

## **LGBT-105-SC Richard Schlegel Historical Marker Collection**

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project  
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### **COLLECTION REGISTER**

Name: Richard Schlegel Historical Marker Collection **LGBT-105-SC**

Material: Papers (2020-2022)

Volume: 5 document folders

Donation: Donated by Anonymous, 2023

Usage: These materials have been donated without restrictions on usage.

Processor: Simone Gillespie, December 2024

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### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Born in 1927 in Berrysburg, PA, a small borough in Dauphin County, Richard Lamar Schlegel grew up in various small towns in Pennsylvania. When he graduated from Pennsylvania State University in 1949, he moved to Washington, D.C. where he pursued a master's degree and later took a job in the federal government. However, his career ended in 1961 when he was fired for "immoral and indecent conduct" after being followed by secret investigators who investigated his personal life. Schlegel appealed his case, *Schlegel vs. the United States*, which went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court but was refused a hearing.

Schlegel then returned to Pennsylvania, and once back, sent his resume to the Governor's Office of Administration, Bureau of Personnel in Harrisburg. He was hired as Director of Finance for the Department of Highways (now referred to as Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, or PennDOT). Schlegel started a small chapter of the Janus Society in Harrisburg by recruiting a small membership and opening a post office box to communicate with the larger Janus Society in Philadelphia. This is believed to be the first gay organization created in central Pennsylvania. Yet, what happened in D.C. occurred again in Harrisburg, and Schlegel was fired from his state position in 1965 after a postal inspector told his

state government superiors about the post office box. After this, Schlegel moved to Philadelphia. He later retired to his parents' home in Lewisburg, PA. He passed away February 26, 2006.

LGBTQ+ activists and community members have repeatedly attempted to get Schlegel the recognition he deserves as a LGBTQ+ rights pioneer. In 2020, Schlegel was nominated for a Historical Marker in Pennsylvania to mark the historic event of Schlegel taking his case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. The marker was approved and installed in Harrisburg near the Pennsylvania capitol, outside Schlegel's former home, in October 2021. After receiving complaints, chiefly from State Senator John DiSanto, the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission voted to remove the marker on June 1, 2022, less than a year after its placement.

### **COLLECTION DESCRIPTION**

This collection contains materials from various steps in the process of organizing, nominating, voting, approving, dedicating, and removing the Pennsylvania historical marker for Richard Schlegel. The materials include the completed nomination packet, design plans, reports, and records of the arguments made for and against keeping the historical marker.

### **COLLECTION INVENTORY**

#### **Series 1 Documents**

- 1.01 Historical Marker Nomination Form and Supplemental Information – Nov. 24, 2020
- 1.02 Historical Marker Lettering final design by Sewah Studios Inc.
- 1.03 Spreadsheet of Recommendations to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for Approval of Historical Markers Reviewed in 2021  
Article "Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Approves 23 New State Historical Markers"
- 1.04 Historical Marker Dedication Event Report – Oct. 2021  
Dedication Ceremony Program – Oct. 10, 2021
- 1.05 Emails and letters concerning retirement of Schlegel's historical marker – Jan. 5, 2022-  
Jul. 26, 2022