texas); John D'Emilio, William B. Turner, and Urvashi Vaid, *Creating Change: Sexuality, Public Policy and Civil Rights* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 95.

[16] "Where Does President Jimmy Carter Stand on Gay Rights?"

[17] Michael Schaller, *Right Turn: American Life in the Reagan-Bush Era, 1980-1992* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 46-47 and 51.

after Reagan's election. However, not too long after President Reagan took office, gay men and women would learn just how detrimental Reagan's presidency would be to their community.

The conservative coalition known as the New Right played a significant role in helping get President Reagan elected. The New Right included religious conservatives, anti-tax and anti-big government activists, and old-line anticommunists. There was one message that united these different but overlapping groups of Republican voters. That message was delivered through a populist rhetoric that blamed the problems of the U.S. on a liberal elite that derided both Christian morality and the traditional American value of self-reliance. Jerry Falwell, the conservative southern minister who co-founded the Moral Majority in 1979, was at the center of the New Right coalition. One of the many segments of American society that the Moral Majority considered a danger was gay liberationists.[18]

In the early 1980s Dallas was an important place to the Moral Majority. First Baptist Church of Dallas, which was still led by the ultraconservative and outspoken Reverend W.A. Criswell, supplied leadership and crucial support for the Moral Majority in the late seventies and early eighties. The church also served as the headquarters for the conservative takeover of the once moderate Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). At the time, the SBC was the nation's largest Protestant denomination. In the early eighties, First Baptist Church of Dallas was also a top supporter of the ascending GOP.[19]

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[18] Beth Bailey and David Farber, *America in the Seventies* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 23-25.

[19] Michael Phillips, *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 2; Mark Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door: American Religion in the Age of Counterculture* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 208.

Although Dallas was still a conservative city when the eighties began, it was not as conservative as it had been when gay men and lesbians started to form a visible community there in the mid-1960s. Starting in the sixties, Dallas had worked to desegregate its businesses and schools. African Americans had been elected to public office in Dallas. During the 1970s gay individuals became more visible within the city. Even though the city was still conservative at the start of the 1980s, it was not the politically far-right bastion that it had once been.

As the election year came to an end, a small group of gay individuals decided to open a new business on Cedar Springs in Oak Lawn. Their business was called the Crossroads Market because it was located at the intersection of Cedar Springs Road and Throckmorton Street. Many LGBT women and men in Dallas referred to the intersection of Cedar Springs and Throckmorton as the crossroads of the gay neighborhood. Five of the people who participated in the new business venture were William Waybourn and his partner Craig Spaulding, Bill Nelson and his partner Terry Tebedo, and Phil Johnson. William Waybourn, Craig Spaulding, Bill Nelson, and Terry Tebedo were the names on the store's lease. Waybourn clearly remembered when the two couples signed the lease on the Crossroads Market on December 5, 1980. Since the Crossroads Market was originally arranged like a flea market, there was also booth space available for people to lease. Johnson leased a booth at the market when it first opened.[20]

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[20] William Waybourn, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, May 22, 2013, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 31-32; Information about J.R.'s Bar and Grill is used here because that information also explains that the crossroads in Oak Lawn is at Cedar Springs Road and Throckmorton Street. This information was taken from J.R.'s company website https://www.jrsdallas.com/about-us/ accessed on July 15, 2018.

When the Crossroads Market opened up on the strip in 1980, it joined a good number of gay organizations and businesses that were already located along Cedar Springs. While recalling those organizations and businesses Waybourn stated,

> "…'Okay, the community center is opening up.' It already opened up down the street, they'd already signed the lease for the community center, this space became available, you know, it was the perfect location, it was across the street from J.R.'s, it was across the street from 4001, it was across the street from Throckmorton [Mining Company, a bar]. All the gay bars were right there in that area, concentrated in that area, the Round Up, and so it was like a no-brainer that we would be there."[21]

Waybourn thought it made perfect sense that the Crossroads Market was located among so many other gay businesses and organizations.

Within a year of the Crossroads Market being established in Oak Lawn, the Oak Lawn Counseling Center (OLCC) was formed within Dallas' LGBT Community. The OLCC focused on the mental health of queer people. A gay white man named Harold "Howie" Daire formed the OLCC in November 1981. A man named Joe Fleming gave Daire the money to start the counseling center. Shortly after founding the Oak Lawn Counseling Center, Daire brought on a lesbian counselornamed Candy Marcum. The two counselors who would become good friends were introduced to each other by a mutual friend. That friend was a gay man who was Marcum's roommate at the time of her introduction to Daire.[22]

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[21] Waybourn, Oral History, 33; Petra L. Doan Ed., *Planning and LGBTQ Communities: The Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 41.

[22] "Founder of Dallas' Oak Lawn Counseling Center, Howie Daire, Dies of AIDS," *The Week in Texas*, July 25 – July 31, 1986, 28-29, http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081983daire.html accessed September 1, 2017; "Dallas AIDS Patient Sees Death as Transition, Not End," *Dallas Voice*, June 27, 1986, http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081983daire.html accessed September 1, 2017; "Brief Biography about Howie Daire," *Dallas Voice*, May 21, 2009, http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081983daire.html accessed 1 September 2017; Candy Marcum, Oral History Interview with Karen Wisely, June 3, 2013, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 4.

Daire's background and resume made him the ideal person to start an organization such as the OLCC. Daire was born in Port Arthur, Texas in 1948. He came from a middle-class background. Daire was well-educated; he held a master's degree in counseling. Daire moved to Dallas in 1971, where he worked for several years as an elementary school teacher. In the late seventies, Daire started teaching math to inmates at the Dallas County Jail. This position was through El Centro College which was part of the Dallas County Community College system. In Daire's spare time, for fun, he worked as a bartender at the gay club the Bayou Landing. Daire's education, jobs, and the way he spent his spare time, conveys that he was smart, outgoing, and cared about the well-being of others. It also explains why he was the kind of person who would open a counseling center.[23]

Marcum's profile and credentials also made her a strong fit with the Oak Lawn Counseling Center. Candy Marcum was born in Houston, Texas in 1950. Her family moved to the town of Spring in Texas when she was a toddler. Marcum was reared in an upper-middle class home. Both of her parents worked in the medical field. Her father was a doctor and her mother was a nurse. Marcum experienced what was considered a fairly common upbringing for many white children who grew up in comfortable middle-class environments in the fifties and sixties in the U.S. After she completed high school, she attended Texas Christian University (TCU) as an undergraduate.

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[23] "Founder of Dallas' Oak Lawn Counseling Center, Howie Daire, Dies of AIDS," *The Week in Texas*, 28-29, http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081983daire.html accessed September 1, 2017; "Dallas AIDS Patient Sees Death as Transition, Not End," *Dallas Voice*, June 27, 1986, http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081983daire.html accessed September 1, 2017; "Brief Biography about Howie Daire," *Dallas Voice*, May 21, 2009, http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081983daire.html accessed September 1, 2017; "An Interview with the Founder of The Oak Lawn Counseling Center Howie Daire," *This Week in Texas*, June 27 – July 3 1986, 30; "Daire Fired by El Centro," *Dallas Voice*, November 1, 1985 http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081983daire.html accessed July 15, 2018.

Marcum went to graduate school at North Texas State University (NTSU) which would later change its name to University of North Texas (UNT). Marcum stated that she became a counselor for two reasons: "One is that people like to talk to me, and I like that. I like people a lot and I like to talk to them. But I noticed when I was in high school, people would come talk to me about their problems or whatever. And then, I wanted to know why I was gay. I wanted to know what that was about." Marcum decided to become a counselor because she was a people-person who enjoyed listening to and talking with other people, and because she wanted to get a better understanding of herself as a lesbian.[24]

When Daire formed the Oak Lawn Counseling Center, he created an organization that was greatly needed within Dallas' LGBT community. A number of queer individuals needed a place where they could go and talk with licensed mental health professionals about problems that they had or issues that needed to be addressed. The OLCC provided LGBT individuals with a place where they could freely discuss issues related to their sexual orientation with queer counselors. The Oak Lawn Counseling Center had counselors of both sexes. This is significant because there were probably some men who only wanted to confide in a male counselor, and some women who only wanted to share their innermost thoughts and feelings with a female counselor.

Daire was both clever and resourceful in how he went about getting clients for the OLCC. He had to think closely about how he and Marcum could build up a roster of clients since there were no major gay newspapers in Dallas in which to advertise, when they opened the center. Since there were not many publications to promote the Oak Lawn Counseling Center in, Daire went to a place where a large number of gay people gathered. He went to the gay bars and talked to

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[24] Marcum, Oral History Interview, 3 and 22-23.

bartenders about the center. Going to the bars turned out to be an effective way to get clients for the counseling center. When Daire first opened the OLCC, he worked there part-time. Not too long after starting the counseling center, Daire accumulated enough clients to leave his day job and start working at the center full-time. Marcum stayed on at the Oak Lawn Counseling Center for a little more than a year before deciding to leave and open her own practice.[25]

After operating for about a year, the OLCC demonstrated that it strived to be a comprehensive mental health facility for Dallas' LGBT community by providing a variety programs that addressed the specific needs of queer individuals. For example, a group called "Men in Transition" addressed the changes that married men who were coming out of the closet encountered as they entered gay life. There were also "Gay Men's Growth Groups," as well as "Gay Women's Growth Groups," that were created for gay men and lesbians who were coming out of the closet and adjusting to gay life, but did not necessarily plan on leaving a marriage. The Oak Lawn Counseling Center also provided a mixed-sex program for lesbians and gay men who were entering, or had entered middle age, which was titled "Gay Men and Women Over Forty." In addition to these programs that focused on gay men and lesbians, the OLCC also put on workshops that covered general topics such as coping with stress, and drinking and driving. The various programs offered by the Oak Lawn Counseling Center demonstrates how the organization was aware of some of the important issues that gay men and women faced and needed help dealing

[25] "Howie Daire," *Dallas Voice*, May 21, 2009 http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081983daire.html accessed July 15, 2018; Marcum, Oral History Interview, 27.

with. The workshops about drinking and driving, and dealing with stress, were the kinds of events that both gay and straight counseling centers developed for potential clients.[26]

Creating the Oak Lawn Counseling Center is another illustration of queer individuals in Dallas exercising their agency. Daire and Marcum, like those who founded the Circle of Friends, Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, and the Dallas Gay Political Caucus, took it upon themselves to create and promote another organization within the LGBT community that helped to support and sustain that community. The OLCC also gave gay men and women who did not live in Oak Lawn a sense of community in the same way that the COF, MCC Dallas, and the DGPC provided lesbians and gay men who did not live in Dallas' gay neighborhood with the same.

In 1981 the Dallas Gay Political Caucus, the second oldest organization in Dallas' queer community, celebrated its fifth anniversary and changed its name to the Dallas Gay Alliance (DGA). In a condensed history of the DGA that was written around its fifth anniversary, Lauri Hardaway, a member of the Alliance, explained why the DGPC changed its name to the Dallas Gay Alliance. Hardaway wrote, "… Primarily, the new name represents what had always been evident: We are more than a political organization. This new name tells our city that the gay women and men of Dallas are allied together to serve whatever needs may arise that affect our lives and our interest, whether they be political, social, or educational." Hardaway communicated that the DGA took on its new name to show that the organization was not only concerned with politics, but that it was interested in a range of issues that were important to gay men and lesbians in Dallas.

[26] "Counseling Available," Dialog (Newsletter of the Dallas Gay Alliance), 1979-1984, UNT LGBT Archive, Louise Young and Vivienne Armstrong Papers (The Dallas Way), 1975-2004, Series 1: Papers, Box 1, Folder 61.

Hardaway's statement relates that the Dallas Gay Alliance was a multi-purpose community organization.[27]

At the same time, local journalists took notice of the various developments within Dallas' LGBT community. In early 1981, Dick Johnson and Marlene McClinton with KDFW Channel 4, a local CBS affiliate, decided to do a story that focused on Dallas' gay community. The name of the three-part report was titled *Closet Full of Secrets*. It was shown during the 10p.m. newscasts.[28]

The news report with the sensational title did a sound job of covering a variety of topics that were specific to the LGBT community. For example, Johnson stated that Oak Lawn was the center of gay life in Dallas, and that between 30,000 and 50,000 gay men and lesbians inhabited the neighborhood. The coverage received appropriate criticism for neglecting to cite a source regarding the population figures for gay people in Oak Lawn, but Johnson was accurate in describing the neighborhood as the center of gay life in Dallas. The report briefly dealt with the issue of gay parenting when McClinton conducted a short interview with a lesbian who was having a child through artificial insemination. The segment with the expecting mother was filmed with the mother's face in shadow in order to conceal her identity. The fact that the pregnant woman found it necessary to share her story in shadow demonstrates that she could go only so far in the contribution that she made to the program. The woman knew that she could face discrimination or some other kind of challenges if she fully exposed herself. The news report also covered the topic of coming out of the closet. In that part of the news story, a college professor told of how he came

[27] "History of the First 5 Years of the Dallas Gay Alliance," May 11, 1981, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 62, Folder 68.

[28] "Dallas Tastefully Told about Its Homosexuals," *Dallas Morning News*, February 17, 1981, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings – Subject Files, Box 71, Folder 18.

out to his family. The professor shared that he was surprised at how supportive his father was of him when he revealed his sexual orientation.[29]

McClinton and Johnson were reflective in their closing remarks in *Closet Full of Secrets*. Johnson stated, "'The gay lifestyle is still difficult for many people to understand and accept. Even gays themselves are still grappling with their own identity.'" McClinton said, "'So they've carved out their own community in Oak Lawn. And they've gained political and economic influence.'" Johnson added, "'Some of the people who talked to us during our series had little to gain from it and a lot to lose.'"[30] The thoughtful comments that the two journalists made at the end of the news report relate that they had gained some valuable insight into what life was like for lesbians and gay men living within the city of Dallas.

The fact that McClinton and Johnson did a multi-part news report that focused on gay men and lesbians in Dallas illustrates just how much things had progressed for gay individuals living within the conservative city. When the eighties began, gay women and men in Dallas were more visible than ever before. By that time, gay individuals in the city were not viewed with as much disdain as they had been a decade or two earlier. It is important to point out that even though gay people were more visible in the early eighties than they had been any time before in Dallas, many gay individuals knew there was a limit with regard to how out or open they could be about their sexual orientation. The pregnant lesbian in the news story was a strong example of a person who was aware of such a limit. By the early eighties, gay men and lesbians also had both an identifiable and sizeable community that news reporters could actually concentrate on and create an in-depth

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

report about. These facts about Dallas' gay community not only show how much it had changed since its formation began in the 1960s, but they also explain how two local journalists were able to do a fair news story about the community in the early 1980s.

Even though things looked promising for Dallas' LGBT community at the start of the eighties, the community still had some important challenges when it entered the new decade. One such challenge was police harassment. In early 1981, several months before the Dallas Gay Political Caucus became the Dallas Gay Alliance, the DGPC tried to effectively deal with the issue of police harassment by the Dallas Police Department. As this work has demonstrated, the DPD had a long history of harassing queer people. This work has also shown that starting in the 1970s, gay men and lesbians started to speak out about police harassment in Dallas. By the early eighties, the Dallas Gay Political Caucus had created a Social Justice Committee. This part of the DGPC dealt with issues like police harassment and violence against gays, which happened with greater frequency in Dallas in the early 1980s.[31]

The way that the DGPC addressed the issues of violence against gay people and police harassment was to communicate directly with the LGBT community about these issues, and to instruct the community on how to deal with police harassment and hate crimes in ways that might bring about justice for victims. One method that the Dallas Gay Political Caucus utilized to disseminate their message to the queer community was a flyer titled "Strike Back!'
The flyer stated, "If you have been harassed or know of a victim of police harassment (police brutality, verbal abuse, harassing traffic tickets, false arrests, etc.) or if you have been a victim of

[31] "Strike Back!," Flyer, January 1981 and DGPC Memo re: Increased Police Presence in the Cedar Springs/Oak Lawn Area – 1981, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 71, Folder 18.

or know of a victim of gaybaiting/bashing (robberies, muggings, vandalism, etc.) please call the THRF EMERGENCY HOTLINE:…" In addition to supplying a number to call, the DGPC informed Dallas' queer community of what the organization would do to help victims deal with police harassment and hate crimes. The flyer said, "The Social Justice Committee of the DALLAS GAY POLITICAL CAUCUS will investigate the charges, assist in filing complaints and provide moral support. But please provide full details (date, time, place, badge numbers, etc.) without which no effective retaliation is possible." The flyer closed with the lines, "Don't be a victim! Stand up for your rights!" The flyer that the DGPC created and distributed was thorough in describing the kinds of harassment and abuse that many queer people in Dallas experienced at the hands of some in law enforcement, and others who were not part of the DPD, but who simply hated gay people or those they perceived to be gay.[32]

Although incidents of police harassment and violence against gay people occurred fairly often in Dallas in the early 1980s, hate crimes against gay individuals seemed to have happened more frequently than police harassment. There were a number of reports of gay men being brutally attacked in Dallas. Most of those attacks took place in Oak Lawn.[33]

In an interview with a Dallas newspaper, the *Dallas Morning News*, a young man was candid about his attacks on gay men. Roberto was a fourteen year-old eighth grader who agreed to talk with the reporter if she did not use his real name. Roberto stated that he lived in Oak Lawn near the bar district there. That was the area where most of the attacks on gay men usually occurred.

[32] Ibid, "Strike Back!"

[33] "Menacing shadows stalk homosexuals," *Dallas Morning News*, March 30, 1981, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings, Box 71, Folder 18.

The assaults almost always happened at night on side streets, as well as in dark parking lots. Roberto referred to the practice of anti-gay violence that he and his friends perpetrated as "'queer rolling.''[34]

Roberto was forthcoming with details about the attacks. In describing the first assault that he participated in Roberto said, "'We did it for the hell of it the first time, and we hurt him real good. He just stood there, and we all kicked him down and took his money. I gave him a good punch in the face, too." In describing how he and his friends felt about gay people, and how they chose their victims, Roberto stated, "'Everybody I know hates queers. They're easier to roll because they don't know how to fight. You just take what they've got and run. You don't pick on the big guys; they might have guns and fight back.'" He added, "'Some don't walk like women, but they're queer anyway.'" Roberto said that he did not feel any remorse after the assaults, because he did not think of "homosexuals" as people. Roberto's comments about the attacks against gay men that he participated in reveal that he perceived most gay men as being weak and easy to take advantage of. Roberto also communicated that he lived in a highly homophobic environment. The most disturbing piece of information that the youngster divulged was that he felt no remorse about attacking gay men, because he did not think of them as people. Because Roberto could not see the humanity in gay people, he felt comfortable with brutalizing them.[35]

In the same article in which Roberto was interviewed, some gay men in Dallas who had been attacked shared their horrific stories. For example, an unnamed thirty-two year-old man stated that he had been hospitalized for several days and became partially blind in one eye after three

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

men stomped him senseless in the year prior to doing the interview with the *Dallas Morning News*. The man said that he and a friend were walking home from a bar when they were assaulted. Another man by the name of Eric shared how he was attacked by two men who had cruised past Eric and his friend while they were walking down the street. Eric said that as the two men drove by, they shouted obscenities. After the men did that, they jumped from the car and came after Eric. Eric stated that after the men caught him, they threw him into the street on Cedar Springs and started kicking him. Even though several people witnessed the incident, no one helped Eric. A twenty-two year-old named David told about a vicious gay-bashing that happened to him in the summer of 1980. David's teeth were knocked loose when two men attacked him near Cedar Springs and Throckmorton. David stated that he lay dazed against a car while his attackers methodically removed his wallet, watch, and jewelry.[36]

Even though a good amount of gay men in Dallas were victims of hate crimes in the early 1980s, this was not the situation for lesbians. It is not clear why there were not many hate crimes against gay women in the early eighties in Dallas. This was not the case across the rest of the United States. For example, lesbians in San Francisco were affected by violence in the early 1980s. It is important to note that even though there were not many hate crimes reported against lesbians in Dallas, that does not mean that none occurred. With any assault or hate crime there are always issues with not reporting or underreporting the crime.[37]

The disturbing information about hate crimes carried out against gay individuals in Dallas demonstrates that increased visibility made gay people more vulnerable to attacks. Because there

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

was an established and identifiable gay neighborhood complete with a gay bar district by the early 1980s, it was easy for those who wanted to do harm to gay individuals to locate them. The stories of gay men having their teeth kicked lose, being beaten until they were blinded, and being verbally and physically assaulted and thrown into the middle of Cedar Springs, illustrates just how vicious and bold some of the attacks on gay men were.

The kinds of anti-gay violence that gay people in Dallas endured had also been inflicted upon gay men and lesbians in other cities and towns across the United States during the same time period. Gay and human rights activist David M. Wertheimer documented the abuse when he wrote,

> "A national survey of 5,400 lesbians and gay men in 1977 included questions about violence. The report determined that 77 percent of the males and 71 percent of the females surveyed had experienced anti-gay/lesbian verbal abuse and that 27 percent of the men and 14 percent of the women had been physically assaulted because they were perceived to be gay. In 1978, Bell and Weinberg published the results of a San Francisco Bay area study of 977 lesbians and gay men. Thirty-five percent of the men surveyed reported that they had been either robbed or assaulted."[38]

The data from the survey and the study shows that a high percentage of lesbians and gay men throughout the U.S. experienced verbal abuse because of their perceived sexual orientation. Even though the numbers for physical assaults against gay men and women were lower than those for verbal abuse, a significant amount of lesbians and gay men surveyed and studied experienced anti-gay physical violence. The numbers for the study that focused on San Francisco reveal that even though the city had become a popular place for gay people to live and visit by the late 1970s, a high amount of gay individuals there had been victims of hate crimes. Since more gay neighborhoods were established in the post-Stonewall years, and more gay men and lesbians were

[38] John D' Emilio, William B. Turner and Urvashi Vaid, *Creating Change: Sexuality, Public Policy, and Civil Rights* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 264.

coming out and more visible, this increased visibility raised the chances of anti-gay violence across the United States.

The aforementioned early studies helped to stimulate the first national, organized response to anti-lesbian and anti-gay violence. In 1982 the National Gay Task Force started a "'violence project.'" The project's goal was to help both the lesbian/gay and the non-gay communities define anti-gay violence, determine the nature of its scope, as well as promote local responses to the violence, both among gay and lesbian community activists and local law enforcement authorities. Under the leadership of Kevin Berrill, the NGTF Violence Project rapidly turned into a highly visible catalyst for change at both the local and national levels. Berrill travelled extensively across the United States educating diverse communities on violence issues and assisting local organizers to mobilize community-based responses to violent attacks against gay men and lesbians.[39]

In 1984 Berrill and the NGTF Violence Project began groundbreaking research that started to document the full extent of hate crimes targeting sexual-minority communities throughout the United States. The results of sampling 1,420 gay men and 654 lesbians in eight U.S. cities (Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Denver, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, and St. Louis) were stunning. A staggering 94 percent had been victimized by some form of violence from verbal abuse to physical assault. A notable nineteen percent of the total sample shared that they had been punched, hit, kicked, or beaten at least once in their lives because they were lesbian or gay. Forty-four percent had been threatened with violence, and eighty-four percent knew other lesbian or gay individuals who had experienced anti-gay/lesbian victimization. In the years that followed, a good number of

[39] Ibid, 264-265.

additional studies confirmed what Berrill's pathbreaking work had determined: violence against lesbians and gay men in the United States was at epidemic proportions.[40]

Even though gay community leaders in Dallas had been invested in combating the hate crimes that were occurring in the LGBT community in the early eighties, the acts of violence continued. Some resulted in death. For example, in the early morning hours of July 5, 1983, one Oak Lawn man, Rickey Curley age twenty-six, and another Oak Lawn man, Robert Taylor age twenty-three, were gunned down outside of Curley's Oak Lawn residence. Curley was an assistant manager at J.R.'s Bar and Grill which was a popular gay bar located on Cedar Springs Road. Taylor was a bartender at J.R.'s. Dale Williams, a man who lived near the White Rock Lake area in Dallas, and Taylor were dropping Curley off after his shift when one of three young black men approached Curley. The men had been hiding in the shrubs near Curley's duplex. The man who approached Curley had a hand gun and he shot Curley multiple times in the abdomen and groin. When Taylor got out of the car to help Curley, a man with a rifle then shot Taylor twice in his shoulder. Williams got out of the vehicle and dragged both Curley and Taylor into the car and drove them to Parkland Memorial Hospital. By the time that Williams had gotten out of the car to get Taylor and Curley, the three men had left with two bags of tips that Curley and Taylor had been holding. One bag contained $150 in cash and the other had $140 in cash. The bag with the lesser amount of money had been dropped a short distance away from the crime scene.[41]

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[40] Ibid, 265.

[41] "Oak Lawn man killed, and friend hurt in robbery," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 5, 1985 and "Gunmen kill bar worker, injure bartender," *Dallas Morning News*, July 5, 1983, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 72, Folder 1; Information about J.R.'s Bar and Grill and when it was established, as well as what kind of bar it is was taken from the company's website https://www.jrsdallas.com/about-us/ accessed on July 1, 2018.

Williams was able to get Curley and Taylor to the hospital before either man died of their injuries. However, while Curley was undergoing emergency treatment for his gunshot wounds, the young man passed away. Curley was pronounced dead at 5:25a.m.. just a little more than two hours after the shooting began. Taylor survived the horrific incident.[42]

There are several noteworthy points to analyze about the shooting and how it was reported. One point is that both of the major Dallas newspapers immediately covered the incident. Even though both papers provided a good amount of details about the shooting, neither paper used the word gay to describe the bar where Curley and Taylor were employed. That was an odd omission considering the fact that J.R.'s was located at the heart of the strip at the intersection of Cedar Springs and Throckmorton, referred to in Dallas' LGBT community as the crossroads of the gay neighborhood. J.R.'s was established in that location in 1980. By 1983 J.R.s was a popular bar within Dallas's queer community. Another point is that even though Oak Lawn was known as *the* gay neighborhood in Dallas by the early eighties, neither newspaper referred to it that way. Also, even though the *Dallas Morning News* described the three robbers as young black men, neither the *Dallas Morning News* nor the *Dallas Times Herald* mentioned the race or sexual orientation of the two men who had been shot. Though it is wise not to make assumptions, one can deduce that Curley and Taylor were most likely gay. This can be inferred because the two men worked in a popular gay bar and they lived in a gay neighborhood in Dallas in the early 1980s. Both men were probably white because the newspapers at the time seemed to only mention the race of an individual if that person was non-white. Even though there were several problematic items in the

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[42] Ibid, "Oak Lawn man killed, and friend hurt in robbery" and "Gunmen kill bar worker, injure bartender"

two newspapers' reporting , the worst one included omitting the possible sexual orientation of the two shooting victims, because the shooting appears to be another illustration of violence that was aimed specifically toward gay people at that time in Oak Lawn. In not mentioning the sexual orientation of the two shooting victims, the *Dallas Morning News* and *Dallas Times Herald* took attention away from the fact that Curley and Taylor were most likely victims of a hate crime.[43]

In the midst of dealing with police harassment and hate crimes in the early eighties, LGBT women and men in Dallas were given a major reason to celebrate when they experienced a major legal victory. In the summer of 1982 a decision was reached in the *Baker v. Wade* case that Don Baker had brought against District Attorney Henry Wade in late 1979, which challenged Texas' sodomy law. On August 17, 1982, Judge Jerry Buchmeyer struck down Texas' sodomy law, penal code section 21.06, declaring the law unconstitutional. In his decision Buchmeyer stated that penal code section 21.06 violated gay individuals' rights to privacy and equal protection under the law. So, respectively, Texas' sodomy law violated the constitutional rights of gay people guaranteed in the First and Fourteenth Amendments.[44]

Notably, during the trial a Dallas theologian took the stand on behalf of Don Baker. The religious scholar was Victor Furnish of Southern Methodist University. During his testimony, Furnish stated that "the homosexual conduct condemned in the Bible was not consensual." Furnish

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[43] "Oak Lawn man killed, and friend hurt in robbery," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 5, 1985 and "Gunmen kill bar worker, injure bartender," *Dallas Morning News*, July 5, 1983, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Box 72, Folder 1; Information about J.R.'s Bar and Grill and when it was established, as well as what kind of bar it is was taken from the company's website https://www.jrsdallas.com/about-us/ accessed on July 1, 2018.

[44] Joyce Murdoch and Deb Price, *Courting Justice: Gay Men and Lesbians v. the Supreme Court* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 347 and 349-350; Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 541; John D' Emilio, William B. Turner, and Urvashi Vaid, *Creating Change: Sexuality, Public Policy, and Civil Rights* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 60.

acted as a witness for Baker which is noteworthy because it is another example of a progressive religious figure in Dallas showing his support for the gay community and demonstrating progressive interpretations of the Bible.[45]

The ruling in the *Baker v. Wade* case was a major legal victory not only for LGBT individuals in the city of Dallas, but also for LGBT women and men throughout the state of Texas. The decision in the *Baker v. Wade* case communicated that LGBT individuals in Texas did not have to conceal their sexual orientation anymore. The ruling also meant that gay women and men no longer had to worry about being arrested and fined for engaging in same-sex sex. The decision in the *Baker v. Wade* suit also told gay people within the state of Texas that they were no longer considered second-class citizens under the law. Judge Buchmeyer's ruling in the *Baker v. Wade* case definitely represents a high point in the history of Dallas' queer community.

The decision in the *Baker v. Wade* case caused Dallas' LGBT community to celebrate gay pride in a new and distinct way. In September 1982, a month after Judge Buchmeyer ruled Texas penal code section 21.06 was unconstitutional, an event that would eventually be called Pride I was held in Lee Park in Oak Lawn. Pride I commemorated the historic Buchmeyer decision. Since the *Dallas Morning News* would not print announcements about upcoming gay events or other gay advertisements in the early 1980s, and the main items that the *Dallas Times Herald* printed pertaining to gay people were their license plate numbers and names because they were parked at gay bars, gay community leaders had to think of ways to notify the gay community about the Pride I celebration. To start spreading the word about the event, William Waybourn purchased several

[45] Murdoch and Price, *Courting Justice*, 347.

copies of Buchmeyer's decision from the Government Printing Office. He then made additional copies and distributed them at the Crossroads Market. The event organizers made fliers and posted them in gay bars and other places around the neighborhood to get people to the celebration.[46]

Promotion of Pride I did not stop there. As word of Buchmeyer's ruling spread, more people within Dallas' LGBT community realized that it was indeed something to celebrate. Once that happened, posters for the celebration were distributed at the gay bars located on Fitzhugh and Lemmon, as well as other areas near the Oak Lawn and Turtle Creek area. The Dallas Gay Alliance did its part to promote the Pride event. The DGA used its phone directory to call people and announce that there would be a celebration in Lee Park on the third Sunday in September. On the day of the event, hundreds of people came to hear gay community leaders like Louise Young, William Waybourn, and Bill Nelson talk about what the historic decision in the *Baker v. Wade* case meant for gay Texans. The Pride I celebration was such a success that the Dallas Gay Alliance staged the Pride II event the following September.[47]

The Pride III celebration which occurred in September of 1984 was the first one to include a Gay Pride Parade as part of the event. That parade started at the Oak Lawn Library located on Cedar Springs and ended in Lee Park on Turtle Creek. There were more than 50 organizations and businesses that participated in the first Pride parade since the *Baker v. Wade* decision. It cost $3,000.00 to stage the Pride III event. Tavern Guild members raised those funds. Around 6,000 people attended this particular Pride parade. There were no grand marshals for that parade, and the Round-Up Saloon, a gay county-western bar, won the best float award.[48]

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[46] "The Birth of a Pride Parade," *Dallas Voice*, September 18, 2015, https://www.dallasvoice.com/birth-pride-parade-10204222.html accessed September 1, 2017.
[47] Ibid.

In addition to making gay Texans first-class citizens under the law, the *Baker v. Wade* ruling also helped create a new tradition within Dallas' LGBT community. Because of the celebration that followed the court's decision in 1982, Dallas' gay community started celebrating gay pride in September instead of June, when most other places around the United States celebrated pride. The cultural tradition of celebrating gay pride in September that began in the early 1980s would endure for decades. Celebrating pride in September and the reason for doing so are more examples of what makes the history of Dallas' LGBT community special.

In the early 1980s, around the time the *Baker v. Wade* case was decided, some gay individuals in Dallas started to think about a new threat to their community. It came in the form of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). In 1980 and 1981, a small number of doctors in Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco started encountering puzzling medical phenomena. Young gay men were suddenly dying from a rare pneumonia, pneumocystis carinii, or wasting away from an unusual cancer, Kaposi sarcoma, that normally attacked older men of Mediterranean ancestry who recovered from the ailment. By the summer of 1981, it was apparent to these doctors, and to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, that a devastating new disease syndrome had entered the annals of medicine. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or AIDS, as it was labeled, annihilated the body's natural defenses against infection, making the victim susceptible to a variety of opportunistic infections which the body appeared to be incapable of resisting. Unlike other recent new maladies, such as Toxic Shock Syndrome or Legionnaire's disease, from which most patients recovered, AIDS had no cure. A person's immune system did not return to normal, and the mortality rate was terrifyingly high. Furthermore, the national caseload grew at an alarming

[48] Ibid.

rate: 225 by the end of 1981, 1,400 in the spring of 1983, 15,000 by the summer of 1985, and 40,000 in 1987.[49]

When gay men in Dallas were faced with the reality of AIDS, many of them thought about their sexual behavior, and some even decided to alter it so that they could decrease their chances of contracting the disease. *The Dallas Morning News* shared some responses that the newspaper received when one of its reporters went to several gay bars in Oak Lawn, and asked gay men for their thoughts about AIDS. A twenty-eight year-old man named Joey who worked as a tailor was at the Round-Up Saloon when he shared what he thought about the disease. He said, "'It can't be cured, right? Well, I'll go happy.'" At another bar, Throckmorton Mining Company, a twenty-nine year-old man named Greg stated, "'I'm personally worried. I've quit doing poppers (butyl nitrite, a non-prescription heart stimulant) and most drugs, like acid, cocaine and crystal (a form of amphetamine), because of it.'" In the early days of AIDS, researchers linked drug abuse to the disease. Ronnie, a twenty-six year-old man who worked in retail and was also at Throckmorton, shared his concerns about AIDS. While doing so, Ronnie was candid about the sexually transmitted diseases that he had contracted: hepatitis, gonorrhea, and syphilis. Ronnie was aware that at the time, AIDS statistics showed that those who had a history of STDs were more susceptible to AIDS. Ronnie stated that he knew a lot about AIDS because his roommate was a doctor. Ronnie also shared that he had cut back on the number of sexual partners that he had. He

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[49] John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 354.

said that he had started limiting himself to only two sexual partners per month, and that he estimated that he had slept with 80 men in the previous year.[50]

Everyone the *Dallas Morning News* reporter interviewed about AIDS was not single. For example, the reporter talked with Charles who was a twenty-nine year-old manager of the gay disco the Village Station. He shared that he was in a monogamous relationship, and that he had been with his lover for three years. Charles said that he did not believe he was susceptible to AIDS because of that fact. When the *Dallas Morning News* reporter stopped in at J.R.'s, she interviewed a thirty-two year-old interior decorator named Ted. He was more focused on the idea of a sexual partner disclosing if he had a sexually transmitted disease. Ted said that he hoped that someone would tell him if they had a STD. Ted also commented, "'But I've never asked. I can't imagine someone being low enough to subject someone to a lethal disease for sexual release.'" The *Dallas Morning News* reporter interviewed a number of men about their views on AIDS, and how it affected them. Some of the responses can be described as fatalistic, thoughtful, realistic, and naïve. One thing that is clear about AIDS, is that it caused some men who had been living liberated sex lives up to that point to pause, and think about how they would behave sexually moving forward.[51]

Howie Daire is credited with being one of the first gay leaders in Dallas to sound the alarm within the city's queer community about AIDS in 1982, when there had been only a handful of cases diagnosed in Dallas. Daire was also one of the first people to organize educational forums about the new disease. By the fall of 1982, Daire was already using the Oak Lawn Counseling Center to sponsor informational meetings about AIDS. Only a handful of people showed up for

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[50] "AIDS," *Dallas Morning News*, January 25, 1983, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clipping – Subject Files, Box 72, Folder 1.

[51] Ibid.

the initial meeting that Daire put together in October of 1982. However, as more people became aware of the disease and its seriousness, more people took advantage of the informational meetings organized by Daire. For example, when Daire led a seminar on AIDS in January of 1983, 400 people attended the event. Besides holding meetings about AIDS, Daire also established an AIDS Action Project Hotline, which anyone could call to get information about AIDS. The line also provided the names of doctors who were informed about the disease. The OLCC also distributed pamphlets on AIDS in Dallas-area gay bars and retail stores that catered to a gay clientele.[52] Daire's organization of the informational meetings about AIDS in the early days of the disease shows just how serious he took the new health threat. His use of the OLCC to help inform Dallas' LGBT community about AIDS is another illustration of a new community organization being utilized to help support and sustain the community.

As queer people in Dallas celebrated the legal victory that resulted from the *Baker v. Wade* ruling, and some tried to gain a better understanding of what AIDS meant to queer people and their community, some Texas officials wanted to challenge Judge Buchmeyer's decision. District Attorney Wade and City Attorney Holt did not appeal the case. However, just before Election Day, on November 1, 1982, Texas Attorney General, Mark White, did appeal the decision in the *Baker v. Wade* suit. At the time, White was running for governor. When Election Day arrived, White was elected governor of Texas. Jim Maddox, a Democrat, was elected to succeed White as attorney general. While Maddox was in the state legislature, he tried to repeal the sodomy law. Shortly after becoming attorney general, Maddox withdrew the state's appeal that White had filed. Since the

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[52] "Founder of Dallas' Oak Lawn Counseling Center, Howie Daire, Dies of AIDS," *The Week in Texas*, 28-29; "AIDS," *Dallas Morning News*, January 25, 1983.

Texas Constitution provided only the state attorney general with the authority to represent the state in civil legislation, that would have been the end of the case—and the end of Texas penal code section 21.06—if events had not taken a strange turn after a Texas district attorney decided to interfere with the issue of a possible appeal. Danny Hill, newly elected district attorney of Armstrong and Potter counties, asked the Texas Supreme Court to force Attorney General Maddox to appeal. The court refused.[53]

The court's initial response did not deter Hill. Instead, Hill and a small group of physicians called Dallas Doctors Against AIDS petitioned to be allowed to appeal the *Baker v. Wade* decision, even though they had never been involved with the case. Dallas attorney, William Charles Bundren, represented Hill and the doctors. When Don Baker learned what Hill and the physicians were doing, he was angry. Baker could not believe that his newly won victory was in jeopardy. While in the process of trying to get a court to re-open the case on the Texas sodomy law, Bundren filed motions in both the district court and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. In the motions that Bundren filed, he cited AIDS as a reason to revive the repeal. Judge Buchmeyer did not accept the argument that Hill and the Dallas Doctors used to try to appeal his decision. In fact, Buchmeyer slammed the group's argument about AIDS. At first, a three-judge Fifth Circuit panel also ruled against reopening the case. Then, the full Fifth Circuit decided to hear Hill's argument. Within a year of Buchmeyer's historic ruling, it was not clear if the judge's decision would stand.[54]

When the eighties commenced, Dallas' LGBT community started a new period in its history. By that time, the community was no longer in its formative years. Instead, it had entered

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[53] Murdoch and Price, *Courting Justice*, 350.
[54] Ibid, 350-351.

a development phase, one in which it was maturing. The first five years of the 1980s represent a high point for Dallas' queer community. At the start of that decade, the LGBT community in Dallas was more visible than it had ever been. During that time, vital organizations within the community reached important milestones. In the early eighties Dallas' LGBT community witnessed the arrival of more organizations and businesses that would become important in helping to entertain, support and sustain the community. These businesses and organizations were the Turtle Creek Chorale, Crossroads Market, and Oak Lawn Counseling Center.

A couple of years into the 1980s, Dallas' queer community experienced a major legal victory with the ruling in the *Baker v. Wade* case. In the summer of 1982 Judge Jerry Buchmeyer ruled Texas penal code section 21.06 unconstitutional. This ruling was highly important to LGBT women and men because it meant that their intimate lives were granted the right of privacy. The *Baker v. Wade* decision not only gave gay Texans more freedom, but it also provided the LGBT community in Dallas with a reason to celebrate gay pride in a different way than other queer communities.

Even though the early to mid-1980s represent a high point in the history of Dallas' LGBT community, queer individuals also faced some serious challenges during that period of time. As gay individuals became more visible within the city of Dallas, some also became victims of hate crimes. Some of the assaults on gay people were so vicious that some victims were left with permanent injuries, while others died as a result of their attacks. In addition to being concerned for their safety, gay men had to deal with a new, deadly threat. This new danger was AIDS. The years 1980-84 involved contested victories, but markers of progress were unmistakable. This certainly would not be the situation during the last half of the decade.

CHAPTER V

DALLAS' QUEER COMMUNITY FIGHTS AIDS AND FACES OTHER DIFFICULTIES FROM THE MID-1980s TO THE EARLY 1990s

By the time the mid-1980s arrived, the overall situation within Dallas' lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community did not look as promising as it did when the decade began. The historic legal victory that the queer community achieved with the *Baker v. Wade* case in 1982 was in jeopardy of being reversed. As the visibility of gay individuals increased, there had also been a rise in hate crimes against them. The direst challenge that Dallas' LGBT community faced at the time was the rapid increase in the number of men who had contracted AIDS. This chapter argues that the mid-1980s to the early 1990s represent the darkest period in the history of the LGBT community in Dallas, mainly because of the AIDS crisis taking hold there. Besides dealing with the scourge of AIDS, many within Dallas' queer community faced discrimination on different fronts, as well as the continued horror of hate crimes. Even though women and men within Dallas' LGBT community encountered a wide array of challenges during this period, they endured by utilizing both existing and new organizations to help sustain their community. Queer men and women did this with the invaluable help of those who were allies and supporters of the LGBT community.[1]

As the overall situation within Dallas' queer community started to become bleak in the mid-eighties, prominent conservatives within Dallas planned for the next presidential election. In

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[1] Joyce Murdoch and Deb Price, *Courting Justice: Gay Men and Lesbians v. the Supreme Court* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 350; "Menacing shadows stalk homosexuals," *Dallas Morning News*, March 30, 1981, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings, Box 71, Folder 18. ; "A Conversation with Bill Appleman and Howie Daire of the Oak Lawn Counseling Center's AIDS Project," *This Week in Texas*, August 30 - September 5, 1985, 43, Texas Obituary Project http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081983daire.html accessed November 4, 2017.

1984 President Ronald Reagan ran for a second term in office. In the summer of that year, the Republican National Convention was held in Dallas. The ultraconservative W.A. Criswell and his church, First Baptist Church of Dallas, played a key role in that year's convention. At the time of the convention, First Baptist Dallas had more than 25,000 members. These numbers made the church the largest Southern Baptist church in the world. On the Sunday of the week that started the Republican National Convention, Jerry Falwell was the guest preacher at the early morning service at First Baptist Dallas. While on the dais with Reverend Criswell, Falwell issued a fervent endorsement of Reagan. The conservative Republican Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina also attended the service. He provided that morning's benediction. Over the course of the week,, Criswell supplied the event with a number of sermons. After President Reagan accepted the Republican nomination for the second time, Reverend Criswell delivered the benediction.[2]

The part the First Baptist Church of Dallas played in the 1984 Republican National Convention illustrates how Dallas was still an important base for Christian conservatives, just as the city had been at the start of the decade when Reagan made his first successful bid for the presidency. The roles that First Baptist Dallas and its ultraconservative senior pastor played in the convention also show how the influence of conservative Christians as a constituency within the New Right coalition had not waned since President Reagan's first election. In addition to the aforementioned facts about First Baptist Church of Dallas and its part in the Republican National Convention, the role the church played in the 1984 convention also demonstrates that Dallas was still an important and influential city within the southern region referred to as the Bible belt.

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[2] "Southern Baptist Preachers Mix Religion Campaigning for Reagan," *Boston Globe*, October 19, 1984, "Falwell Plugs Reagan at Baptist Ceremony," *Dallas Morning News*, August 20, 1984, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, Dallas Public Library Electronic Database (DPL); Edward H. Miller, *Nut Country: Right-Wing Dallas and the Birth of the Southern Strategy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 150.

On the Sunday following the Republican National Convention, Reverend Criswell delivered a scathing sermon about a group of people he and many other Christian conservatives considered to be among the worst sinners on earth: gay men and lesbians. In his message to his congregants Criswell stated, “In our lifetime we are scoffing at the word of God … and opening up society and culture to the lesbian and sodomite and homosexual … and now we have this disastrous judgment … the disease and sin of AIDS.” The damning remarks that Criswell delivered in his sermon communicate that he believed that AIDS was a punishment from God given to gay men and lesbians as a consequence of their sinful lifestyle.[3]

At the same time Criswell delivered his anti-gay sermon, individuals within Dallas’ LGBT community were dealing with the fact AIDS was spreading. In 1983 the number of individuals in Dallas who were diagnosed with AIDS that year was 23. In 1984 there were 71 new cases. In the first half of 1985 the number of people newly diagnosed with AIDS in Dallas was 81.[4]

Around the time that AIDS cases in Dallas started to increase, the number of individuals and organizations that openly discriminated against gay people rose, and they cited the fear of contracting sexually transmitted diseases as one reason for doing so. One organization that did this was the Dallas Police Department. In late 1984 leaders of the Dallas Gay Alliance announced to city officials that they would push for an ordinance to open city government — including the DPD — to hire gay men and women. After DGA leaders made their announcement, several Dallas City Council members indicated that they might support an ordinance that barred discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, just as the city of Dallas barred discrimination based on race and sex.

[3] W.A. Criswell as cited in Edward H. Miller’s, *Nut Country: Right Wing Dallas and the Birth of the Southern Strategy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 150.

[4] “A Conversation with Bill Appleman and Howie Daire of the Oak Lawn Counseling Center’s AIDS Project”

Although some Dallas City Council members signaled that they might support an ordinance that would allow gay men and lesbians to become police officers, some individuals who were part of the Dallas Police Department were vocal in their opposition to such an ordinance. In explaining why he was against the idea of the DPD hiring gay men and women, Dallas Police Association President Dick Hickman stated, "Because of moral objections and fears of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, many heterosexual officers — himself included — would refuse to work with homosexuals." Although Police Chief Billy Prince had previously stated that he opposed hiring gay individuals, he refused to offer his opinion on the ordinance that was being discussed. However, Prince did point to the fact that the police department screened current applicants to learn whether they engaged in "deviant" sex acts.[5] The moral case against gay men and women was nothing new within the DPD. What was new was the fear of catching sexually transmitted diseases. By 1984 it was common knowledge that one could not catch sexually transmitted diseases like chlamydia, gonorrhea or syphilis through casual contact. So, even though Hickman did not mention AIDS when he said that straight police officers were afraid of catching sexually transmitted diseases from gay officers, one can deduce that Hickman was referring to AIDS without saying the name of the disease. This is the case because at the time, AIDS was the main STD that a good part of the public was misinformed about and thought one could catch through casual contact. Hickman's statement about gay individuals and sexually transmitted diseases shows that AIDS provided institutions that were already biased against gay people with another reason to remain that way.

[5] "Group wants police hiring opened to homosexuals," *Dallas Moring News*, October 12, 1984, Vertical File: Clubs & Organizations: Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance, (DPL).

When the number of people with AIDS in Dallas started to rise, some leaders within Dallas' LGBT community learned that they had contracted the disease. One such person was Phil Gerber, a founder of the Turtle Creek Chorale. In the five years since helping to form the TCC in 1980, Gerber's life had dramatically changed. The development that altered his life the most was discovering that he had contracted AIDS.[6]

In an interview with the *Dallas Times Herald*, Gerber shared how he learned that he had AIDS, as well as the various ways that the disease had affected his life. The 32 year old Gerber learned in the summer of 1983 that he had contracted AIDS. He was only 30 years old when he was diagnosed. Gerber explained that as far back as 1980, he had noticed that his lymph nodes were enlarged and that he often did not feel well. After that, other symptoms set in. He developed chronic diarrhea, suffered from low-grade fevers, woke up frequently with night sweats, and lost weight. Initially, Gerber's doctors were at a loss to explain what was wrong. Finally, one physician diagnosed him with Hodgkins disease, which is a rare and potentially fatal form of cancer. Although that diagnosis was later ruled out, Gerber's problems only seemed to get worse. In February 1983, the platelets in Gerber's blood — the cells that help blood clot — started to disappear. Because of this, he was in imminent danger of bleeding to death. When doctors removed Gerber's spleen, it helped his platelet count return to normal. In the summer of the same year,

[6] "Crisis hits home: AIDS counselor draws from own experience in warning homosexuals to take precautions," *Dallas Times Herald*, January 20, 1985, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the University of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings – Subject Files, Box 72, Folder 9; "Turtle Creek Chorale," August 25, 2015, The Dallas Way: A GLBT History Project, http://www.thedallasway.org/stories/written/written-stories/2015/5/10/turtle-creek-chorale accessed August 31, 2017; "Turtle Creek Chorale Celebrates Its 34th Anniversary," *Dallas Voice*, February 19, 2014, https://www.dallasvoice.com/turtle-creek-chorale-celebrates-34th-anniversary-10167780.html accessed August 31, 2017.

Gerber developed a yeast infection in his esophagus. This was one of more than twenty infections specifically associated with AIDS.[7]

Finally, doctors were able to make an AIDS diagnosis and explain to Gerber what was happening to him. The virus was ravaging his immune system, leaving him nearly defenseless to disease and infection. In the fall of 1984, not too long before his interview with the *Dallas Times Herald*, Gerber was bedridden for two months after developing bacterial pneumonia.[8]

Even though Gerber had been diagnosed with AIDS he kept a positive outlook on life. Gerber shared that he felt extremely lucky, not only in the lack of physical pain and impairment he suffered, but also for the opportunities that were afforded him as a result of the reorganization of his life. Gerber's AIDS diagnosis forced him to take stock of both his spiritual and his professional life. Geber was a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Oak Lawn. He served as a lay minister for the church, sometimes giving Eucharist to the congregation. Gerber explained that AIDS had strongly intensified his personal faith. He said that he did not blame God for what he had done to him. Instead, Gerber stated that he had thanked God for the opportunities that God had given him. Though Gerber maintained a positive view of life after being diagnosed with AIDS, the young man did acknowledge those experiences he had in common with other people who had the disease. In addition to physical suffering, Geber believed that he had been discriminated against due to his health problems. He said that because of AIDS he had lost a lot, including a lover, a job and insurance. He stated that he also gained the resource to start over his life.[9]

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[7] "Crisis hits home"; "Remembering Dallas's Phil Gerber, November 6, 1952 – July 28, 1985," *This Week in Texas*, Texas Obituary Project http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081685gerber.html accessed October 22, 2017.

[8] "Crisis hits home"

[9] Ibid.

In 1984 Gerber, who had worked as a travel agent as well as an employee of a publishing company, started to work as a staff assistant at the Oak Lawn Counseling Center. In this position, Geber frequently lectured to gay groups and others who were concerned about AIDS. He stressed the need for gay men to take responsibility for their sexual lives by avoiding promiscuous behavior that could increase their risk of getting AIDS and spread the disease. Gerber also participated in an AIDS support group in Dallas. Besides discussing the meaningful AIDS-related work that he did after his AIDS diagnosis, Gerber related that he was optimistic about surviving the disease. Although AIDS had shown a mortality rate of two years in eighty percent of its victims, for reasons that were not clear to medical experts at the time, some victims suffered less severe cases than others did.[10]

Though Gerber had expressed hope about a development in medicine which could possibly prolong his life, Gerber lost his battle with AIDS within six months of his interview with the *Dallas Times Herald*. He died in Dallas in July, 1985. When Gerber passed away, many remembered him for all of the great work he did within various organizations in Dallas' LGBT community. Although Gerber was praised for helping to found the Turtle Creek Chorale and continuously supporting it, as well as the contributions that he made while working with the Dallas Gay Alliance over the years, he was remembered most for the work that he did with the Oak Lawn Counseling Center by helping educate the public about AIDS.[11]

Phil Gerber's story puts him in a special place within the history of Dallas' queer community. He was only in his late twenties when he helped to conceive the idea to form one of

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid; "Remembering Dallas's Phil Gerber, November 6, 1952 – July 28, 1985"

the earliest cultural organizations within Dallas' LGBT community, the Turtle Creek Chorale. Geber was also young when he discovered that he had contracted AIDS. Based on the previously listed numbers regarding AIDS in Dallas, Gerber was one of a relatively small amount of people in the city accurately diagnosed with the disease based on the symptoms he had when he learned he had it in the early eighties. Even though Gerber found out some devastating news about his health, he did not let that prevent him from living a meaningful life and doing important work. Armed with a positive attitude and a good amount of hope, Gerber started working at the OLCC as an AIDS educator. Gerber used the last part of his life teaching others about AIDS, so they could possibly avoid contracting and spreading the disease. Phil Gerber is one example of how some people responded to the discovery they had AIDS in the early years of the crisis. He used his difficult, personal experience to make a positive difference in the early part of the fight against AIDS.

Another leader within Dallas' queer community personally affected by AIDS in the mid-1980s was Howie Daire. Daire, the founder of the Oak Lawn Counseling Center, discovered in September of 1985 that he had contracted AIDS. As this work has documented, Daire was one of the first leaders within Dallas' LGBT community to sound the alarm about the disease when very few cases had been diagnosed in Dallas. Daire was the first person in the city to initiate educational activities about AIDS and risk reduction. Daire did this important work through the OLCC. After the initial action that Daire took in response to AIDS, he continued working to educate people about the disease, and to help those who contracted it. For example, Daire was among the first in the United States to organize a "buddy program" of volunteers to help people with AIDS. Daire was the only person from the state of Texas asked to testify about the disease before a U.S. House

of Representatives committee. After serving as the executive director of the Oak Lawn Counseling Center from 1981 to 1984, Daire stepped down from that position to develop his own private counseling practice. After stepping down as executive director of the OLCC, he continued to serve on the Board of the Directors for the center and directe its AIDS Buddy Project until 1985. Within a year of being diagnosed with AIDS, Daire died at his Oak Cliff home in the summer of 1986.[12]

As the number of individuals in Dallas who had AIDS increased, many within Dallas' LGBT community worked in both thoughtful and constructive ways to help those who were coping with the disease. For example, Candy Marcum, helped people who had AIDS deal with their illness through counseling sessions. Marcum explained that the arrival of AIDS changed how she counseled gay individuals and their families. Prior to the onset of AIDS, as well as after, Marcum counseled some gay people and their families in the same sessions. In explaining how those sessions were arranged, Marcum said that her clients announced, "'My parents are going to visit this weekend. I would like for them to come into a session and I would like to come out to them.'" After the arrival of AIDS, Marcum said that some of her clients who had contracted the disease stated, "'My parents are coming, I would like to come out to them, and I would like to tell them that I have AIDS.'" The statements that Marcum shared about her clients, as well as the counseling sessions that she conducted with them, demonstrates how much her clients concerns and needs had changed from when Marcum went to work with her former colleague Howie Daire at the OLCC in the early 1908s, to when the AIDS crisis took hold in Dallas by the mid-1980s. The work that

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[12] "Howie Daire dies at home," *Dallas Voice*, July 18, 1986, Texas Obituary Project http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081983daire.html accessed July 20, 2018.

Marcum did in counseling AIDS patients and their families is a strong example of a gay person using her particular skill to help ensure that the gay community survived a difficult time.[13]

One group of gay women who devised a special, but also practical way to support gay men who were dealing with AIDS, went by the name of the Blood Sisters. These women were members of Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. The Blood Sisters opened an account with a blood bank in Dallas and they donated blood in the place of their gay male friends who could not make donations. Gay men were not allowed to give blood due to the fact that health officials did not want to run the risk of spreading AIDS through the blood blanks. The Blood Sisters were moved with compassion for individuals that AIDS impacted. The Blood Sisters did not have any famous or influential people who promoted their cause. The group did not utilize posters or flyers to promote their campaign. MCC Dallas was not even a stop on the rounds that the bloodmobile made. Instead, the Blood Sisters simply passed along an account number that designated the blood that they donated was on behalf of Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. The Blood Sisters did not supply the blood bank with an immense amount of blood. Even though this was the case, AIDS patients never had a problem receiving needed blood transfusions. The women who comprised the Blood Sisters explained that they organized to supply something more scant than blood; they wanted to provide a sense of family support to individuals who may not have had any at the time. The Blood Sisters' actions conveyed that they believed that gay men and lesbians were united in the battle against AIDS during this dire time within Dallas' queer community.[14]

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[13] Candy Marcum, Oral History Interview with Karen Wisely, June 3, 2013, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 29.

[14] "Lesbians Donate Blood for 'Brothers' with AIDS," *Dallas Times Herald*, October 27, 1985, Chronological File: News – 1985-October, Cathedral of Hope History Project (Cathedral of Hope, Dallas, Texas); Dennis Michael Mims, "Cathedral of Hope: A History of Progressive Christianity, Civil Rights, and Gay Social Activism in Dallas, Texas, 1965-1992," Master's thesis, University of North Texas, 2009, 77-78.

Gay women were not the only women who cared for individuals in Dallas stricken with AIDS in the 1980s. As the number of people in Dallas who contracted AIDS increased during the mid-eighties, many within Dallas' queer community learned they had gained a straight ally by the name of Evelyn Pruitt. Pruitt was an elderly white woman. After meeting a person who had AIDS for the first time in 1984, Pruitt would eventually become both a dedicated caretaker and advocate for those who had the disease.[15]

The first person that Pruitt met who had AIDS was a young gay man who called her to ask for a ride to the hospital. The young man called Pruitt because she was a volunteer driver for people who needed rides to either the hospital or doctor. When the man called Pruitt requesting a ride, she had been doing this type of volunteer work since the mid-1970s. During their phone conversation, the man asked Pruitt if she was afraid of AIDS. Pruitt answered that she was not, and she picked up the young man and drove him to Parkland Memorial Hospital. After they got to the hospital, Pruitt talked with the young man's landlady on the telephone. On that call, the landlady informed Pruitt that the young man had been evicted, without providing any details as to why. This bit of bad news was just another item for the young man to add to his list of recent misfortunes. His lover had recently left him and the young man did not have any money. After Pruitt finished her call with the landlady, she stayed with the young man all day and night. Pruitt even supported him by holding his hand while he underwent a medical procedure. Pruitt described the entire experience as life-changing.[16]

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[15] "A Christmas Story: This Rhinestone Angel is Making Life Livable for People with AIDS," *Dallas Observer*, December 18, 1986, Chronological File: News – 1986 – December, Cathedral of Hope History Project (Cathedral of Hope, Dallas, Texas); Mims, "Cathedral of Hope," 78-79.
[16] Ibid.

The experience that Pruitt had when she took the young AIDS patient to the hospital had a major effect on her. Because of this, Pruitt decided to sell some paintings she had previously done, after she prayed to find ways to help other individuals like the man she had driven to the hospital. Pruitt sold a roomful of paintings and donated the proceeds to MCC Dallas because she knew that the church helped people who had AIDS. The money that Pruitt initially donated was used to start the AIDS Crisis Ministry Fund at Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. After experiencing success with selling her paintings, Pruitt resumed painting on a regular basis. Between the years 1984 and 1986, Pruitt was a regular at a gay piano bar near Turtle Creek. At the bar, both the owners and musicians helped Pruitt sell tax-deductible one dollar raffle tickets for the half dozen or so paintings she did on a monthly basis. All of the funds raised were donated to the crisis fund at MCC Dallas. Pruitt raised over $7000 in two years. She had raised more than $40,000 by 1989.[17]

In addition to raising a significant amount of money on behalf of Dallas' queer community during the AIDS crisis, Pruitt also became a dedicated volunteer and advocate for those coping with AIDS. Pruitt received special training at the Oak Lawn Counseling Center so that she could become a floating buddy in the center's Buddy Project. This project was a one-to-one support program that paired volunteers with AIDS patients. As a volunteer in the Buddy Project, Pruitt did a variety of tasks to assist patients. She sat with them in the hospital. While at the hospital with patients, Pruitt explained different tests and procedures to them. Besides doing these things, Pruitt helped AIDS patients look for places to live. She assisted some patients in their search for roommates. When Pruitt was not with patients, she took part in events that ensured that she would

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[17] Ibid; *Cathedral of Hope 1970-1995: A Generation of Faithfulness 25th Anniversary Bulletin*, 23.

remain a valuable asset to the Buddy Project. The events she participated in included educational meetings within the LGBT community, as well as AIDS research fundraisers.[18]

Besides raising funds, volunteering, and advocating on behalf of people living with AIDS, Pruitt had helped some of them early on in another special way. Prior to raising money to help care for AIDS victims, Pruitt had let some of them live in her home. Sue Schrader told of Pruitt's hospitality when she stated, "Now, Evelyn had a house up on Forest Lane. She took in boarders and she took in gay men. Some of her guys had gotten sick. Evelyn wanted to raise money for them because these people were losing their jobs and didn't have any money." Schrader's comments about Pruitt not only tell of how she allowed some sick gay men to live with her in the early part of the AIDS crisis, but they also explain Pruitt's motivation for raising money for AIDS victims. In addition to the first gay man with AIDS that Pruitt encountered when she drove him to Parkland Memorial Hospital, some of the gay men who had lived with her contracted the disease.[19]

Evelyn Pruitt's invaluable support of Dallas' LGBT community during the AIDS crisis illustrates how she was one of the community's most dedicated and compassionate allies. Pruitt started to help and care for gay men who were stricken with AIDS just as the disease started to hit Dallas in the mid-1980s. Unlike many straight people during that time, Pruitt clearly was not afraid to be in contact with individuals who had AIDS. In using the money that she raised to create the AIDS Ministry Fund at MCC Dallas, and because she wassuch a dedicated volunteer at the OLCC, Pruitt is an example of someone who was allied with Dallas' LGBT community and used its

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[18] *Cathedral of Hope 1970-1995: A Generation of Faithfulness 25th Anniversary Bulletin*, 23; Mims, "Cathedral of Hope," 80.

[19] Sue Schrader, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, March 16, 2015, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 81.

existing organizations to try to help ensure that the community survived a difficult time in its history.

So far, this chapter has demonstrated that AIDS had become a top issue within Dallas' queer community by the mid-1980s. This chapter has also shown that not only had figuring out ways to care for those with the disease become important, but educating the public about AIDS had also become a top priority. By 1984 the virus that would ultimately be named Human Immunodeficiency Virus or HIV was discovered. The newly discovered virus was at the root of a cluster of opportunistic infections that produced AIDS. Around this time, most AIDS activists coalesced around the idea that condoms provided the best protection against the spread of a virus. The concept of safe sex provided gay men with the hope they could continue to have healthy sex lives and worry less about contracting a disease that had a high mortality rate.[20]

After medical professionals and AIDS activists established the idea of safe sex in the mid-1980s, more organizations within Dallas' LGBT community offered classes and workshops on the subject. For example, the Dallas Gay Alliance organized a safe-sex workshop with a Houston AIDS organization in 1985. The name of the Houston organization was the KS/AIDS Foundation of Houston, Inc. The workshop, which was part of AIDS Awareness Week, was titled "AIDS Risk Reduction Workshop a.k.a. 'Safe Sex' Workshop." The DGA hosted event was held at the Old Plantation, a large, gay dance club located on Cedar Springs in Oak Lawn. This venue was most likely selected in anticipation of a large crowd attending the workshop . The informative event is

[20] Jennifer Brier, *Infectious Ideas: U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 44; Robert M. Collins, *Transforming America: Politics and Culture during the Reagan Years* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 138.

an illustration of Dallas' LGBT community utilizing an existing organization to do important work to help sustain the community during a time of crisis.[21]

In the month following the workshop that the Dallas Gay Alliance hosted, Bill Nelson and some other leaders within Dallas' queer community established the AIDS Resource Center. The center was created with the purpose of educating the public about AIDS. The new center employed pamphlets and a speakers' bureau to disseminate information about the disease. The AIDS Resource center also had a 24-hour telephone information service. When people dialed the information service number, they were connected to a recorded message that provided general information about AIDS and how it affected one's immune system. The initial recorded message supplied telephone numbers for five additional taped messages about AIDS. Those messages described the symptoms and signs of the disease, told how a blood test could be used to detect if an individual had been exposed to the AIDS virus, explained how to reduce the chances of contracting AIDS, provided recent news stories on the disease, and supplied a list of groups that assisted AIDS patients.[22]

When the AIDS Resource Center formed, it was the first organization in Dallas' LGBT community created to focus exclusively on AIDS. Even though existing organizations such as MCC Dallas, the DGA, and OLCC had been successful at doing important work related to the disease, those organizations also remained dedicated to focusing on their main missions and objectives. The AIDS Resource Center was unique because its main goal was to educate people

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[21] "AIDS Awareness Week" Flyer, October 17, 1985, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings, Box72, Folder 9.

[22] "Dallas Gays Establish AIDS Resource Center," *Dallas Morning News*, November 23, 1985, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings – Subject Files, Box 72, Folder 8.

about AIDS. The aforementioned topics that the AIDS Resource Center covered demonstrate that the organization was comprehensive in the information that it provided about AIDS. This was crucial because the center formed at a time when the number of people in Dallas that the disease affected increased rather quickly.

After the AIDS Resource Center operated for a while, some people outside of Dallas' LGBT community became aware of the center and the vital work it was doing. One of those people was Lucy Crow. She was the daughter of real estate developer and businessman Trammell Crow. At some point, Lucy Crow and Waybourn became friends. Since Crow knew Waybourn and the work he did with the various organizations in Dallas' queer community, she gave Waybourn a $50,000.00 donation to the AIDS Resource Center.[23] Even though Lucy Crow did not have the reputation of being a gay rights activist or an ally to Dallas' queer community, her generous donation to the AIDS Resource Center illustrates that she supported the work it did, and that she was a straight supporter of and benefactor to Dallas' LGBT community during a difficult moment in its history.

When the AIDS Resource Center formed in the fall of 1985 it was indeed a new organization. As previously stated, it was the first organization in Dallas created to concentrate exclusively on AIDS. Even though the AIDS Resource Center was a new organization with a specific mission, it grew out of a nonprofit organization that was founded in 1983 called the Foundation for Human Understanding. The Dallas Gay Alliance established the Foundation for Human Understanding. The Foundation for Human Understanding was created to provide services

[23] William Waybourn, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, May 22, 2013, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 17.

and programs to gay men and lesbians. These programs included educating people about sexuality, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, as well as how to end that discrimination. When people originally made donations to the Foundation for Human Understanding, the organization functioned as a repository for funds to be used to aid people in the queer community until AIDS hit. Then some of these funds were used to help people pay for their insurance. Once the AIDS crisis intensified, the Foundation helped people pay other expenses. After the AIDS crisis hit, the Foundation for Human Understanding altered its original mission. As this work has shown, this was the case for several organizations with Dallas' queer community during that time. Even though the AIDS Resource Center and the Foundation for Human Understanding helped people with AIDS, the organizations started with two different missions. After the AIDS crisis took hold, both organizations did important AIDS-related work. However, each organization dealt with the disease in its own way. The connection that the Foundation for Human Understanding had with the AIDS Resource Center was analogous to the connection that the Circle of Friends had with MCC Dallas in the early seventies.[24]

During the same time period that the Dallas Gay Alliance and the newly formed AIDS Resource Center worked to educate Dallas' queer community about AIDS and safe-sex practices, the DGA also put effort into trying to inform people outside of the LGBT community about AIDS. The alliance did this in a highly visible way when it erected billboards about AIDS in minority neighborhoods across Dallas. While Bell Nelson was president of the Dallas Gay Alliance, the organization put up forty billboards in minority neighborhoods to provide information about AIDS.

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[24] "Resource Center of Dallas History Timeline," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 1: Resource Center Records, Sub-Series 1: Resource Center, Box 1, Folder 1;"AIDS center directors to exit," *Dallas Morning News*, September 7, 2002, UNT LGBT Archive, The Dallas Way, Small Collections, Box 1, Folder 20; Waybourn, Oral History Interview, 39-42.

Nelson said that the DGA displayed the billboards because it believed that the entire Dallas community needed to learn more about the disease. Nelson stated that the group focused on minority communities because it had studied the way in which AIDS was spread in U.S. cities that had large minority populations. Nelson added that AIDS was very under-reported in the Dallas area, and there were several reasons why. One reason he stated was because the disease carried a stigma due to the association that people made with homosexuality.[25]

The Dallas Gay Alliance did not have to pay the cost of advertising on forty billboards. The advertising company Foster and Kleiser donated the billboard spaces for the DGA's message. The billboards contained phone numbers that people could call to get information about AIDS. During the day, volunteers answered the phones and responded to questions that callers had. In the evenings, there was a recorded message that provided additional phone numbers for callers.[26]

The Dallas County Health Department worked with the Dallas Gay Alliance on its billboards project. Karen Herndon, the Dallas County Health Department's AIDS coordinator, provided some figures about groups in Dallas that had been diagnosed with AIDS by the late summer of 1986. Herndon stated that 347 people had been diagnosed with the disease. She said 308 whites, 21 African Americans, and 18 Latinos in Dallas made up that total. Herndon also stated that at the time, forty percent of the 23,307 AIDS victims in the United States were minorities. Herndon added that the billboards project targeted minority communities for education programs because many of them had misconceptions about AIDS. Many minority communities

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[25] "AIDS billboards aimed at informing minorities," *Dallas Times Herald*, September 7, 1986, Vertical File: Clubs & Organizations: Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance, (DPL).

[26] Ibid.

thought that AIDS was only a gay, white disease. Because of this belief, many minorities did not think they were at risk of contracting the disease.[27]

In addition to dealing with the realities of homophobia, discrimination, and a worsening AIDS crisis in the mid-1980s, queer people in Dallas continued to be the victims of hate crimes. Gay rights activist William Waybourn recalled how a gay man was beaten and eventually died of his injuries. In telling about the attack Waybourn said, "...An AIDS educator who had his head bashed in…he didn't die for months, but he was very sick because of it. He never returned to work." Waybourn stated that the beating victim also had AIDS. In explaining how having AIDS affected the man who was attacked Waybourn commented, "So consequently that put him into a higher risk for an opportunistic infection. He ultimately died of AIDS, but he never recovered from that bashing." Waybourn noted that this particular attack occurred in 1984 or 1985.[28]

Even though Waybourn was never a victim of a gay-bashing, he was aware that he could be attacked, especially in Oak Lawn. Waybourn described an incident in which he thought that he and Bill Nelson were being assaulted. Waybourn stated, "…Bill and I, one time, we were walking down Cedar Springs…and it was really cold, we had heavy coats on. And out of the corner of your eye you can see this thing coming, and it was eggs coming out of the back of a pick-up truck. And--but what happened was, because our coats were so thick the eggs just bounced off and broke on the ground." When explaining how he and Nelson reacted to being hit by the eggs Waybourn said, "…We started laughing because we were thrilled to death that they weren't bricks or rocks." This story shows that both men were aware they could be victims of a hate crime in Oak Lawn. The

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Waybourn, Oral History Interview, 58-59.

reaction the two men had to being hit by eggs conveys their relief of not being victims of a serious gay-bashing.[29]

In the mid-eighties, as Dallas' LGBT community dealt with a range of serious problems, it took another blow when the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed Judge Buchmyer's decision in the *Baker v. Wade* case. In making its decision, the appeals court relied on the ruling for *Doe v. Commonwealth's Attorney for Richmond* case that had gone to the Supreme Court in 1976. In that decision, the court ruled in favor of upholding Virginia's sodomy law. Before Buchmeyer's decision was reversed, the sixteen judges of the entire Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals gathered in New Orleans to hear the appeals case *en banc*. Nine of the judges agreed with District Attorney Hill who brought the case before the appeals court. The nine judges stated that Western culture had had a strong moral objection to "homosexual" conduct for seven centuries. The judges added, "'Implementing morality is a permissible state goal.'" In addition to referencing several centuries of Western culture and morality, some of the judges were probably in agreement with the small group of physicians, Dallas Doctors Against AIDS, who were willing to testify that gay men were dangerous to public health and safety. The doctors felt emboldened to speak that way because the number of gay men who were diagnosed with AIDS in the mid-eighties had increased at a rapid rate. On October 23, 1985, the court reversed Judge Buchmeyer's decision. Penal Code Section 21.06 was again in full force in the state of Texas.[30]

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[29] Ibid, 57-58.
[30] John D' Emilio, William B. Turner, and Urvashi Vaid, Eds, *Creating Change: Sexuality, Public Policy, and Civil Rights* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 60; Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 542-543.

When the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals made its decision reversing that of Buchmeyer, all hope was not lost on the part of Don Baker and his legal team. In fact, Baker and his team had already planned on how they would respond if the court reversed the *Baker v. Wade* decision. They would turn to the U.S. Supreme Court. Baker's team hired Laurence Tribe, a Harvard law professor and leading constitutional law expert, to handle Baker's appeal. In the following January, Baker's legal team filed an appeal. The Supreme Court rejected the appeal.[31]

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals' reversal of Judge Buchmeyer's decision on *Baker v. Wade* was a huge blow to gay men and lesbians across the state of Texas. The court's decision returned gay Texans to the status of second-class citizens. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals' decision further stigmatized a group of individuals because of the onset of AIDS. The appeals court's decision in the *Baker v. Wade* case is another illustration of why the mid-1980s was such a dark period for Dallas' LGBT community.

In the mid-1980s, as existing organizations within Dallas' queer community altered their missions to help deal with the effects of AIDS, Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas experienced a significant change. In 1986 Reverend Don Eastman resigned from the church. Eastman decided to leave MCC Dallas so that he could work full-time as an elder within the United Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Eastman had been elected to the Board of Elders in the UFMCC denomination in 1983. In the same year that Eastman resigned from MCC Dallas, the clergyman won the Texas Freedom Award. The Dallas Gay Alliance gave the award to people considered important role models for gay men and lesbians. Lesbian and gay organizations

[31] Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*, 543.

throughout the state of Texas nominated the individuals who received the Texas Freedom Award from the DGA. During Eastman's tenure as senior pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, he did a number of important things that demonstrated his support for LGBT people throughout Texas. For example, the minister met with District Attorney Henry Wade to oppose the harassment of gay men by the Dallas police. Eastman travelled to Austin and spoke before the Texas State Board of Health to oppose the quarantine of people with AIDS. This work has documented the ministries that Eastman created or supervised at MCC Dallas to support queer people who attended the church.[32]

When Eastman left Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, the board of directors chose Steve Pace to be the interim pastoral coordinator. Pace's title meant that he would be MCC Dallas' interim pastor. When Pace was selected for this interim position, he was part of the student clergy in the UFMCC denomination. Pace worked in the capacity of interim pastor at MCC Dallas from the summer of 1986 until the fall of 1987. During that time there was a nationwide search for MCC Dallas' fourth senior pastor.[33]

Just before Eastman left MCC Dallas and Pace became interim pastor, Carol West arrived at MCC Dallas. West was a student clergy woman. She was studying to become a minister within the MCC. From 1986 through 1990, West took classes in order to receive her license through the MCC. After she received her license in 1990, West did her pastorate work at Cathedral of Hope. Everyone seeking ordination in the UFMCC denomination had to obtain three successful years of a pastorate. West completed her three years in 1993 and was ordained at that time.[34]

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[32] *Cathedral of Hope 1970-1995: A Generation of Faithfulness 25th Anniversary Bulletin*, 21-22, and 27; Schrader, Oral History Interview, 75-76.

[33] *Cathedral of Hope 1970-1995*, 27; Schrader, Oral History Interview, 76.

As the mid-1980s became the late eighties, the year 1987 proved to be a particularly eventful year for gay people both nationally in the United States, as well as in Dallas. One notable development that occurred at the national level was the formation of AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP). Gay activist Larry Kramer, along with a small group of other New York gay activists, formed the organization in March 1987. Just a year earlier, Kramer and the same people had launched the Silence = Death campaign. The ACT UP organization was dedicated to both militant street protest and political action. The group utilized media-savvy and elaborate demonstrations to protest the sluggish approval of AIDS medications, discrimination against individuals with HIV, inadequate funding for treatment, research, and prevention of AIDS, as well as other grievances. The inaugural ACT UP protest was a dramatic attempt to shut down traffic on Wall Street in Manhattan. During this event, ACT UP activists nearly reached their goal. Even though ACT UP was not able to bring traffic to a halt on Wall Street, the group's action did draw media attention. This was significant since ACT UP activists believed that bringing attention to their causes could eventually lead to change with regard to how the government and other institutions in society treated individuals dealing with AIDS. In the end, ACT UP activists were correct about what their demonstrations could do; the tactics employed by ACT UP helped to bring about change within the gay community during the AIDS crisis.[35]

The positive developments that resulted from ACT UP members' activism were critical for men and women living with AIDS in the late 1980s and early 1990s. For example, ACT UP

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[34] Carol West, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, May 29, 2008, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 14-16.

[35] Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 391; Raymond A. Smith and Donald P. Haider-Markel, *Gay and Lesbian Americans and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2002), 47-49 and 255; Brier, *Infectious Ideas*, 159-162.

members fought the state and pharmaceutical industry in order to transform the development process for drugs. Members changed the clinical definition of AIDS so that more women were included in the various aspects of care for the disease. Members of ACT UP also oversaw the expansion of independent housing for people with AIDS, and the group generally made the AIDS crisis visible through the conscious and consistent manipulation of the popular media. The members of ACT UP accomplished all of this in the first four years that the group existed.[36]

Another noteworthy event that happened the same year ACT UP was formed that pertained to gay individuals across the U.S. was the second March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. This march occurred in October. The event which had been a year in the making drew between a quarter and half a million participants. This made the march the largest demonstration in the nation's capital since the Vietnam War. The theme of the march was, "For Love and for Life, We're Not Going Back." The event united feminist, religious, labor, and social justice organizations. The president of the National Organization for Women (NOW) Eleanor Smeal, Jesse Jackson, and César Chávez made speeches, and march organizers announced a broad agenda of gay rights legislation such as legal recognition of same-sex relationships and reproductive freedom, among other demands.[37]

In addition to having a massive number of participants, and an impressive group of leaders and activists speak at the second March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, the march was the first time that the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt was displayed. The quilt was the brainchild of Cleve Jones. He had also founded the San Francisco AIDS Project. The AIDS quilt

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[36] Brier, *Infectious Ideas*, 157.

[37] Self, *All in the Family*, 391.

was a magnificent creation: at once a memorial, a political statement about the humanity of gay people, a place of mourning, and the reappropriation of an iconic American tradition, quilting. The quilt included individual panels which contained the names of people who died of AIDS. In addition to the name of the person whom the disease felled, the panel contained his or her birth and death years, as well as a symbol that communicated something important to the AIDS victim during his or her life. The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt vaulted to worldwide fame within a few years, expanding to more than forty thousand panels and touring the United States and the world; in 1989 it was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.[38]

In 1987 President Reagan finally addressed AIDS publically. After remaining silent for six years after the disease was identified, Reagan discussed AIDS in a formal speech. Even though First Lady Nancy Reagan had urged the president to use the bully pulpit to address the AIDS issue, the president was slow to respond to the crisis. The president's late response to AIDS had a great deal to do with the hard-line social conservatives in his administration. Individuals like Gary Bauer, White House domestic policy advisor, and William Bennett, Secretary of Education, fought hard to keep President Reagan and Surgeon General C. Everett Koop from exercising strong national leadership on the AIDS issue. Reagan's hard-core conservative advisors told the president that AIDS was political dynamite. Considering how long it took for Reagan to make a speech about the disease, which was a raging epidemic by the time he addressed it, it is evident that the president followed the advice of those hard-core conservative advisors for as long as he could.[39]

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[38] Ibid, 392.

[39] Ibid, 393; Collins, *Transforming America*, 138.

In 1987 there was also a great deal happening within the LGBT community in Dallas. Most of the activity focused on AIDS and how to care for those who had it. While many lesbians and gay men concentrated on meeting the various needs of those who were stricken with AIDS, gay men and women in Dallas continued to experience discrimination because of the disease. For example, 1987 was the year in which Dallas police, much like those in some other departments around the country, started carrying gloves, masks, and insecticide for fear of contracting AIDS. The Dallas police arrived late to this practice, considering the fact that some departments had been carrying gloves for years.[40] At first thought, one might think the Dallas police department's actions were reasonable. However, since AIDS had existed for six years, and there had been a great deal of sound information produced about how the disease was spread, the DPD's actions were not reasonable. Instead, the new Dallas police department practices were discriminatory and based in fear. One can draw this conclusion because it is highly doubtful that the Dallas police put on gloves or masks when they responded to calls in areas that included individuals they assumed to be straight. The times the Dallas police most likely wore masks and gloves were when they went on calls in areas where gay people were known to live or congregate. This was probably the case even though by 1987, it was known that both straight and gay people could and did have AIDS. It was also known by that time that it was not easy to spread the disease. There does not seem to be a great deal of information about how queer men and women responded to the DPD's new practice regarding people the police thought might have AIDS.

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[40] Smith and Haider-Markel, *Gay and Lesbian Americans and Political Participation*, 301; "AIDS Fear Has Police Fighting Crime with Rubber Gloves," *Chicago Tribune*, July 29, 1987, http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1987-07-29-8702250346-story.html accessed October 20, 2018.

As the Dallas Police Department continued working to use AIDS as a reason to discriminate against gay people in Dallas, there were some young men within Dallas' queer community who worked to find housing for people with AIDS. The men who did this work founded the People with AIDS Coalition (PWA Coalition) in 1987. This organization, which was also referred to as the Persons with AIDS Coalition, mainly focused on housing for individuals who had AIDS. The men who co-founded the Dallas chapter of the PWA Coalition were Daryl Moore and Michael Merdian. Moore, who was originally from Muscle Shoals, Alabama, was only twenty-six when he helped to found the new organization. Merdian, who was originally from Birmingham, Michigan, was in his early thirties when he co-founded Dallas' chapter of the People with AIDS Coalition. Moore's educational background and the kind of work that he did prior to co-founding the PWA Coalition are not clear. Even though there are not a lot of details about Merdian's educational background, he worked in the field of accounting. Both Merdian and Moore had AIDS.[41]

Because of initial funding, and the fact that the organization focused on where people with AIDS lived, the PWA Coalition's founding was challenging and somewhat controversial because a good number of people still feared individuals who had AIDS. When Merdian and Moore started the PWA Coalition, it was a program of Oak Lawn Counseling Center. This is another example of how the OLCC's mission changed over the years because of AIDS. Knowing that housing was an issue for people living with AIDS, Moore and Merdian leased two houses on Nash Street near

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[41] "Daryl Moore's Obituary," *This Week in Texas*, August 1988, Texas Obituary Project http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081988moore.html accessed July 20, 2018; "Michael Merdian's Obituary," *This Week in Texas*, March 1993, Texas Obituary Project http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/032693merdian.html accessed July 20, 2018.

Inwood Road in Oak Lawn. After the two men rented the houses and fixed them up, their landlord evicted them. It is not clear why the landlord took this action, and there are not a great deal of easy-to-access records about the person or company who leased the houses to the PWA Coalition. Shortly after the eviction, a woman named Evelyn Petty who had heard about what happened to Merdian and Moore, contacted the two men. Petty owned a real estate investment company in Oak Cliff. She offered to sell the two men a 22-unit rooming house. Petty said that she would hold the lien on the property. Merdian and Moore took Petty up on her offer. The two men named their newly acquired property "A Place for Us."[42]

After purchasing the PWA Coalition's first property, Moore and Merdian attempted to have the organization incorporated. This is when they ran into a major problem. The purchase of the building had been mostly funded by an anonymous donation in the amount of $175,000.00. Merdian and Moore discovered that the donated money had been embezzled from First Texas Savings Association by a man named Patrick Debenport who was the branch manager of the savings association. After learning this, Moore and Merdian became involved in arduous negotiations with First Texas Savings Association. These negotiations lasted for months, with the financial institution insisting that the money be returned.[43]

The matter of whether or not the PWA Coalition could keep the donation was resolved in early 1988. This happened with the help of African-American State Senator Eddie Bernice Johnson. Johnson, a nurse prior to entering politics, fully understood the need for "A Place for Us." So, Johnson and her staff located three attorneys to represent the Persons with AIDS Coalition

[42] "AIDS Services Dallas Turns 30," *Dallas Voice*, May 12, 2017, https://www.dallasvoice.com/aids-services-dallas-turns-30-10236557.html accessed July 20, 2018; "PWA Coalition president Daryl Moore dies at home," *Dallas Voice*, August 1988, http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/081988moore.html accessed July 20, 2018.
[43] Ibid.

in the matter with First Texas Savings Association. One of those attorneys was Don Maison. He would go on to do a significant amount of vital work to support Dallas' LGBT community. First Texas Savings Association agreed to consider the stolen money a loan, and the PWA coalition was given a formal note to pay with interest.[44] Johnson played an instrumental role in helping to ensure that the Persons with AIDS Coalition could keep the property that it had acquired. Johnson's intervention is another example of an ally to the LGBT community helping the community to solve a major problem at a critical time in its history.

It is important to note that the issue of the embezzled money was not the only problem associated with the PWA Coalition acquiring the apartment house in Oak Cliff. Shortly having residents started moving into the facility in May of 1987, a small group of neighbors began protesting the house being in the neighborhood. Protestors had signs that read, "No gays/AIDS colonies" and "Keep Oak Cliff Clean and Healthy." In addition to protesting, two Oak Cliff residents, African-American women named Sherri Leach and Lil Carter, circulated petitions, obtaining 156 signatures objecting to the opening of "A Place for Us." The women had planned to go before the Dallas City Council in June of 1987. However, Carter and Leach called off their protests after they met with coalition members. After the meeting Leach commented, "'We didn't want Oak Cliff to be a dumping ground for the City of Dallas.'" She added that some neighbors were afraid they could get AIDS just by living next door to the facility. Leach lived five blocks away from the PWA building. After meeting with the Persons with AIDS Coalition, Leach changed her mind and halted the petition drive. Not only did meeting with the PWA Coalition help

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[44] Ibid.

Leach decide to end the protest and petition drive, but the meeting influenced her thinking about how the PWA residence could be useful to people who lived near it. Leach said that "A Place for Us" could serve to educate the neighborhood about how AIDS was transmitted.[45]

The way that the PWA Coalition members and those who protested the PWA facility in their neighborhood came together, is a positive illustration of what can happen when those on opposing sides of an issue meet and have an honest conversation about a contentious issue. The people who protested having an apartment building for persons with AIDS in their community did so out of fear. After the protesters learned that they did not really have anything to fear, they adopted a new attitude about the PWA building. In addition to having their fears calmed, the protesters decided that the neighborhood could benefit from having "A Place for Us" there. The way that the PWA Coalition members and the protesters resolved their issue was an exception to how issues related to fears about AIDS and people with AIDS were dealt with at the height of the AIDS crisis. Most of the time, fear was too strong for people to make progress.

In the same year that the PWA Coalition was formed in Dallas, MCC Dallas found its fourth senior pastor after being without one for more than a year. The new pastor was Reverend Michael Piazza. He was white, young, gay and progressive. Piazza was also a southerner. He was born in Florida but grew up in Georgia. When Piazza became the senior pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, he had a partner, Bill Eure, who he had been with since 1980. Piazza was installed as senior pastor of MCC Dallas on the first Sunday in November in 1987.[46]

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[45] Ibid; "Fireworks in Oak Cliff over AIDS Residence," *This Week in Texas*, June 19 – June 25, 1987, Texas Obituary Project http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/032693merdian.html accessed July 25, 2018.
[46] Michael Piazza, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, March 22, 2007, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 1,2,34-36,65 and 68.

Piazza's education and religious training made him a good match for MCC Dallas. Piazza studied psychology and history while obtaining his undergraduate degree from Valdosta State University in Georgia. He attended seminary at Emory University in Atlanta. That is where Piazza received his Master of Divinity Degree. When Piazza arrived at Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, he had already accumulated a good amount of years preaching because Piazza started pastoring churches at the age of nineteen. He was nineteen years old when he was licensed to preach in the Methodist Church in 1973. Piazza stated that he was licensed to preach in one week, and the following week he became the pastor of a circuit of three small churches in Georgia. Piazza started working as a pastor at an early age because there was a shortage of Methodist ministers in Georgia the year he was licensed. Because of the shortage, some officials within the Methodist church asked Piazza if he would serve a small circuit of churches in middle Georgia. The only experience that Piazza had prior to becoming a pastor was as the youth director at his home Methodist church. Piazza worked his way through seminary pastoring churches.[47]

When Piazza became the senior pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas in late 1987, he faced some significant challenges. One of the problems he had to deal with was getting the church's finances in order. This proved to be a major task because the church had so much debt. Besides that, the church building was in great need of repair.[48]

Even though debt was a major problem for Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, when Reverend Piazza arrived there, the biggest challenge that the church faced was AIDS. Piazza considered the years 1987 through 1989 the worst years of the AIDS crisis within the city of Dallas.

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[47] Ibid, 16-20 and 22.

[48] Ibid, 74-75.

For example, when Piazza became senior pastor of MCC Dallas the church had 280 members. In January of 1988, two months after Piazza's arrival, he conducted funerals for 18 of those members. The fact that the church lost over five percent of its members to AIDS in just two months is one strong example of how the disease impacted not only Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, but the entire LGBT community during the late 1980s.[49]

As AIDS continued to ravage Dallas' queer community in the late 1980s, the community lost another one of its leaders to the disease. That person was Terry Tebedo. When the gay rights activist died, he had recently turned 38 years-old. At the time of Tebedo's death, he and Bill Nelson had been life partners for eleven years. As this work has shown, Tebedo had been a dedicated gay rights activist in Dallas since the late 1970s. Some of the organizations and events that Tebedo had been involved with were the Dallas Gay Alliance, Razzle Dazzle Dallas, and the AIDS Resource Center. When Tebedo died, friends and fellow activists held a candlelight service in his honor at City Hall Plaza in Downtown Dallas. At the event 641 candles, one for each of Dallas' 640 AIDS victims, and an additional one for Tebedo, were set adrift in the reflecting pool. In addition, someone drew a chalk figure on the Plaza to commemorate Tebedo's death. Tebedo had been one of the people who participated in a protest there just one month before his death. He had protested the lack of AIDS funding.[50]

In the same year that Dallas' LGBT community lost Terry Tebedo to AIDS, the Dallas Gay Alliance filed a lawsuit against Parkland Memorial Hospital because of the way it treated AIDS

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[49] Piazza, Oral History Interview, 74.

[50] "Obituary – Terry Tebedo," *Dallas Voice*, Undated – Late January 1988; "Obituary – Terry Allen Tebedo," *This Week in Texas*, Undated – Early February 1988, Texas Obituary Project http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/020588tebedo.html accessed July 15, 2018.

patients. Prior to the lawsuit, the president of the DGA, William Waybourn, Reverend Piazza, and some other activists protested the AIDS clinic at Parkland because AIDS patients had been denied proper medication and timely treatment at the facility. Waybourn and the Dallas Gay Alliance went beyond protesting, after seven indigent AIDS patients died while waiting to receive AZT from Parkland's AIDS clinic. At that time, AZT was the only federally approved medication that slowed the AIDS virus, so it was crucial for patients to receive it in a timely manner. The death of the seven AIDS patients at Parkland compelled the DGA to file suit against the hospital. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit against Parkland were the Dallas Gay Alliance and five Parkland AIDS patients. Don Maison who had previously worked with State Senator Eddie Bernice Johnson on the PWA housing issue, was one of the attorneys who assisted the DGA in the Parkland case. The lawsuit between the Dallas Gay Alliance and Parkland was litigated rather quickly with the DGA winning its case. The suit resulted in AZT becoming more readily available to people who needed the drug. As of January 1990, about 1,700 people in Texas received AZT free of cost under a program that was financed jointly by the state and federal governments.[51]

William Waybourn and the attorneys who represented the Dallas Gay Alliance were very pleased with the outcome of the lawsuit brought by the DGA against Parkland. While reflecting on the Dallas Gay Alliance's case against the hospital, and what the AIDS crisis did for the healthcare system, Waybourn stated, "When you look at the whole of the AIDS crisis, how medicine now is delivered in this country has been totally transformed by the AIDS effort. From

[51] Waybourn, Oral History Interview, 78-84; Piazza, Oral History Interview, 95-97; "Trial Set for June 20 in Parkland Lawsuit" *Dallas Morning News*, May 24, 1988, (DPL); "In Texas, AIDS Struggle is Also Matter of Money," *New York Times*, January 5, 1990 https://www.nytimes.com/1990/01/05/us/in-texas-aids-struggle-is-also-matter-of-money.html accessed July 10, 2018.

clinical trials to investigative drugs to delivery from compassionate use, all of that has been changed because of gay activists pushing the system to its limits and the system having to respond to open its doors and letting these patient populations help be a participant in their own healthcare." Waybourn viewed the AIDS crisis and the vital work that gay activists did during that crisis as having revolutionized the healthcare system in the United States.[52]

Within a couple of years of the DGA winning its suit against Parkland, Dallas' queer community lost another one of its leaders and activist to AIDS. In the late winter of 1990, Bill Nelson died of the disease. A year before the longtime community leader and activist passed away, Nelson was honored by officials in Texas' state government. Straight ally to the LGBT community State Senator Eddie Bernice Johnson offered Senate Resolution 217 in late winter 1989, which recognized Nelson as a teacher, preservationist, businessman, civil leader, and civil rights activist. The resolution also acknowledged the important work that Nelson did in the fight against AIDS. While providing some positive words about Nelson's work and character, Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby signed the resolution honoring Nelson. Since Nelson died a year after the resolution passed the Texas Senate, he was able to share how he felt about the honor prior to his passing. Nelson said that he was moved by Johnson's initiative and he was deeply honored by the Texas Senate's recognition. When Nelson died, hundreds of friends and supporters attended his funeral.[53]

This chapter has shown that the mid-1980s to the early 1990s represent the darkest period in the history of Dallas' queer community. The main reason why these years can be described this

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[52] Waybourn, Oral History Interview, 82 and 84.

[53] "Dallas Activist Bill Nelson Dies of AIDS," *This Week in Texas*, March 2 – March 8, 1990, "Texas Senate Honors Nelson," *This Week in Texas*, April 7 – April 13, 1989, Texas Obituary Project http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/022390nelson.html accessed October 25, 2017.

way is because this period is when the AIDS crisis took hold within the city of Dallas. Once AIDS made its way to Dallas in the early eighties, it did not take long for the number of those infected with the disease to rise. Since there were no medications for AIDS during the early years of the crisis, AIDS-related deaths occurred often and in high numbers. When AIDS deaths started rapidly increasing, almost everyone within Dallas' queer community was affected in some way. From the mid-eighties to the early nineties, Dallas' LGBT community lost several of its organizational leaders.

Even though AIDS was the main challenge that Dallas' LGBT community confronted from the mid-eighties through the early nineties, the community also dealt with some other major issues. These problems included various forms of discrimination and hate crimes. Dallas' queer community took on the challenges that it faced by utilizing existing community organizations, as well as creating new organizations that met new and more specific challenges. The established organizations that Dallas' LGBT community used to help in the battle against AIDS and discrimination were the Dallas Gay Alliance, Oak Lawn Counseling Center, and Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. These organizations were modified to meet some of the challenges they faced during this period. The new organizations that were created to mainly deal with the effects of AIDS on Dallas' queer community were the AIDS Resource Center, People with AIDS Coalition, and AIDS Services of Dallas.

During this dark and taxing period within Dallas' queer community, LGBT women and men gained some new, straight allies and supporters. Women like Evelyn Pruitt, Lucy Crow, and State Senator Eddie Bernice Johnson did important acts such as volunteering, raising money, donating money, and helping to secure housing for people with AIDS. The actions that Johnson,

Crow and Pruitt took on behalf of Dallas' LGBT community are strong illustrations of how people who were allied or associated with the community worked to help ensure that it survived that difficult time. Pruitt, Crow, and Johnson's support of Dallas' queer community also demonstrates that the community had allies who not only came from different positions within society, but also came from different racial backgrounds.

Finally, this chapter has shown how even though this was the darkest period within Dallas' LGBT community, the community not only survived but was able to continue to evolve. Dallas' queer community was able to do this because it was already a developed community before the arrival of AIDS in the early 1980s. Prior to the onset of AIDS, Dallas' queer community contained several strong organizations, and it had a number of passionate and dedicated leaders. All of these elements contributed not only to the community's survival, but also to its further development from the mid-1980s through the early 1990s. The next chapter covers a changing of the tide for Dallas' LGBT community, as it entered a new more promising period in its history.

CHAPTER VI

THE TIDES TURN FOR DALLAS' LGBT COMMUNITY IN THE 1990S AS QUEER PEOPLE SURVIVE THE WORST OF THE AIDS CRISIS AND ARE INTEGRATED INTO ORGANIZATIONS, POSITIONS, AND POLICY WITHIN DALLAS

In the early 1990s, Dallas' queer community continued to deal with the ravages of AIDS. Even though the Dallas Gay Alliance had won its lawsuit against Parkland Memorial Hospital near the end of the previous decade, and as a result of that victory more AIDS patients received better medical treatment, Dallas' LGBT community continued to experience a high number of AIDS-related deaths. As LGBT women and men endured the various effects that AIDS had on them and their community, they began to witness a turning of the tides for LGBT individuals in Dallas. In the early nineties, Dallas' LGBT community entered a new and more promising phase in its history. This chapter argues that in the 1990s Dallas' queer community finally started to be integrated into various organizations, positions, and policy within the city of Dallas which LGBT individuals had been denied access to until that time. As this occurred, several existing organizations within Dallas' queer community such as the Cathedral of Hope, DGA, and Foundation for Human Understanding were altered in various ways to meet the needs of the people they served at that particular time. Also a new organization formed for queer students and queer families.

When the 1990s commenced, Dallas' queer community continued to cope with the ravages of AIDS. For some people within the community, the losses they experienced due to the disease had become too much to deal with on a daily basis. One person who felt this way was William Waybourn. The loss of one of his best friends, Bill Nelson, to AIDS contributed to Waybourn's decision to leave Dallas in the early 1990s. When Waybourn was asked why he and his partner,

Craig Spaulding, moved out of Dallas Waybourn responded, "Bill died in 1990." He added, "And by this time, everyone that's involved in the store has either been bought out, moved on, or died. Of the twelve to fifteen people that were involved in the opening of that store on December 5, 1980, they're all gone. Craig and I are the only two left." Waybourn communicated that not only did one of his best friend's die but others also died, and that he and Spaulding were the only two remaining owners of the popular Crossroads Market in the early 1990s.[1]

Waybourn elaborated on what it was like to operate the Crossroads Market after his friends who co-owned the store passed away,

> "And so by February 1990, after Bill dies, that's it. We're the only two left. And so we - - you're standing there in the store, and you're behind the counter for eighteen hours a day, or twelve to sixteen hours a day depending on - - the store was open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and you are trapped by everyone coming in to that store saying, 'Oh, I really miss Bill. Oh, I really miss Terry. Oh, do you know when this happened?' And you cannot escape it."[2]

Waybourn related that customers' comments about Bill Nelson and Terry Tebedo made a difficult situation worse. Because Waybourn and Spaulding continued to operate the Crossroads Market, it was a challenge to process their friends' deaths since customers often talked to them about Nelson and Tebedo.

Waybourn not only dealt with powerful memories related to his deceased friends while at the store, but he did the same thing around Dallas. Waybourn explains,

> "And it wasn't that you didn't want to escape it, it's just that you could not. If you wanted to go take a break, you couldn't get away from it, and every corner, every address in Dallas had some meaning to us because of all that had gone on. So we made the decision to sell the store and we found buyers who we felt would be

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1 William Waybourn, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, May 22, 2013, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 104-105.

2 Ibid, 105.

> responsible - - because it was the community store. We felt like that they would be responsible and to maintain the store and its character and improving it and making it better, and they did, in my opinion."[3]

Since Waybourn and his activist friends who had died had been involved in so much throughout Dallas, it was difficult for Waybourn and Spaulding to escape those memories and the emotions connected to them. So, the couple decided to sell the Crossroads Market and leave Dallas. Waybourn indicated that it had been important to sell the store to someone responsible, since the Crossroads Market was an important store within Dallas' queer community.

Prior to moving out of Dallas, Waybourn took care of some important business between the DGA and Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas. In 1990 Waybourn was still the president of the DGA. MCC Dallas decided to sell its building that year so the church could afford to purchase a new property. This is when Reverend Piazza came up with an idea that benefitted MCC Dallas and the DGA. Piazza met with Waybourn and told him that Dallas' LGBT community needed a community center. Piazza stated that since MCC Dallas was going to buy a new church building, the DGA should purchase MCC Dallas' current property so the DGA would have its new community center, and the church would be able to acquire a new building. Waybourn informed Piazza that the DGA did not have those kinds of funds. Waybourn added that no bank would loan the DGA that kind of money to buy the building from MCC Dallas.[4]

Reverend Piazza provided a response to Waybourn's concern about funds. Piazza said that if the DGA managed to raise the closing costs, the church would hold the note and the DGA would make payments to MCC Dallas. Reverend Piazza assured Waybourn that the mortgage on the

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[3] Ibid, 105-106.

[4] Ibid, 95; Dennis Michael Mims, "Cathedral of Hope: A History of Progressive Christianity, Civil Rights, and Gay Social Activism in Dallas, Texas, 1965-1992," Master's thesis, University of North Texas, 2009, 104-105.

church's old building would be no more than what the DGA's rent was on its current space. After Waybourn was convinced, he agreed to the plan. Piazza later met with attorneys, and the sale happened.[5]

Shortly after MCC Dallas sold its building at the intersection of Reagan and Brown streets in Oak Lawn to the DGA, the church started meeting at a temporary location while it searched for a permanent property to purchase. MCC Dallas' temporary worship space was located at 5353 Maple Ave in Oak Lawn. It was during this time period that the church officially adopted the name Cathedral of Hope. MCC Dallas did not take on a new name because its congregation had grown tired of the original one. MCC Dallas changed its name because the new name represented what the congregation envisioned for the church's future. Piazza elucidates this when he says, "One of the interesting things they said, one of the things they said could be best defined by the world 'hope': that they wanted to find hope again, to get this community to hope again, to be a hopeful sign in a dying community. The other thing they said was - - which seemed really strange to me at first - - was they wanted to be a *big* church." Even though the early nineties was a challenging period for the CoH, its congregants were hopeful about the church's future and the role it could play in Dallas' queer community.[6]

In late 1990, after the DGA purchased MCC Dallas' building, and after Waybourn and Spaulding decided that they were going to sell the Crossroads Market, Waybourn thought about what he would do next. Waybourn got an idea after witnessing Ann Richards victory over Clayton Williams in the 1990 Texas gubernatorial race. When Richards' won the governor's race,

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[5] Mims, "Cathedral of Hope, 104-105; Michael Piazza, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, March 22, 2007, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 91-92.

[6] Piazza, Oral History Interview, 79-80; Mims, "Cathedral of Hope," 110.

Waybourn tried to understand how she won and had more money than a Texas millionaire. Richards, a Democrat, had $10,500,000, and her Republican opponent, Williams, had $10,000,000. Waybourn looked into this and discovered that Richard's money came from Emily's List which was an organization in Washington, D.C. After learning about Emily's List, Waybourn called some of his friends in Washington in December of 1990 and asked, "'Why don't we have our own organization? Why are we not trying to elect our own people to office? If we don't we're never going to get anywhere.'" Waybourn's friends responded by telling him that what he suggested sounded like a good idea, and that he should come to Washington, D.C. to discuss it with them. This is what Waybourn did. He travelled to Washington around Christmas 1990. While in Washington, Waybourn had a meeting with his friends. Everyone thought that Waybourn had a great idea, so they decided to start raising funds. This is when he called gay rights activist David Mixner to help raise money for the new organization that would be the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund (GLVF).[7]

By early 1991, Waybourn and Spaulding had decided to sell the Crossroads Market and move to Washington, D.C. The store closed on April 15, 1991. The GLVF proved to be an immediate success. When the GLVF was created in 1991 it had only 181 members. By 1994 that membership number had jumped to 3,500. In 1996 the GLVF total member contributions were more than $1.3 million dollars. After the GLVF was established, it not only raised funds for lesbian and gay political candidates, but the organization also supplied staff and other resources to candidates.[8]

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[7] Waybourn, Oral History Interview, 106-107.

[8] Ibid, 107-108; Smith and Haider-Markel, *Gay and Lesbian Americans and Political Participation*, 113.

The first candidate that the GLVF endorsed had a victorious, history-making campaign. That candidate's name was Sherry Harris. She was a history-making candidate for more than one reason. In 1991 Harris, an African-American lesbian, was elected to the Seattle City Council. Harris is believed to be the first openly lesbian elected official in Washington state. She was also the first elected openly lesbian, African–American city council member in the U.S. By supporting Harris, the nascent GLVF helped her beat an incumbent who had been in office for 24 years. As time would show, the GLVF would have much more success helping to get LGBT candidates elected to office.[9] Even though the formation of the GLVF does not exactly fit with the theme of Dallas' gay rights movement being in conversation with the national gay rights movement, it is worth highlighting that the idea for forming the GLVF came from a gay rights activist who had a great deal of success leading a gay rights organization in Dallas. Waybourn took the skills that he honed as a gay rights leader and activist within Dallas' LGBT community to the nation's capital to form and help lead an organization that helped to get LGBT candidates elected to public office throughout the United States.

In 1992, a year after Waybourn relocated to Washington, D.C., a major development occurred at the Dallas Police Department that would have a significant impact on Dallas' LGBT community. The department finally changed its policy with regard to hiring lesbians and gay men. This policy change at the DPD was the result of a lawsuit brought by Mica England against the department. In 1989 the DPD refused to hire England because she stated that she engaged in "homosexual" sex, which at the time the Texas Penal Code said was deviant and a misdemeanor.

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[9] Ibid, 307; https://victoryfund.org/about/history/ accessed October 16, 2017.

As a result of this England sued the state of Texas, city of Dallas, and Dallas Police Chief Mack Vines. When the white, working-class lesbian from the rural northern Oklahoma town of Oologah sued the DPD, she did not know how long the suit would be in litigation, the toll that it would take on her, and how it would change the DPD. After England decided to legally challenge the DPD's ban on hiring gay individuals, she was asked why she did not apply for a police position in another Texas city where one's sexual orientation would not prevent one from becoming an officer. England responded by saying, "'I like Dallas, the city, the gay community.'" She added that her brother had lived there, and that Dallas was where she wanted to do her public service.[10]

Kay England, Mica England's mother, stated that her daughter had talked about becoming a police officer since she was in high school. Besides talking about being a police woman, England took a number of important steps to make that happen. For example, she took college courses in sociology and psychology to bolster her major in criminal justice. England sold her horse to pay the tuition at Rogers State College in Claremore, Oklahoma. She later transferred to Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. While in college England held various jobs to pay for her education. Some of her jobs included fry cook, security guard, and shoe saleswoman. Once England started applying for police jobs she faced other challenges. For example, she applied to join the police force in Muskogee, Oklahoma but was not hired because she was twenty when she applied and the minimum age was twenty-one. England also applied to be a police officer in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, however, she failed the written exam.. When she applied to the police

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[10] "Mica Stands Up-and Pays the Price," *Chicago Tribune*, May 4, 1992 http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1992-05-04-9202090688-story.html accessed on October 1, 2018.

department in Tulsa, Oklahoma, England was informed that she did not have enough college credits.[11]

After not having success applying for police positions in her home state of Oklahoma, England made her first attempt to join the Dallas Police Department. This occurred in 1987. While asking a series of questions, a female recruiting officer asked England one that the DPD deemed important. Question 14 was – "'Have you ever engaged in deviant sex?'" Even though England believed that being a lesbian was not "'deviant,'" on some level she knew that she was not being honest. When England responded to the same question on a follow-up lie-detector test, the needle on the polygraph machine went haywire. England was then rejected. Two years after that incident, on a recruiting trip in May of 1989, the same Dallas recruiter interviewed England again in Tulsa. Even though England told her that she was a lesbian and that she would not lie about it again, the DPD recruiter encouraged her to travel to Dallas for a formal interview. Three months later, England went to Dallas. When she walked into the police station the recruiter was waiting for her with a copy of the departmental hiring policy. It basically stated that lesbians and gay men need not apply. At that moment England felt enraged, humiliated, and frightened, so she went through the phone book and was eventually connected to the DGA.[12]

In addition to connecting with the DGA, England hired an attorney, packed her belongings, and relocated to Dallas. England endured three difficult years as her case was litigated. She received anonymous hate mail, and experienced "bolt-upright nightmares." England struggled financially as she barely survived on the small salary that she earned as the Promenade chef at The

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

Mansion on Turtle Creek. England's finances were so bad that her car was repossessed. Besides all of these challenges, England's morality was attacked as she was called a pervert and compared to a child molester. Even though William Waybourn had moved to Washington, D.C. after England filed her lawsuit, he remained one of her closest advisors. Waybourn made an interesting prediction about England as her case was litigated. He stated, "'She will never be a Dallas police officer. If she wins the case, she would never be able to serve effectively because of the scrutiny from her peers, the command staff and the media. No human being could withstand that sort of pressure. It will be awful. She could very well come out of this with no money and no job.'" Time would show that Waybourn was not far off with his prediction about England.[13]

In February 1992 a judge in Austin, Texas ruled that the Dallas Police Department's practice of screening applicants for sexual orientation was unconstitutional. This ruling is what caused the DPD to change its discriminatory hiring policy. Even though England succeeded in her fight to change that policy, her lawsuit with the city of Dallas was not settled until late summer 1994. In England's settlement she received $73,000. England technically got $42,000 and her lawyers received the remaining $31,000. Once England's case was finally settled she said about the ordeal, "'I should have gotten a lot more money, but I accomplished what I wanted to. I changed the state law and the police hiring policy.'" England's comments about the outcome of her lawsuit and settlement communicate that she believed her experience taking on the DPD was worthwhile.[14]

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[13] Ibid.
[14] "Lesbian Settles Suit for Bias in Dallas," *The New York Times*, September 16, 1994 https://www.nytimes.com/1994/09/16/us/lesbian-settles-suit-for-bias-in-dallas.html accessed on October 1, 2018.

Although England won her suit against the DPD which helped to end its discriminatory hiring practice, and she received some money in the form of a settlement, England did not become a Dallas police officer. By the time her lawsuit against the city of Dallas was settled in the mid-nineties, England had decided that she was going to become a chef. She planned to use some of her settlement money to try to open a restaurant.[15] Mica England earned a special place within the history of Dallas' LGBT community because this young, working-class lesbian with limited resources took on a powerful organization in the city of Dallas, and in doing so she helped end its discriminatory hiring practice. When the DPD ended its ban on hiring lesbians and gay men, it terminated a policy that was decades old. In addition to making it possible for gay men and women to serve on the DPD, in theory, the new hiring policy could potentially help decrease the amount of harassment that gay individuals would experience at the hands of the Dallas police. This line of thinking comes from the idea that if straight police officers worked closely with gay officers on a regular basis, their homophobia against gay people would decrease over time, and they would stop targeting and harassing gay individuals. Also, if gay officers were on the Dallas police force, harassment against gay individuals in Dallas by the police would go down because gay officers would be less inclined to harass other gay men and women.

In the same year that England's legal action helped to bring about a significant policy change within the DPD, the Dallas Gay Alliance also made an important change. The DGA added the letter L to its acronym when the advocacy organization adopted its new name, the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance (DGLA). Before the DGA changed its name in 1992, the organization had

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[15] Ibid.

operated under that name for eleven years. During that time, there had been an issue among some DGA members about the organization's title not containing the word lesbian. When the DGA became the DGLA in early 1992, the organization had existed for nearly sixteen years, and it boasted 1,200 members. Women made up twenty percent of the DGA's membership. When the DGA voted to change its name, the organization was the only one of its kind in the United States that had failed to acknowledge lesbians in its title until that moment. By the time the DGLA adopted its new name, similar organizations in the U.S. already included lesbian in their titles, and some of these groups started to formally include bisexual in their titles. These particular organizations were located in the Northeast and the West coast. The day the DGA voted to change its name was described as anticlimactic, as fifty-seven of the fifty-nine voting members cast ballots for the organization to adopt its new name.[16]

In a divisive 1981 decision, the Dallas Gay Political Caucus' membership voted to change its name to the Dallas Gay Alliance instead of the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance. That vote was by a margin of three-to-two. During the eleven years that elapsed between the initial vote and the second, some lesbians had become increasingly skeptical of the DGA's concern for women's issues. For example, shortly after the 1981 vote, the DGA board passed a policy prohibiting the world lesbian from appearing in the organization's newsletter. The words "gay woman" were employed instead. Louise Young stated that, as an "olive branch," the DGA sanctioned the formation of an all-female committee, but it was referred to as the Women's Issues Committee, *not* the Lesbian Issues Committee. At the time the DGA voted to become the DGLA, a Dallas

[16] "Dallas Gay Alliance renames itself to include lesbians, salves decade-old wound" *The Dallas Observer*, February 13, 1992, Vertical Files, (DPL).

lesbian named Lisa, who asked that her name not be used in an interview that she gave to the *Dallas Observer*, stated that the DGA had discriminated against lesbians in other ways, such as discouraging their participation in the speakers bureau, which provided speakers to various community groups.[17] The comments that Lisa provided about the DGA relates that some men within leadership at the organization may have had some issues with women,beyond deciding whether or not they wanted to utilize the word lesbian in their title. Based on what Lisa stated, some men in leadership within the DGA may have preferred that women stay in the background. If this was indeed the case, it demonstrates that some important organizations within Dallas' queer community had some significant issues that needed to be dealt with in relation to equality and fairness.

Around the time the DGA took a vote on changing its name in 1992, leadership at the organization finally got on board with the change. The DGA's leadership demonstrated this when they brought in Urvashi Vaid, a lesbian who was the executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, to help cement the vote. The DGA's name-change committee flew Vaid in from New York, just in case DGA members required some last-minute persuading. Before the ballots were cast Vaid said, "'It's the right thing to do. It's time; it's time, OK? It's 1992, not 1792.'" Vaid's comment drew both laughter and applause from her audience at the DGA. Because the DGA's leadership was fully supportive of the move to alter the organization's name, they left nothing to chance. The vote culminated in a lobbying effort that included a membership survey, a series of workshops on lesbian issues, and a mail campaign.[18] Changing the name of the Dallas

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[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

Gay Alliance to the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance was an important modification for the second oldest organization in Dallas' LGBT community to make. For some lesbians within the group, or who had been associated with the DGLA, the name change was long overdue. Since lesbians had held leadership positions in the organization since its founding, they had contributed significantly to building Dallas' queer community, and were critical in helping to sustain the community as AIDS took its toll, it is interesting that it took so long for the DGA to add the word lesbian to its title. The alliance altering its name is not only an illustration of the organization changing to meet the needs of a group of people that it served, but it is also an example of the organization recognizing a group of people who served the DGLA and Dallas' LGBT community for a long time.

The oldest organization in Dallas' queer community, Cathedral of Hope, also experienced a major change during the same year that the DGA became the DGLA. The CoH's new facility was completed near the end of 1992. The CoH conducted its first service there, dedicating the new building in December of that year. When the CoH held its initial service in its new multi-million dollar facility, an overflow crowd of more than 1,000 people were in attendance. Everyone present witnessed an engaging ceremony in a beautiful sanctuary. The initial service included a blessing of the altar area, as well as the passing of the keys to senior pastor, Michael Piazza. These activities happened in a sanctuary that boasted a fifty-foot high ceiling. The CoH new building contained a great deal of detail that reflected the congregation's diversity, as well as symbols of oppression and suffering that the LGBT community had to battle and overcome through the years. For example, the church's altar was a large pink, marble triangle which had been the sign that Nazis utilized to mark gay people. The CoH's stained-glass window included a pink triangle covered

with barbed wire, an AIDS quilt, and male and female gender symbols representing three sets of couples: gay, lesbian and straight. Appearing above the images was the Spanish word for hope, esperanza. By the time the CoH dedicated its new building in Oak Lawn, the church had become the largest one in the world with a predominantly LGBT congregation.[19] The CoH constructing and moving into its new building is an illustration of an organization within Dallas' queer community undergoing change to meet the needs of the people that it served. The congregation did not necessarily need a new shiny building to hold worship services in, but it did need a larger space to accommodate its congregants. That is what the church offered as of late 1992.

People within Dallas' queer community not only witnessed the important developments that happened at the DPD, DGLA, and CoH in 1992, but they also saw Bill Clinton rise to national prominence and become that year's Democratic presidential nominee. Gay people in Dallas, and throughout the United States, who followed politics were excited about Clinton's candidacy because he actively sought their vote. Clinton's approach to gay and lesbian voters stood in direct contrast to anti-gay Republican sentiment that the party couched in traditional family values rhetoric. Two of the main reasons why the politically astute Clinton courted gay constituents were because he knew they could provide him with both money and votes.[20]

Clinton's gay supporters in Dallas were happy to cast ballots for him and raise funds for the candidate as he made his bid for the White House. By the 1990s, Dallas' queer community had gotten fundraising down to a science. During the 1992 presidential campaign cycle, Clinton's

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[19] "Gays Dedicate New Church," *Dallas Morning News*, December 21, 1992, Vertical File: Churches – Cathedral of Hope (DPL); "Faith Healer," August 9, 1992, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

[20] David M. Rayside, *On the Fringe: Gays and Lesbians in Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 289-291.

campaign collected several hundred thousand dollars from Dallas' LGBT community. The amount of money that queer men and women in Dallas raised for Clinton's presidential campaign not only conveys how adept they were at fundraising, but it also shows how much they were willing to invest in a candidate who had made important promises to LGBT people across the U.S. while seeking their vote.[21]

Bill Clinton prevailed in that year's election. His victory unleashed unparalleled expectations among lesbians and gay men. After a dozen long years living under the burden of the AIDS epidemic and chilly relations with the Reagan and Bush administrations, gay activists and leaders were convinced that this was their time in the sun. They had legitimate reasons to feel this way. Gay men and women had played an instrumental role in the election of the most pro-gay president in American history to that point. While running for president, Clinton made sweeping promises to end all formal discrimination based on sexual orientation. For these reasons, lesbians and gay men believed their days as political pariahs were coming to an end.[22]

Two longtime gay rights activists from Dallas were not only hopeful about a Clinton presidency, but they were lucky to participate in the new president's inaugural parade. As the parade's planning committee organized the event, the committee selected Louise Young and Vivienne Armstrong to be among 80 people to ride on a float called The Family of America. The parade float intended to represent a cross-section of families in the United States. The inclusive

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[21] "Building A Powerhouse," *Dallas Morning News*, July 11, 1993, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

[22] John Gallagher and Chris Bull, *Perfect Enemies: The Religious Right, the Gay Movement, and the Politics of the 1990s* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1996), 125.

float not only had lesbian and gay couples, but it also included single parents. The Family of America float also featured an American flag.[23]

Some people did not support the idea of having lesbians and gay men participate in the inaugural parade. One such person was Reverend Lou Sheldon. He was chairman of a group called the Traditional Values Coalition. The group represented 25,000 churches across the U.S. Sheldon stated, "'Homosexuals should never be compared to people who are black or Hispanic or Asian or handicapped or Jewish.'" He added, "'The freedom train to Selma never stopped at Sodom or Gomorrah.'" Sheldon employed the same language that many conservatives used at the time to separate LGBT people from other minority groups, and to suggest that LGBT individuals were not worthy of the same freedom and civil rights for which African Americans fought. A spokeswoman for the inaugural parade, Sally Aman, stated that lesbians and gay men were put on the float because those organizing the parade felt that gay people were part of the family of America.[24]

Prior to Clinton's election victory, Vivienne Armstrong and Louise Young had been highly enthusiastic about his candidacy. Because of this, the couple did some volunteer work in support of Clinton's campaign to help turn out the vote. For example, Armstrong and Young worked phone banks. The pair also went door to door canvassing on behalf of Clinton. Young and Armstrong put this much effort into helping get Clinton elected because the couple stated that they expected the new administration to improve the social climate for lesbians and gay men. When Armstrong and

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[23] "Lesbian couple to ride family float in inaugural parade," *United Press International Archives*, January 13, 1993, https://www.upi.com/Archives/1993/01/13/Lesbian-couple-to-ride-family-float-in-inaugural-parade/5403726901200/ accessed on January 20, 2018; "2 lesbians given inaugural role," *Dallas Morning News*, January 13, 1993, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

[24] Ibid.

Young started working in support of Clinton's campaign, they probably had not envisioned riding in a Clinton inaugural float representing the diversity of modern American families.[25]

The selection of Louise Young and Vivienne Armstrong to ride on an inaugural parade float speaks to the theme of visibility. For people who paid attention to the planning of the inaugural parade via the media, and those who watched its procession closely in person or on television, they knew that lesbian and gay couples were on the The Family of America float. This kind of broad visibility for gay and lesbian couples helped make them a bit more familiar to people who did not see or interact with gay people on a regular basis. Witnessing lesbian and gay couples, along with non-gay families, on the parade float was another moment that helped normalize lesbians and gay men to the broader public.

Bill Clinton's victory at the polls in the fall of 1992 was not the only electoral win that gave queer people in Dallas reason to celebrate. In 1992 former State Representative and State Senator, Eddie Bernice Johnson, accomplished another historic first in her political career when she was elected to the House of Representatives. Johnson was sent to Congress to represent the new 30th Congressional District, a district that she helped draw when she was state senator. This new district not only included large black and Latino populations, but it also encompassed Oak Lawn. The fact that the new district included Oak Lawn is significant because Johnson had been supportive of Dallas' LGBT community dating back to the early 1970s when the then registered nurse, with a specialty in Psychiatry, filled out a candidate survey for the Circle of Friends stating that she did not believe that homosexuality was a mental illness. In that survey she also indicated that she would treat gay people fairly if elected. Chapter 2 of this work documents that

[25] "2 lesbians given inaugural role"

communication. Chapter 5 of this work detailed the critical role that Johnson played in helping to ensure that the Persons with AIDS Coalition was able to keep the housing it had acquired for AIDS patients who needed affordable shelter. Chapter 4 also discussed that during the same time period Johnson did that important work on behalf of the PWA Coalition, she was responsible for getting Senate Resolution 217 passed to have gay rights activist Bill Nelson honored in the Texas Senate. Since a substantial number of citizens usually cannot name their representative in Congress, it would not be surprising if some LGBT people in Dallas were not aware of the significance of Johnson's congressional victory.[26]

The year following Clinton's presidential win and Eddie Bernice Johnson's congressional victory, as well as the developments that occurred at the DPD, DGLA and CoH at the local level, brought an important change within Dallas' city government that pertained to Dallas' LGBT community. This development was the election of the first openly gay person, Craig McDaniel, to the Dallas City Council. When McDaniel was elected to the council, he won Council District 14 which covered half of Oak Lawn and a number of adjacent neighborhoods. McDaniel attributed his victory to service to the city of Dallas via his appointment on various commissions and planning boards, and his record of service to his neighborhood association. McDaniel said that he did not become involved in city politics because he was a gay man. Instead, his focus was on matters such as neighborhood development and improving city services. It is worth noting that the *Dallas Voice*, a gay newspaper in Dallas, barely mentioned McDaniel's campaign in the run-up to the election. McDaniel stated that after he became a council member, and being there and known as openly gay,

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[26] "Johnson wins new House seat," *Dallas Morning News*, November 4, 1992, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

as well as being available to his colleagues on the council, removed a lot of the unknown for some of his council colleagues who may not have interacted much with gay people before meeting McDaniel.[27]

McDaniel's city council victory in 1993 was a historic moment because after two openly gay men made three failed attempts to gain a seat on the council in the 1970s and 1980s, McDaniel was finally able to capture one. This work covered Reverend Jim Harris' historic run for the Dallas City Council in 1977. During the 1980s, the former president of the Dallas Gay Alliance, Bill Nelson, made two unsuccessful bids for a council seat. Nelson ran for the city council in 1985 and 1987.[28] Even though homosexuality was not the main issue when Harris, Nelson, or McDaniel sought a council seat, it appears that McDaniel played down the issue the most of the three men. It is not clear if this had anything to with McDaniel's win. McDaniel's victory could simply be attributed to being the right candidate at the right moment.

In the early 1990s, while the previously mentioned developments were happening within Dallas' LGBT community, Dallas' most queer neighborhood, Oak Lawn, was thriving. At that time, the neighborhood still had a diverse population. Of the roughly 70,000 people who lived in the area, one-third of them were gay men and lesbians (mainly gay men), one-third were non-gay whites, and the other third were African Americans and Latinos, of whom most were not gay. Most of the living structures in Oak Lawn were multi-family. During this time, Oak Lawn still had a vibrant entertainment district that contained about twenty-five lesbian and gay bars. These businesses were tucked under the umbrella of the Dallas Tavern Guild which sponsored Razzle

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[27] Petra L. Doan, ed., *Planning and LGBTQ Communities: The Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 45.

[28] Ibid, 43 and 45.

Dazzle Dallas, an event that had been transformed into an annual AIDS fundraiser by this time. One of the issues that community leaders and retailers wrestled with was expansion, and whether or not to expand retail or housing. Some retailers and community leaders thought the area's bars were overrunning the neighborhood, and that the bars were bringing noise and spurring crime. The issue of expansion is one that most successful communities must contend with at different times. The data about Oak Lawn in the early nineties relates that Dallas' LGBT neighborhood was flourishing at that time.[29]

Even though the tides began to turn for Dallas' queer community in the early nineties, and a variety of things related to the community changed for the better, queer men and women in Dallas continued to deal with the effects of AIDS. In the early 1990s a high number of AIDS-related deaths occurred on a regular basis. Because the CoH boasted such a large membership, the church continued to witness the loss of a significant number of its members to AIDS. For example, by August 1992 the CoH had lost seventy-five of its members to the disease since the beginning of that year. Because of this sad and depressing reality, CoH continued to hold a high number of funerals and memorial services on a weekly basis. The church also continued its practice of conducting these services for members and non-members of the CoH.[30]

As the previous chapter of this work demonstrated, leaders and members of the CoH had been caring for thoseafflicted by AIDS since the mid-1980s. Even though several religious leaders at the CoH had provided important spiritual and emotional support to many AIDS victims for several years, Reverend Carol West arguably reached the most people stricken with AIDS because

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[29] "Accommodation helps Oak Lawn to thrive," *The Texas Triangle*, January 21, 1993, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 1: Personal Collection, Box 64, Folder 10.

[30] "Faith Healer," *Dallas Morning News*, August 9, 1992, Vertical File: Churches – Cathedral of Hope, (DPL).

of the additional time she spent with people who had the disease through her work as *the* AIDS chaplain for Dallas. By the time the congregation at the CoH had settled into its new building in early 1993, West had been an AIDS chaplain for three years. From the time AIDS hit in Dallas, to the late winter of 1993, the CoH had lost more than 500 parishioners to the disease. So, at the CoH alone, West had literally helped care for hundreds of people who battled AIDS.[31]

Though AIDS had clearly taken a tremendous toll on the congregation at CoH by the time the AIDS chaplain position was created in 1990, the position was not created solely to meet the needs of the CoH. By that time the church had been long taking care of its own. Instead, the AIDS chaplain position was created to fill a void in Dallas. By 1990 there were various sources in the Dallas area who could answer AIDS patients' physical needs, as well as providing them with housing, food and medical care. However, there was no one devoted full-time to AIDS patients' spiritual concerns. Many AIDS patients—no matter their sexual orientation—were not affiliated with a church. Others belonged to churches they felt they could not turn to while dealing with AIDS.[32]

As the early 1990s turned into the mid-nineties, politics in Dallas continued to open up for minorities, meaning more minorities were elected to leadership positions in the city than they had ever had before. For example, in 1995 Ron Kirk was elected as the first African-American mayor of Dallas. The newly elected mayor possessed an impressive professional and political resume. Professionally, Kirk was a successful attorney. He was a partner in one of Texas' most prestigious law firms. Prior to going to work at a law firm, Kirk served as an assistant city attorney for Dallas.

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[31] "A Life & Death Mission," *Dallas Morning News*, March 14, 1993, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

[32] Ibid.

In terms of political experience, when Kirk was elected mayor, he had just finished a term as secretary of state for Texas. Kirk's earlier political experience included work on the legislative staff of U.S. Senator Lloyd Bentsen. Because of Kirk's varied professional and political experience, his candidacy for mayor received support from the city's African-American community, as well as conservative business leaders. Kirk's victory at the polls was easily achieved due to the broad support that he enjoyed within Dallas.[33]

After Kirk was elected mayor, he was successful in that post. One of his accomplishments included the complicated arrangement to finance a new arena with the owners of the Dallas Stars ice hockey team and the Dallas Mavericks basketball team. His other victory included successfully advocating for a Trinity River bond. The bond that voters approved included a plan to control flooding, create a chain of small lakes surrounded by recreational facilities, extend the levees, preserve an existing forest, and construct a toll road within the levees to improve traffic problems. Because of his success running the city of Dallas, Kirk was elected to a second term in the spring of 1999. He won nearly 75% of the votes that were cast. Kirk served as mayor of Dallas until he resigned in 2001 to run for the U.S. Senate. He won the Democratic Party primary, but lost the general election to Republican John Cornyn.[34] Kirk's story is important not because he wasn't much of a major ally to the Dallas' LGBT community, but because it shows how minorities made important gains in Dallas in the 1990s. Kirk was elected mayor two years after Craig McDaniel became the first openly gay person elected to the Dallas City Council. The acceptance of racial

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[33] Harvey J. Graff, *The Dallas Myth: The Making and Unmaking of An American City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 298; Darwin Payne, *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of An American Supercity in the 20th Century* (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 2000), 484.

[34] Payne, *Big D*, 484- 487; Graff, *The Dallas Myth*, 299.

and sexual minorities in leadership positions within the city of Dallas in the nineties demonstrates that the city and its inhabitants had progressed significantly in their thinking and attitudes since the 1960s, when Dallas was considered a politically far-right city.

In the same year that Ron Kirk was elected the first African-American mayor of Dallas, an openly gay person of color was elected to the Dallas School Board. That person was a Latino man named Jose Plata. Plata was an educator with an interesting biography.[35] Jose Plata's election to the Dallas School Board in the mid-1990s is another example of LGBT individuals being integrated into positions and organizations within Dallas that they had been denied access to until that time. Previous chapters of this work detailed the various reasons why LGBT educators in Dallas kept their sexual orientation private. Chapter 3 covers when the former Dallas Independent School District superintendent, Nolan Estes, threatened to fire any teachers that he learned were gay or lesbian in the late 1970s. The fact that Plata was elected to the school board less than twenty years after Estes' threat demonstrates just how far the DISD had progressed.

Plata winning a seat on the Dallas School Board was not the only major achievement that LGBT people scored in the DISD in the mid-nineties. During that time period, the DISD created a non-discrimination and harassment policy that included sexual orientation. When the school district originally set out to create its non-discrimination and harassment policy, it had not planned on including sexual orientation. The inclusion of sexual orientation was the result of a recent scandal that had rocked DISD.[36]

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[35] Jose Plata, Oral History Interview with Jose Angel Guitierrez, February 23, 1998, Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS), University of Texas at Arlington, 3,4,6 and 10-13 and 15-17.

[36] "Gays, lesbians included in DISD policy – Board approval expected on anti-harassment rules," *Dallas Morning News*, March 28, 1996 and "Voices altered DISD's policy on harassment, *Dallas Morning News*, April 2, 1996 in NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

In contrasting the Dallas' gay civil rights movement in the nineties to the national gay civil rights movement, the movement within the Sunbelt metropolis made significant advances, while the national movement stalled. In 1993, after promising his gay supporters that he would lift the ban on gay individuals serving in the military, President Clinton supported the new military policy known as "don't ask don't tell." The policy was considered a compromise with conservative lawmakers like Democratic Senator from Georgia Sam Nunn. Nunn, then chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, believed that the presence of openly gay servicewomen and servicemen gave a great deal of discomfort to a number of straight people. In 1996 Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) into law. The marriage law allowed individual states to refuse to recognize marriages conducted in other states. This ended a long-standing interstate reciprocity. The new law also prohibited the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriage. The new military policy and new marriage law were major setbacks for the national gay civil rights movement. During the time period that "don't ask don't tell" became the official military policy regarding gay individuals, and DOMA was made the law of the land with respect to marriage, many gay rights activists were aware that they had a long fight ahead of them with regard to possibly changing military policy and marriage law.[37]

Back in Dallas in the mid-1990s, the LGBT community had not only witnessed the critical developments that occurred on the Dallas School Board and in the DISD with regard to queer people, but Dallas' LGBT community also saw the Cathedral of Hope reach an important milestone. In the summer of 1995 the church celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. At the time

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[37] Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy sin the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 412-413; Raymond A. Smith and Donald P. Haider-Markel, *Gay and Lesbian Americans and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2002), 310-311.

of this special occasion the CoH was doing quite well. The congregation had been in its new building for more than two years. The CoH had enjoyed the distinction of being the largest church in the world with a predominantly LGBT congregation for several years. In addition to the aforementioned facts about the CoH, the church still did a wide variety of work to meet the needs of both members and non-members.[38]

During the year the CoH celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, the *Dallas Morning News*' Religion section ran a weekly profile on places of worship within the Dallas area. The CoH was profiled in the fall of that year. The article about the CoH briefly told the church's history. The feature discussed the church's demographics. Even though 75 to 80 percent of the congregation was gay or lesbian, the fastest growing segment of the CoH's population was young, straight couples, and babies. The story also described the upbeat nature of the worship experience at CoH.[39]

In addition to the aforementioned topics, the story on the CoH highlighted several special programs that the church provided. For example, the church sponsored small Bible study groups throughout the Dallas area that were called Circles of Hope. The CoH continued to make taking care of people who had AIDS a top priority by providing them with services that ranged from counseling to financial assistance. The CoH did these things for more than 700 people with AIDS. Cathedral of Hope also hosted mammogram testing, a home missions project, and Social Security seminars. At the time that the *Dallas Morning News* did its profile on the CoH, the church was preparing for a special event in conjunction with World AIDS Day on December 1. Positive

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[38] *Cathedral of Hope 1970-1995: A Generation of Faithfulness 25th Anniversary Bulletin*, Chronological File: B-1995 – 25th Anniversary, Cathedral of Hope History Project (Cathedral of Hope, Dallas, Texas); "Faith Healer."

[39] "The Cathedral of Hope Metropolitan Community Church," *Dallas Morning News*, November 25, 1995, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

Voices, one of the church's choirs which consisted of people who were HIV positive, was going to host a debut party for their compact disc. The *Dallas Morning News*' profile of the CoH conveyed that it was a one-of-a-kind church that put forth a strong effort to serve a wide range of people in Dallas in a variety of ways.[40]

By the time CoH reached its twenty-fifth anniversary, the church was not only thriving, but it had also established itself as arguably the most important organization within Dallas' LGBT community. The CoH was to the queer community what the church had long been to the African-American community – an invaluable multi-purpose site. When CoH started as an MCC mission in 1970, it was a place where gay men and lesbians could worship openly without fear and shame. Once the Reverend Jim Harris arrived in the mid-1970s, the church also became a place where gay and lesbian people organized to discuss a variety of issues that were important to their community. Reverend Harris, one of founding members of the Dallas Gay Political Caucus, allowed the DGPC to hold its initial meeting at MCC Dallas in the spring of 1976. This work has documented how from the mid-1970s through the 1980s, the various pastors of MCC Dallas continued to let the DGPC and DGA hold meetings at the church. Besides accommodating the organization that would eventually become the DGLA, the church met the emotional needs of LGBT women and men by offering them counseling that was specific to their needs as queer people. From the moment that AIDS hit in Dallas, the CoH worked to meet the needs of members as well as non-members who were dealing with the effects of the disease. The CoH provided all of this support and these services while promoting a philosophy of love and inclusion regardless of one's race, class, gender, or sexual orientation.

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[40] Ibid.

Another notable development that happened at CoH in the mid-1990s was Carol West's departure from the church. After being there for a decade, West left the CoH in late 1996. In an oral history interview West explained why she left the church, "I felt like what I came here to do was done. I think I was just burned out as I could be. Not on - - I think AIDS burned me out. I had - - there's no telling how many funerals I have done. I would say 1,200 maybe." West decided to leave the CoH because the work that she had done related to AIDS took its toll on her over the years.[41]

The mid-1990s proved to be a special period for the Turtle Creek Chorale, just it had been for the CoH. In 1995 the TCC won an Emmy award. That prize was bittersweet because it was connected to the lows that the chorale intensely endured for about a decade as it lost many of its talented members to AIDS. The TCC won the best informational or cultural program Emmy for the documentary *After Goodbye: An AIDS Story*. The Dallas public television station KERA-TV (Channel 13) produced and showed the program. Ginny Martin of KERA directed and produced *After Goodbye*. The acclaimed actress, Ruby Dee, narrated the program. By the time the documentary was awarded its Emmy, the then 200-member TCC had lost more than 90 of its members to AIDS. Even though AIDS had clearly taken a toll on the TCC by the mid-nineties, the organization had experienced some other high points prior to its Emmy win. For example, the chorus performed throughout the United States and Europe. In the U.S. the chorale sang for President George H.W. Bush. While in Europe the group performed for Queen Elizabeth of England. In 1993 the Turtle Creek Chorale sang at Carnegie Hall.[42] The story about the TCC is

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[41] Carol West, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, May 29, 2008, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 48-49.

not only significant because the group won an important award and had travelled the world by the mid-1990s, but it is also important because the chorale accomplished these things as it lost a good number of its members to AIDS. The fact that the TCC persevered and continued to entertain so many people underscores just how durable some of the organizations within Dallas' queer community were.

In the mid-1990s, as community organizations such as the CoH and TCC celebrated various accomplishments, Dallas' queer community experienced the loss of another one of its early community leaders and activist, Steve Wilkins. Wilkins, the second president of the Dallas Gay Political Caucus, died from complications of AIDS in 1995. As chapter 3 of this work detailed, Wilkins was the person who came up with the idea of the Dallas approach or Dallas Way as a means of helping bring about social change for gay men and lesbians in Dallas in the late 1970s. Wilkins was also a leader within the DGPC when it laid out its long-term political goals for Dallas' queer community. Even though Wilkins died before he reached the age of fifty, he did live long enough to witness Dallas' LGBT community accomplish some important goals in the nearly two decades since he had led the organization which eventually became the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance.[43]

When Wilkins passed away several of his friends from the early days of the DGPC attended his memorial service. Those friends included Louise Young, Vivienne Armstrong, Phil Johnson, Dick Peeples, Don Baker, and Jack Pettit. In a joint interview that Young and Armstrong gave, the

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[42] "'Sing' brings hope, tears," *Dallas Morning News*, June 12, 2000; "Choir concert stirs controversy at Clark High," *Dallas Morning News*, April 13, 2000; "Arts Beat," *Dallas Morning News*, September 13, 1995; "Rites held for Rodger Wilson, founder of chorale, gay groups," January 7, 2000, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

[43] "Steve Wilkins: Remembering One of Dallas' Founding Gay Activists," *This Week in Texas*, February 24 – March 2, 1995, Texas Obituary Project http://www.texasobituaryproject.org/022495wilkins.html accessed February 28, 2018.

couple discussed the significant number of friends and associates they lost to AIDS in the 1980s and 1990s, and the numerous memorial services and funerals they attended because of those deaths. When explaining what it was like in the mid-eighties when they observed so many people they knew dying of AIDS, Armstrong stated, “There for a while it was so horrible. I mean, you can’t convey to people who - - my family the people I worked with and stuff - - to say you could not open a paper without seeing one, two or three people dying, at least, every week. I mean, we just went to funerals all the dang time. It was just heart-wrenching.” Armstrong’s words not only communicate just how many people they knew personally who died of AIDS, but they also convey the emotional toll that experiencing such a high amount of deaths in such a brief period of time took on her and Louise.[44]

When reflecting on the high number of men who lost their lives to AIDS, Young and Armstrong did not just think of how those deaths personally affected them. The two women also viewed those deaths in terms of what the LGBT community lost when those men died. Young noted, “But I’ll tell you: we lost a whole generation of leaders, male leaders, due to the AIDS crisis. When you look at the national organizations, the local organizations, we really lost that, that whole generation. And it’s very hard for any movement to suffer that kind of loss of their dedicated charismatic leaders.” Armstrong added, “You wouldn’t believe how much energy and innovation that some of these guys really had. It was phenomenal.” Armstrong and Young’s comments about all of the male leaders who died at the height of the AIDS crisis relates that the gay rights

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[44] Ibid; Louise Young and Vivienne Armstrong, Oral History Interview with Karen Wisely, February 24, 2010, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 69.

movement in Dallas, as well as across the United States, lost so many talented and energetic leaders.[45]

The 1990s was not only filled with suffering and death with regard to AIDS, but the period also ushered in an era of hope for people in Dallas and around the globe who were personally dealing with the disease. This hope stemmed from the development and availability of a new drug treatment used to combat the effects of HIV/AIDS. In 1996 at the Eleventh International AIDS Conference, which took place in Vancouver, British Columbia, drug researchers and AIDS activists announced the discovery of protease inhibitors. This new discovery was an effective treatment for AIDS. The medical advancement was partly the result of AIDS activists who had demanded new methods for testing drugs in combination with each other. The combination of protease inhibitors and reverse transcriptase inhibitors became known as the cocktail. Researchers and AIDS activists believed that these new treatment protocols would decrease suffering and allow individuals with AIDS to live longer and better lives. The new drug regimen was expensive, costing about $20,000 per year per person.[46]

The HIV/AIDS treatment that was introduced in the mid-nineties was effective and did what many researchers and medical professionals suspected it would do. The drug regimen helped patients live longer and better lives. For example, a study of 394,705 Americans found to have AIDS from 1984 to 1997, showed that the median survival times rose to 46 months from 11 months during that period. The survival time for these people increased more than four times. These figures

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45 Young and Armstrong, Oral History Interview, 73.

46 Jennifer Brier, *Infectious Ideas: U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 187; "AIDS Drugs Extend Survival Time Fourfold," *The New York Times*, March 14, 2001, http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/14/health/aids-drugs-extend-survival-time-fourfold.html accessed February 10, 2018.

are based on the nearly 400,000 people with AIDS who were reported to the surveillance system of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia.[47] Although the new medical cocktail that was made available to treat HIV/AIDS was expensive, those who had the disease were glad to have an effective treatment that could help them manage their illness, and possibly extend their lives. The new HIV/AIDS treatment made it possible for people with either ailment to live more active and productive lives. The medical cocktail enabled those with HIV/AIDS to seriously think about having a future. The new possibilities associated with the cocktail demonstrate just how revolutionary this new medical treatment was.

There were some educators who thought that queer students or straight students with queer parents needed a safe place to learn free of verbal and physical violence. Because of this belief, these teachers decided to start a school for LGBT youth. The names of the school's founders were Becky Thompson and Pamala Stone. Thompson was a lesbian and Stone was straight. The name of the school that the two educators founded was Walt Whitman Community School, named for the gay poet and Civil War Union nurse from the nineteenth century. Walt Whitman opened in September of 1997. The Walt Whitman Community School had the distinction of being the first private gay school in the U.S. Tuition at Walt Whitman was $7,000 annually. All seven of the students who attended the school when it first opened received financial assistance. This assistance came from people who wanted to see the school succeed.[48]

[47] "AIDS Drugs Extend Survival Time Fourfold"

[48] "Nation's First Private School for Gays Opens in Dallas," *Los Angeles Times: Article Collections*, September 21, 1997, http://articles.latimes.com/1997/sep/21/news/mn-34608 accessed February 15, 2018; Leila J. Rupp, *A Desired Past: A Short History of Same-Sex Love in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 68-72.

The Walt Whitman Community School had a direct connection to the Cathedral of Hope. When the school opened, it was housed in a five-room building that was located on the grounds of the church. The CoH did not charge Walt Whitman rent so the new school was fortunate to be able to operate rent-free. Even though no one who worked at the CoH worked at the school, letting Walt Whitman operate for free on its property was another way for the CoH to support LGBT youth in a significant way.[49] The formation of the Walt Whitman Community School in the late 1990s demonstrates that some educators did not think that public and some private schools in Dallas were suitable for LGBT students, or straight students who had queer parents. Even though Dallas had elected its first openly gay school board member in the mid-nineties, and adopted a non-discrimination and harassment policy that included sexual orientation during the same time period, people like Becky Thompson and Pamala Stone did not believe that those measures were enough. So they created a school where queer students and straight students with queer parents could go and have an educational experience free of harassment and other types of abuse.

As the decade of the nineties neared the end, the Foundation for Human Understanding changed its name to the Resource Center of Dallas. Around the time this happened, the Foundation for Human Understanding and AIDS Resource Center were consolidated. So, the services that both places once offered were now provided through one organization. However, the Resource Center of Dallas' main focus continued to be taking care of those who were dealing with HIV/AIDS.[50]

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[49] "School's out," *Dallas Observer*, November 13, 1997, http://www.dallasobserver.com/news/schools-out-6402442 accessed February 15, 2018.

[50] "Resource Center of Dallas History Timeline," UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 1: Resource Center Records, Sub-Series 1: Resource Center, Box 1, Folder 1;"AIDS center directors to exit," *Dallas Morning News*, September 7, 2002, UNT LGBT Archive, The Dallas Way, Small Collections, Box 1, Folder 20.

As the twentieth century wound down, Dallas' LGBT community lost another longtime leader and activist to AIDS. That person was John Thomas. He passed away in 1999 at the age of 51. Even though Thomas worked closely with people like Steve Wilkins and Don Baker, he did not always adhere to the "Dallas Way." Thomas believed in protesting like Piazza and Waybourn. During his life he had been arrested at protests in Dallas, Washington, D.C., New York and San Francisco. Thomas was also involved in lawsuits against Texas' sodomy law and Parkland Memorial Hospital's treatment of AIDS patients. Thomas was an activist who believed in employing a number of methods to help improve the lives of queer people.[51]

By the time Thomas died at the end of the nineties, Dallas' queer community had lost a significant amount of its leaders and activists to AIDS. In about a decade and a half, Dallas' LGBT community lost leaders and activists like Phil Gerber, Howie Daire, Daryl Moore, Terry Tebedo, Mike Richards, Bill Nelson, Allan Calkin, Phil Morrow, Bill Hunt, Michael Merdian, Steve Wilkins, Chance West, and John Thomas to the disease. Since Thomas was fortunate enough to live until the late 1990s, he was able to witness just how much Dallas' queer community had progressed since he started his activism on behalf of it in the late 1970s. Thomas had not only seen how much things had changed for the better within Dallas' queer community, but he also witnessed how the community had started to be integrated into the larger community in Dallas. Thomas went to his grave knowing that his hard work and dedication had helped to make those changes happen.

This chapter proved that during the 1990s Dallas' queer community finally started to be integrated into various positions, organizations, and policy within the city of Dallas that LGBT

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[51] "Prominent gay activist John Thomas dies at 51," *The Dallas Morning News*, January 21, 1999, UNT LGBT Archive, Resource Center LGBT Collection of the UNT Libraries, 1940-2011, Series 2: Phil Johnson Collection, Sub-Series 2: Clippings-Subject Files, Box 76, Folder 29.

women and men had been denied access to until that time in the city's history. For example, as a result of the lawsuit that Mica England filed against the Dallas Police Department in 1989, the DPD finally lifted its ban on hiring lesbian and gay police officers in 1992. In the following year Dallas finally elected its first openly gay city council member, Craig McDaniel. In 1995 Jose Plata made history at the Dallas Independent School District when he was elected its first openly gay board trustee. The integration of lesbians and gay men into various organizations and positions within Dallas did not stop there. In 1996 the DISD board created a new anti-harassment policy that included sexual orientation.

As the aforementioned changes pertaining to Dallas' queer community occurred, some of the community's existing organizations were altered in various ways in order to meet the needs of the LGBT people that they served. For example, in 1992 the Dallas Gay Alliance finally became the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance after many years of debate that was at times contentious. With the name change, members of the DGLA finally included lesbians in the title of the organization that gay women had contributed to since its founding. In the early 1990s the Cathedral of Hope's new building was completed giving the congregation the worship space that it needed. Around the time this happened, the CoH earned the distinction of being the largest church in the world with a predominantly LGBT congregation. By the mid-nineties the church's demographics started to change when young, straight couples with babies started attending the Cathedral of Hope. In the late nineties, after operating as the Foundation for Human Understanding for fifteen years, the organization was consolidated with the AIDS Resource Center and changed its name to the Resource Center of Dallas. Although it adopted a new name, Resource Center of Dallas continued to offer a wide range of services to Dallas' LGBT community. However, the main focus of the

organization continued to be caring for people coping with AIDS. This was important because even though effective AIDS medications were developed in the mid-1990s, people were still being diagnosed with HIV, and they still needed an organization to turn to for vital information and support.

After witnessing LGBT youth being harassed and abused at the school where Becky Thompson and Pamala Stone originally worked, the two educators decided to form a private school for queer students, and straight students who had queer parents. The school that the teachers founded was the Walt Whitman Community School, which was the first of its kind in the United States. Even though queer people had made a significant amount of progress by the nineties, queer students and their families continued to experience discrimination and harassment during that time. So, a school such as the Walt Whitman Community School served an important purpose.

This chapter also shows that while a number of changes that queer people welcomed were happening within Dallas' queer community in the 1990s, the community still had to cope with the devastating effects of AIDS. Because new AIDS treatments did not become available until the mid-nineties, the LGBT community continued to experience a high number of AIDS-related deaths until after that time. Although this was still a sad part of reality for Dallas' queer community at the time, it is quite clear that Dallas' LGBT community entered a more promising phase in its history during the decade of the nineties.

EPILOGUE

In the first decade of the new millennium Dallas' queer community continued to thrive. When the 2000s commenced, two organizations within Dallas' LGBT community reached important milestones. In the late winter of 2000, the Turtle Creek Chorale, one of the oldest cultural organizations in Dallas' queer community, turned twenty years old. The Cathedral of Hope, the oldest organization within Dallas' LGBT community, celebrated thirty years in existence. When the CoH reached this special anniversary the church still had the distinction of being the largest Christian church in the world with a predominantly LGBT congregation. By 2000 the CoH had enjoyed this status for nearly a decade. Even though the first year of the new millennium was not an important anniversary for the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance, the queer advocacy organization still did important work on behalf of Dallas' queer community. The fact that these queer organizations lasted until the start of the twenty-first century conveys that they were still vital to Dallas' LGBT community. If the CoH, DGLA, and TCC had not been important to queer people in Dallas, LGBT individuals would not have continued to support these organizations over the span of decades.

By 2000 the TCC had gotten in the practice of holding benefit concerts to support organizations and schools outside of the LGBT community. For example, in 1998, with the help of Seagoville parent, Gerald Picus, the TCC did a musical program with students in Seagoville. The event was a great success. Prior to the program there were some people who raised concerns about allowing the TCC to participate in an event that also featured five student choirs. Picus said that some individuals threatened to boycott the concert. Picus stated that he and some others played the whole incident down because they had the support of the community to proceed with the

performance. That concert happened and subsequently raised $12,000 to supplement music programs in southeast Dallas schools. The chorale also had success working with Mesquite, Garland and Irving schools.[1]

The TCC continued to build bridges between Dallas' LGBT community and organizations and schools outside of the community at the start of the new millennium. For example, the TCC joined the Women's Choir of Dallas and poet and author Maya Angelou for a breast cancer benefit concert in the late spring of 2000. The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation sponsored the event. The program was entitled "Sing for the Cure." Angelou was the program's narrator. In that role she told first-person stories of people affected by breast cancer while the Women's Chorus of Dallas and the TCC performed ten songs.[2]

The start of the twenty-first century was also an eventful time for the CoH. On the weekend that the CoH celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in the summer of 2000, the church did two dedications. One was the dedication of the AIDS memorial. The John Thomas Bell Wall was the name of the national AIDS memorial that was located at the CoH. The world-renowned architect, Phillip Johnson, designed the wall. The memorial was dedicated on the same weekend that the CoH dedicated the first phase of a $23 million dollar plan to build a cathedral that Johnson also designed. The John Thomas Bell Wall was part of a project to create what the church called "'the first cathedral of the 21st century.'" Plans called for breaking ground on a 2300-seat sanctuary in 2001. At the time of the CoH thirtieth anniversary, the church had raised $7 million. That was

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1 "Choir concert stirs controversy at Clark High," *Dallas Morning News*, April 13, 2000, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

2 "Survivors have something to sing about," *Dallas Morning News*, June 18, 2000, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

enough money to purchase 20 acres of land around the CoH. The initial funds raised also covered the cost of the memorial wall.[3]

A good amount of detail went into the design of the John Thomas Bell Wall. The wall was dark green stucco trimmed in bronze. It was positioned on a granite base. The wall contained three bells that were suspended more than 70 feet above the ground. The bells were visible for blocks. The largest bell was the "remembrance" bell; it weighed 5,665 pounds. The other bells – "hope" and "justice" –weighed about 3,300 pounds apiece. Each bell would toll once a day. One characteristic that distinguished the memorial at the CoH from others is that it included a computer database linked to the Internet. At the base of the wall was a monitor that allowed visitors to look at memorials of people who had died of AIDS. The database, www.aidsbellwall.com, had room for one millions memorials. Anyone could submit one by visiting the website or calling the CoH. Visitors – both on the Web and in person – were able to search individual names or scroll through the names of the dead and their stories.[4]

While reflecting on the number of AIDS-related funerals that the CoH had conducted, Reverend Piazza reminded people just how high the amount was. For example, during his first month at the church in 1987, Piazza conducted funerals for eighteen people who had died of AIDS. That was a significant number of deaths for a congregation of about 280 people. At the time of the CoH's anniversary in 2000, the congregation had 3,000 members. By that time the church had conducted about 1,400 AIDS-related funerals since the disease had hit Dallas. The national AIDS

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[3] "In Loving Memory," *Dallas Morning News*, 30 July 2000, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).
[4] Ibid.

memorial at CoH did more than just keep a count of the people who lost their lives to AIDS. The memorial honored those individuals in a beautiful and thoughtful way.[5]

Besides having organizations that continued to provide queer people in Dallas with a sense of community at the start of the twenty-first century, Oak Lawn was still the neighborhood people considered the geographic location of Dallas' LGBT community. When the new millennium began, a high amount of queer people still resided in Oak Lawn. In 2000 the neighborhood's zip code contained the highest number of same-sex households of any in Texas, even though a notable amount of queer individuals had started moving to other sections of Dallas such as Oak Cliff and East Dallas as early as the late eighties. There is no clear reason why queer people started moving out of Oak Lawn when they did. They may have relocated because they desired a change in scenery, or they could have been interested in more housing options.[6]

In addition to Oak Lawn, Oak Cliff, and East Dallas being popular areas for LGBT people to inhabit in Dallas at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Northwest Dallas had also become a part of town where queer individuals had taken up residence in noteworthy numbers. LGBT women and men started to move to this section of Dallas by the early 2000s. This was mainly the result of lesbian realtor and gay rights activist, Lory Masters, selling a substantial number of single-family homes in Northwest Dallas. Because Masters had sold so many houses in that area by the early 2000s, many queer people in Dallas referred to that part of town as Loryland. When Masters

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Petra L. Doan, ed., *Planning and LGBTQ Communities: The Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces* (New York: Routledge), 43-44 and 47.

started selling homes she probably did not have the goal of helping to create a new gay enclave in Dallas.[7]

At the start of the new millennium, queer people in Dallas continued to be integrated into important policies and positions within the city. For example, in 2002 gay men and lesbians were included in a new non-discrimination ordinance in Dallas. The ordinance prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, and such public places as restaurants and hotels. The ordinance covered sexual orientation and gender identity, but the language of the ordinance grouped both categories under sexual orientation. The new non-discrimination ordinance was an important development because it communicated that treatment of someone as a second-class citizen because of his or her sexual orientation was not acceptable in Dallas anymore. It is important to note that there was a gay person on the council when it voted to pass the new ordinance. His name was John Loza. This is significant because it illustrates that having a more diverse city council meant possibly having more inclusive policies.[8]

In the same year the Dallas City Council passed its non-discrimination ordinance, which included sexual orientation and gender identity, a new organization for transgender people was formed in Dallas. That organization was called the Dallas Transgender Alliance. The alliance was concerned with the specific needs of transgender individuals. Members of the Dallas Transgender Alliance described it as an educational and charitable transgender advocacy organization. Tylana

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[7] Ibid, 46; "A brief herstory of lesbians in Dallas," *Dallas Voice*, January 16, 2015, https://www.dallasvoice.com/herstory-lesbians-dallas-10188119.html accessed March 5, 2018.

[8] "Dallas city officials adopt measure prohibiting discrimination of gays," *Houston Chronicle*, May 9, 2002, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL); "Comparing Nondiscrimination Protections in Texas Cities," *The Texas Tribune*, June 9, 2016 https://www.texastribune.org/2016/06/09/comparing-nondiscrimination-ordinances-texas/ accessed April 15, 2018.

Marie Coop was one of the Alliance's co-founders and its president. Coop was a white, middle-aged transgender woman.[9]

Even though transgender people represent the T in the acronym LGBT, these individuals are often misunderstood among queer and non-queer people. Many people within and outside of the LGBT community are not aware of how diverse transgender individuals are. Scholar Joanne Meyerowitz explains the diversity of transgender people when she writes, "...'transgendered' people, an umbrella term used for those with various forms and degrees of crossgender practices and identifications. 'Transgendered' includes, among others, some people who identify as 'butch' or masculine lesbians, as 'fairies,' 'queens,' or feminine gay men, and as heterosexual crossdressers as well as those who identify as transsexual." Meyerowitz points out that these categories are not hermetically sealed, and that the boundaries are permeable to a certain extent. The same individual might identify as a butch lesbian at one moment in life, and as FTM transsexual at another.[10]

The Dallas Transgender Alliance had a short life. It dissolved in 2005 after existing for just three years. The organization disbanded because there was not much interest in it, so it did not grow. Some of the people who had been members of the Dallas Transgender Alliance joined with other individuals to create the Dallas Gender Society in 2005. The new organization's mission was

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[9] "Officials wonder why center chosen as campaign's target," *Dallas Voice*, June 7, 2002 https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth616160/m1/9/ accessed March 29, 2018, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu; "To thine own gender be irrevocably true," *Dallas Voice*, April 25, 2003 https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth616013/m1/4/ accessed March 29, 2018, University of North Texas Libraries, Digital Library, digital.library.unt.edu.

[10] Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 10.

to serve the transgender community and to make a better effort to reach out to the larger LGBT community at the same time.[11]

As queer people in Dallas made some significant gains in the early 2000s, LGBT women and men in Dallas and across the United States celebrated a major civil rights victory. In 2003 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled sodomy laws unconstitutional in *Lawrence v. Texas*. When the Supreme Court handed down its ruling in the case, thirteen states still banned sodomy. In four of the thirteen states, sodomy laws only applied to same-sex sex. Texas was one of the four states. The *Lawrence* case concerned John Lawrence and Tyron Garner who had been arrested, jailed, and convicted for having consensual sex in a private apartment. Lawrence was white and Garner was African American. The police who made the arrests entered Lawrence's apartment based on a false report that an armed black man was in the apartment. The incident involving Lawrence and Garner happened in Houston. The Supreme Court (with seven Republican and two Democratic appointees) in a six to three decision overturned its 1986 ruling in *Bowers v. Hardwick*. The majority ruled that state sodomy laws, when they criminalized private sex by consenting adults, violated constitutional privacy rights.[12]

When the Supreme Court made its ruling striking down sodomy laws in the United States, it was a truly momentous occasion for LGBT women and men. The court's decision meant that queer citizens were finally afforded the same right to privacy with regard to their sex lives that

[11] "Dallas Transgender Society elects 7-member board of directors," *Dallas Voice*, May 20, 2005 https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth616475/m1/8/ accessed March 29, 2018, University of North Texas Libraries, Digital Library, digital.library.unt.edu.

[12] Marc Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 191-192; Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 510 and 546-551; Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 263.

straight U.S. citizens had long enjoyed. With the *Lawrence* case, LGBT women and men had finally achieved the important civil rights victory through the Supreme Court that they had worked for decades to obtain.

In the same summer that the Supreme Court ruled sodomy laws unconstitutional, a major development occurred in Dallas at CoH. In July of 2003 members of the CoH voted to leave the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. The CoH's decision to leave the UFMCC denomination was the result of a combination of issues. There had been a conflict between Reverend Piazza and some church board members. Piazza stated that some of the issues that arose around that time came from some members not liking the direction that the CoH was going at the time. Piazza described the tensions of the early 2000s at the CoH as being good creative tension. Most congregants must have agreed that they wanted to take the progressive church in a new direction, because the majority of members voted to leave the UFMCC after more than thirty years.[13]

During the same time period that the congregation at CoH voted to leave the UFMCC, another organization within Dallas' queer community permanently closed its doors. After struggling for the majority of the time it was in operation, Walt Whitman Community School closed in 2003. The school closed because of two issues that it struggled with the entire time it was open: accreditation and lack of funding.[14]

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[13] Michael Piazza, Oral History Interview with Michael Mims, March 22, 2007, University of North Texas Oral History Program, 122-125.

[14] Jason Cianciotto and Sean Cahill, *LGBT Youth in America's Schools* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 108.

A couple of years after the Dallas City Council voted to pass a non-discrimination ordinance that included gay men and lesbians in 2002, another important political development occurred relating to queer women and men in Dallas. In the fall of 2004, Lupe Valdez was elected the sheriff of Dallas County. This was a truly historic event because Valdez's victory at the polls represented important firsts for queer people, women, and people of color. When Valdez was elected sheriff, no openly gay person had been elected to this position in Dallas or any other place in Texas previously. No woman had served as sheriff in Dallas before Valdez. Also, no person of color had been sheriff in Dallas prior to Valdez's election victory. Another important fact that is worth noting about Valdez becoming one of Dallas' top law enforcement officers is that it had been a little more than a decade since the ban on hiring lesbian and gay officers in Dallas had been lifted. So, Valdez's election underscores the progress that queer people in Dallas made in the field of law enforcement in a relatively brief amount of time. Another trait to point out about Valdez is that she was a working-class individual. Most of the figures covered in this work have been middle-class. Valdez, like Mica England, was a working-class woman who helped to bring about social change within Dallas. England did it through litigation and Valdez did it by seeking public office and winning.[15]

In the same year that Valdez was sworn into office as sheriff in Dallas, a historic development happened at the CoH. In early 2005 the CoH elected its first female senior pastor; the new pastor was Reverend Dr. Jo Hudson. She was a white, middle-aged progressive lesbian who was born and reared in Texas. Prior to being elected pastor in late winter of 2005, Hudson

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15 Guadalupe "Lupe" Valdez, Oral History Interview with Jose Angel Guitierrez, January 11, 2006, Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS), University of Texas at Arlington, 1-11, 24, 28-30 and 62-64; "Gay Hispanic Woman Elected Dallas Sheriff," *The Houston Chronicle*, November 4, 2004 https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Gay-Hispanic-woman-elected-Dallas-sheriff-1512881.php accessed October 25, 2018.

had worked at the CoH for several months. During that time Reverend Hudson delivered sermons and led church services. While carrying out these duties Hudson had become popular among the congregants at the CoH. This was reflected in her receiving 94 percent of the eligible votes when the church cast ballots for the new pastor. Hudson possessed a great deal of education and experience that would help ensure that she was successful at leading the CoH. She was a graduate of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. Hudson also had a doctorate in educational administration from Texas A&M University. Reverend Hudson had been ordained in the progressive United Church of Christ (UCC) in 1997. When Hudson was elected senior pastor of CoH, the church had about 3,500 members. Even though Reverend Hudson was elected in February, she was installed in that position on Palm Sunday.[16]

In addition to Valdez and Hudson, another queer woman made history in Dallas in the first decade of the twenty-first century. This happened when transgender restaurateur, Monica Greene, ran for the Dallas City Council. Prior to running for the city council, Greene had led a fascinating life. She was born into a wealthy family in Mexico as Eduardo Greene. When Greene arrived in Dallas at the age of seventeen in 1974, he originally told his father that he was going to attend SMU. That never happened. Instead, Greene started working in the restaurant business where he was a great success. After marrying twice and having two children, the successful restaurant owner got a divorce and travelled to Europe in the mid-1990s to have gender reassignment surgery. After having surgery, Eduardo Greene became Monica Greene. When Greene returned to Dallas she opened restaurants that became highly successful.[17]

[16] "Here & Now," *Dallas Morning News*, February 19, 2005, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

After achieving success as a business woman, Greene decided that she wanted run for the Dallas City Council. She ran for a council seat in District 2 which included a part of Oak Lawn. Greene proved to be an impressive candidate. *The Dallas Morning News* was so impressed with her that they endorsed her candidacy. It was a significant development when Greene secured the endorsement of *The Dallas Morning News*, considering the reputation that the newspaper had for a long time of being a conservative. *The Dallas Morning News*, like the city of Dallas, had come a long way progressing over the years. Even though Greene received some positive media attention, and was endorsed by *The Dallas Morning News*, she still lost her bid for the council seat.[18]

In the first five years of the twenty-first century, vital queer organizations within Dallas' LGBT community thrived as they continued to provide queer women and men with a sense of community. Even though queer people continued to relocate to other parts of Dallas during this time, Oak Lawn was still considered the main location of Dallas' LGBT community. So, at the start of the new millennium, organizations and a neighborhood continued to define community for queer men and women in Dallas just as they had for decades.

A Queer History of Dallas has shown that Dallas' LGBT community has a rich and compelling history. While discussing community, in relation to queer men and women in Dallas, this work defined community in two ways. First, it defined community through organizations that LGBT individuals created for themselves within the city of Dallas. Second, this work explained that queer people in Dallas carved out a geographic community for themselves in the diverse

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[17] "City Council District 2 Greene would bring fresh solutions to issues," *Dallas Morning News*, March 31, 2005, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL); "Monica at 10," *Dallas Observer*, November 20, 2003, http://www.dallasobserver.com/news/monica-at-10-6406285 accessed March 5, 2018.

[18] Ibid; "We Recommend," *Dallas Morning News*, May 7, 2005, NewsBank: America's Newspapers, (DPL).

neighborhood of Oak Lawn. By focusing on the southern city of Dallas *A Queer History of Dallas* helps to further complicate the narrative about thriving LGBT communities being located on the East and West coasts of the United States. This work also challenges the commonly held narrative about queer people in relation to religion which suggests they are non-religious, and that religion has not played a positive role in the lives of queer individuals. For these reasons, *A Queer History of Dallas* makes a solid contribution to the current scholarship that focuses on LGBT history in the United States.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dennis Michael Mims was born in Dallas, Texas. He is a member of a large, diverse and close-knit family. Mims developed a love of learning at a young age. During his elementary school years Mims attended Episcopal and Catholic schools in Dallas. Once he became a middle school-aged student, Mims started attending public schools where he continued to receive a good education. After Mims graduated from high school he enrolled in college with the goal of becoming a social worker. Mims wanted to have a career with which he could do meaningful work and make a positive difference. After being in college for a little while, Mims decided to take a break from his studies and contemplate about his future and career plans. This is when Mims began working in the legal field. While on break from school Mims decided that he wanted to pursue a career in academia. After making this career decision Mims returned to college. He received his undergraduate degree in historical studies at The University of Texas at Dallas. Mims obtained his master's degree in history from The University of North Texas. After taking about a year and a half off from school Mims enrolled in the History of Ideas doctoral program at The University of Texas at Dallas. In May of 2019 he will receive his PhD.

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EDUCATION

The University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas, (2011 – 2019)
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Panel Topic: Artistic Hegemony and the African-American Artistic Experience – Presentation: "Exploring How Artists of the Harlem Renaissance Present Common Folk in *Fire!!*," The University of Oklahoma Student Association of Graduate English Studies (SAGES) – *Dissonant Discourses: An Interdisciplinary Conference*, Norman, Oklahoma, January 25, 2013.

Panel Topic: Dallas Gay Politics and Homophobic Fears – Presentation: Session Chair - Michael Mims, Texas Oral History Association Third Annual Conference, Nacogdoches, Texas, April 5, 2014.

Presentation for The Portal to Texas History Research Fellowship: "A Queer History of Dallas: The Formation, Development, and Integration of Big D's LGBT Community, 1965-2005," The University of North Texas Libraries Fellowship Lecture Series, Denton, Texas, July 22, 2016.

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PSY 4V99 Service Learning Internship – LGBT Issues (Fall 2017)
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TEACHING EXPERIENCE
The University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas, (2012 – 2017)
Teaching Assistant for HIST 1301 & 1302 American History Survey Courses – Assisted professors with their classes and taught some review sessions.

HIST 3390 Twentieth Century African-American History (Spring 2017)
Guest lectured on multiple occasions – taught students the techniques of conducting oral histories. Lectured students on the modern civil rights movement and how it is connected to the concept of American citizenship.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING & EXPERIENCE
Learned the techniques of oral history as a graduate student at The University of North Texas (UNT). Conducted several oral histories independently and had them archived at the Oral History Program at UNT.

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