

LGBT History Project of the LGBT Center of Central PA

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Title: Accomplishments of the Pennsylvania Governor's Council for Sexual Minorities

Date: circa 1979

Location: LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

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SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PENNSYLVANIA'S COUNCIL FOR SEXUAL MINORITIES

- :Had Governor Shapp strengthen his original executive order to include protection from discrimination in all state services, housing, licensing, contracts and "any other matter whatsoever". The Council's position and function have been maintained in Governor Thornburgh's administration.
- :Developed the course content on gay men's issues for the training of prison guards.
- :Conducted a two day training on sexual minority issues for state Drug and Alcohol workers and secured the appointment of an open lesbian on the state Drug Advisory Task Force.
- :Published and distributed with the Department of Education, an award winning booklet, "What is a Sexual Minority, Anyway?"
- :Secured non-discrimination clauses on sexual orientation in the policies of every state college and supported the successful efforts to include such language for universities including Temple and the University of Pennsylvania.
- :Worked successfully for the inclusion of non-discrimination clauses in six state union contracts including the Pennsylvania State Education Association and the Pennsylvania Nurses Association.
- :Amended the state hospital patients' Bill of Rights to prohibit discrimination against gay people and did likewise for clients' rights at state-supported drug and alcohol facilities.
- :Worked with the Governor's Office and legislators for the defeat of Senate Bill 83 and six other bills which would have prohibited the hiring of avowed homosexuals in the state police, juvenile institutions, patient care and other state jobs.
- :Responded to dozens of complaints of discrimination with success in over ninety percent of them.
- :Trained state police officials in every barracks in the state; also trained Affirmative Action Officers and the staff of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.
- :Worked successfully to have policies issued forbidding discrimination in insurance and in the licensing of professionals in the state.
- :Worked in developing a constitutional challenge to the state sodomy law. (The case is presently before the state Supreme Court.)
- :Co-sponsored state wide conferences on sexual minority issues.
- :Presented testimony to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission on police brutality and harassment of members of sexual minorities.
- :Supported the funding of the Philadelphia Gay Arts Festival by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.
- :Supported efforts to have gays included in civil rights bills in Allentown, Reading, State College and Philadelphia.