

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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# LAST CALL



**OUR 35TH ANNIVERSARY AND FINAL PRINT ISSUE**

## Thank You Windy City Times!

The course of the Windy City Times print edition over the last 35 years has mirrored our own involvement with the community, both as political activists and as real estate advisors.

Without fail, the Windy City Times has captured and memorialized the joys, the struggles, the pains, and the triumphs of our community - on both local and national levels. From parades and carefree happenings around town to events for LGBTQ-friendly politicians, the AIDS crisis and momentous Supreme Court decisions, WCT has always been a reliable and trusted source for information that matters to all of us.

And as the Windy City Times has grown, so have we and our family. On a personal level, our accomplishments, events, and business developments have always been covered thoughtfully and heartfully by the newspaper. And the Brad Lippitz Group is so proud to have been one of its strongest and most prominent advertisers for so many years.

As sad as we are to see the last of the print edition, we will always admire the drive, dedication, and respect for all members of the community afforded by the paper's publisher, Tracy Baim and all the editors, writers, photographers and staff. This is the essence of pride.

*With so much love and gratitude,  
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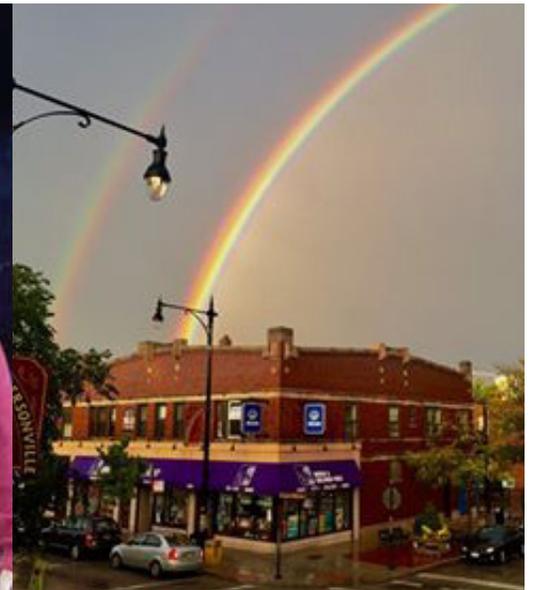
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Jan Dee with Tracy Baim, co-founder of Windy City Times



# WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BI, TRANS AND QUEER COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

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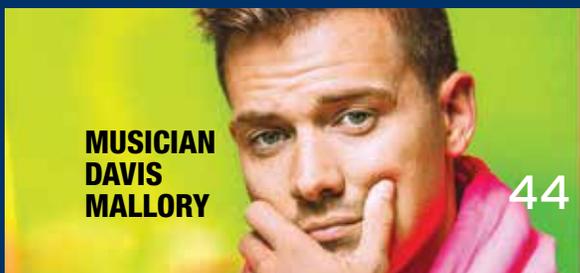


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# LGBTQI Media: The Long Haul



*Tracy Baim*

**TRACY  
BAIM**

Windy City Times  
Co-founder  
Started in 1985

**Top photo: Tracy Baim photographing  
July 1986 gay-rights rally at Daley  
Plaza, kneeling, front.**

Headshot by GlitterGuts Photography

Working in the LGBTQI press should probably be measured in dog years. Right-wing threats, death and destruction, physical assaults, robberies, property destruction, and that's not to mention the internal struggles within our great rainbow community—it all makes those years seem so much longer.

But while hundreds of reporters have come and gone through the years of “gay media” in Chicago, I feel very fortunate to have done this since 1984, one month out of journalism school. I had been doing newspapers since I was 10 years old, shadowing my mother, Joy Darrow, when she was managing editor of the Chicago Defender, creating a family newsletter, and then working on grammar-school, high-school and college newspapers, as well as starting my own feminist newsletter in college.

Still, when I graduated with a journalism degree from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, in May 1984, I assumed I would never have a career in journalism. I didn't think I could be an out lesbian and a reporter, so I readied myself for a typesetting career supplemented by activism and journalism—just as in college. I packed up my 1966 Mustang with all my college memorabilia and headed home to Chicago.

Within a few weeks, my mom heard about a part-time job at GayLife newspaper. I worked doing typesetting and some writing for it while also freelancing for the Chicago Tribune, where my stepdad Steve Pratt was a reporter and editor of the City Trib section. And to pay the bills, I was typesetting at night for an advertising firm. Given the low wages and lousy hours, attrition was a fact of life in the gay press. I moved up from editorial assistant to managing editor of GayLife in 12 months—in time for the June 1985 Pride edition.

I was really lucky to graduate when I did. There were a few dozen Chicagoans who had done the heavy lifting of gay journalism in the 1960s and 1970s, into the early 1980s. They started newspapers, radio shows and newsletters. They fought harassment, struggled to pay the bills and somehow created a thriving media world by the time I started at GayLife. My role models included Marie J. Kuda and William B. Kelley, who had reported in the 1960s for the Mattachine Midwest Newsletter, and Toni Armstrong

Jr. and Jorjet Harper, who were lesbian journalism pioneers.

By the summer of 1985, there were stirrings at GayLife. When a group left to start Windy City Times, I joined them as founding managing editor. I left again, 18 months later, to start Outlines newspaper, and then added subsequent sister publications over the years. I explain more about this history in the article on Windy City Times; what follows is a set of more-personal observations about my more than 36 years covering the LGBTQI community. It's a story of journalism and other near-death experiences. And all without even one cup of coffee.

## Bars, Bombs and Crises

Since there were so few pages in the gay newspapers, and of course no Internet, the power of the press in the 1980s was in choosing just what to cover. It was always a battle for space, and to this day there has never been an edition where we didn't have far too much to print. Making decisions on what to include, whom to cover and what photos to run was always difficult. A lot of what we were writing about was news briefs, AIDS developments and local organization events.

From the start, I was plunged deep into the gay and feminist communities. I covered Mountain Moving Coffeehouse for Womyn and Children, the Pride Parade, sports leagues, gay and lesbian business owners, gay bars and, most importantly, the growing AIDS crisis.

My first bylined cover story for GayLife was June 14, 1984, about a man arrested for placing 24 bombs in Chicago, claiming to be the “North American Central Gay Strike Force Against Public and Police Oppression.” He was a lone wolf, likely not gay. But I have to say that I did not even remember that story until recent years when I started to work on gay history projects, including co-writing and editing Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Community and launching [www.chicagogayhistory.org](http://www.chicagogayhistory.org). Having worked pretty much seven days a week—16-to-18-hour days—on LGBTQI news and issues for all these years, it's funny how little I remember of some of the actual stories. But the memories come flooding back when I page through those yellowing issues of the papers.

In that same GayLife issue, I also wrote about the closing of the Jane Addams feminist bookstore, after seven years in business. I took photos of the Pride Parade that month and covered the Proud to Run race.

My first major interview was with ex-Mormon Sonia Johnson, who was running a third-party race for U.S. president. My interview ran July 12, 1984, and she attacked even Geraldine Ferraro, who was the Democratic vice-presidential pick that year. (Johnson later came out as a lesbian.)

One article I wrote in the June 20, 1985, issue of GayLife led to a series of articles (including some at subsequent papers) on the anti-gay terror striking the University

Marro. Our news boxes were vandalized (dirty diapers being a favorite) and stolen. I was arrested covering an early-1990s Easter Sunday pro-choice demonstration at a right-wing church on the Northwest Side. The arrest and threats were never a deterrent—they usually were a motivator.

I also wrote a lot of editorials for GayLife and subsequent gay papers, but I was always most comfortable doing news articles and interviews. I did some fluff stories, business profiles, and lots of sports news since I played in the lesbian sports leagues, and I took thousands of photos a year. And because I am a pack rat for history, I have saved and scanned almost



Tracy Baim at age 13 and her mom Joy Darrow in 1976. Darrow was managing editor of the Chicago Defender at the time.

of Chicago and Hyde Park community. A right-wing newspaper, the Chicago Patriot, had been published by students and included offensive remarks about AIDS, gays, investment in South Africa and more. Later, when I worked on related stories about events at the U of C, and actual anti-gay attacks, I received phone calls at home threatening my life if I continued to cover the stories.

Of course, I continued investigating the stories, but I was scared. In later years, we received threats, usually through the mail, including some suspicious powder soon after the September 11, 2001, terrorism attacks. We also were robbed of all our computers, suffered additional robberies and even had our windows shot at (when we were not there). Our website was under constant attack, defended by Martie

every press release and photo—including those by other photographers. The Chicago Public Library now has a lot of our original photos and documents.

Once I made the move to Windy City Times, I felt freer to explore all parts of the LGBTQI community. I had never felt constrained by GayLife Publisher Chuck Renslow, but Windy City Times soon had a larger advertising base and therefore more space to cover the community. It was all about the space.

Even though I was managing editor, at a small paper that means doing everything, including typesetting and delivery. I found that such chores kept me more interested than just doing writing or editing all day. The cover story of our first Windy City Times, on September 26, 1985, was

Turn to page 48

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# For Joe Biden, push relentlessly until Nov. 3

## STATEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL LGBT MEDIA ASSOCIATION

Among the many compelling reasons to make sure that Donald Trump and Mike Pence are not re-elected Nov. 3, perhaps the 27 most compelling are the transgender Americans—most of them trans women of color—known to have been murdered this year.

We needn't be simple-minded in making this argument. Trump and Pence did not pull the trigger, and those who did must, of course, bear the consequences for their horrific acts.

But the all-too-toxic environment which too many of our transgender siblings have endured in their lives has gotten immeasurably worse over the past four years.

For this reason and many more, in an historic move, the 12 newspapers of the National LGBT Media Association (NLGMA), which represents the nation's oldest and most established LGBTQ publications with a combined circulation of more than one million readers, are issuing this joint endorsement of the Joe Biden/ Kamala Harris ticket this week.

From the start, Donald Trump has used the trans community as a punching bag to prove his toughness to his socially conservative base hungry for a strongman willing to turn back the clock. He has denied trans folks the ability to serve openly in the military, sought to strip them of nondiscrimination protections in healthcare, worked to rob trans youth of dignity in their schools, and battled to take away the right of student athletes to compete in sports.

And against the trans community as well as lesbian, gay, and bisexual Americans, Trump's administration fought tooth and nail to prevent the pivotal advance we won at the Supreme Court in June—the recognition that we enjoy employment nondiscrimination protections thanks to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Still, Trump and his see-no-evil GOP Senate allies refuse to move the Equality Act, which would extend those nondiscrimination protections across the board in areas like housing and public accommodations. For them, the nation's most embattled minority are bigots who want to enshrine their right to discriminate under the cloak of "religious liberty."

As in every other aspect of this endorsement, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris offer a stark and redemptive alternative.

After Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell denied President Barack Obama federal judicial appointments in his last year in office, he and his colleagues have rubber-stamped an unprecedented number of judges—many of them viciously right-wing, others lacking in even the most elementary judicial qualifications—whose influence will last for decades to come. The cornerstone decision in protecting reproductive freedom—*Roe v. Wade*—may already be doomed by the Trump court's configuration. Give him another chance or

two to name a member to the high court and the ball game will definitely be over.

Trump's governing has been much like his court appointments—where he is not cruel, he is merely incompetent. Mexican and other Latin American immigrants have been slurred in overtly racist terms, and their children have been caged. Muslim newcomers to America have also been stigmatized where they have not been blocked outright. The damage is not limited to the newcomers. Latinx and Muslim-American citizens have faced increasing levels of hostility and hate crimes.

Trump saw "very fine people, on both sides" during the 2017 neo-Nazi invasion of Charlottesville, but he's been snide in reacting to the Black Lives Matter movement, telling Bob Woodward, in response to a question about why he can't bring himself to empathize with African-American citizens, "You, you really drank the Kool-Aid, didn't you?"

The coronavirus' most recent surge—in the Midwest—and the wild fires raging through wide swaths of the West are only the most calamitous indicators of Trump's refusal to accept the basic facts of science, a posture at one with his hostility to fact-based discourse on almost any public policy issue. It's no surprise that the nation's free press and the unfettered right of Americans to vote—the twin jewels of American democracy—are, in his mind, enemies of the people.

Meanwhile, Trump is most at ease with fellow authoritarian figures around the globe, whether Russia's Putin, North Korea's Kim, Turkey's Erdogan or Brazil's Bolsonaro.

Since Hillary Clinton lost the presidency in 2016 even while winning almost three million more votes than Trump, the Democratic Party has undergone an internal battle of sorts for its soul,

## Trans candidate McBride makes history—again

Sarah McBride—who, in 2016, was the first openly transgender person to address the Democratic National Convention—made history again with a primary victory, setting her up for her likely win as the highest-ranking openly transgender legislator in the United States, The Washington Blade noted.

According to a Human Rights Campaign (HRC) statement Windy City Times obtained, McBride—national press secretary for HRC—won the Democratic primary for Delaware's 1st state Senate District on Sept. 15.

HRC President Alphonso David said, in part, "Sarah is no stranger to making history. As the first transgender speaker at a national party convention, Sarah spoke for a community long



Former Vice President Joe Biden.  
Photo by Tim Carroll Photography

pitting insurgent, left-leaning candidates, many of them young newcomers, against more moderate establishment figures—on issues from racial justice to healthcare policy, economic inequality, and climate change action. Those are all areas on which debate is legitimate, indeed needed.

But here's the thing: With four more years of Trump, there is no real consequential venue for having those debates. Trump and his enablers are draining the oxygen out of our democracy. Debating between left and center in the House of Representatives is no substitute for regaining the White House and the Senate. Only then can we have our debates, lick our wounds, and set a

course for a better tomorrow. This election will be decided in a small number of states—perhaps as many as a dozen, more likely just a handful. In all of the battleground states, LGBTQ activists and our progressive allies are on the ground working to elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. Especially in a year when much of the campaign will be carried out on the air and on-line rather than in person, all of us—everywhere across the nation—can pitch in to help in those states where a boost for Biden is most needed.

Grab a bucket, adopt a state and dive in to the battle. None of us should wake up Nov. 4 wishing we had done more.

ignored and pushed to the sidelines. As the first transgender person to work at the White House, she spoke truth to power advocating for her community in halls that were unfamiliar to anyone similar to her. Next year, as the first transgender state senator in our nation, Sarah will show that any child can achieve their dream, no matter their gender identity or sexual orientation.

"While we will be sad to lose her as a staff member at the Human Rights Campaign, we are overjoyed to have been a piece of her story. Congratulations, Sarah."

—Andrew Davis

## Carey stepping down as Task Force director in 2021

On Sept. 23, the National LGBTQ Task Force announced that longtime Executive Director

Rea Carey will be stepping down in early 2021.

Carey has been with the organization since 2003 as a senior strategist, then deputy executive director, becoming executive director in 2008. The Board of Directors has unanimously selected Kierra Johnson, who has served as deputy executive director since 2018, as its next executive director beginning Feb. 1, 2021.

Johnson will become the first Black executive director of the Task Force.

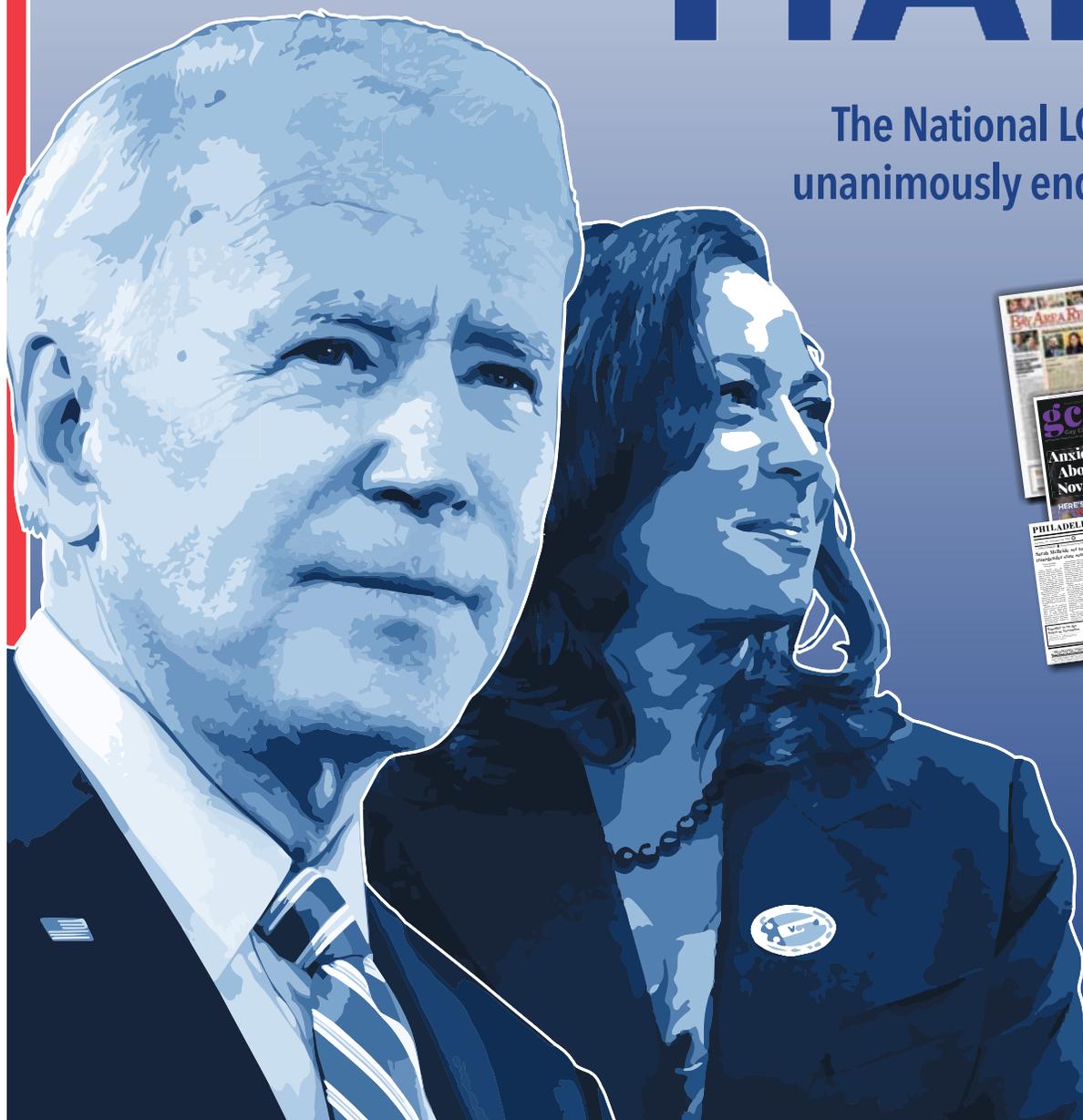
On her departure, Carey said in a statement, "From overturning discriminatory policies and passing LGBTQ inclusive laws to celebrating marriage at the Supreme Court, to being arrested alongside immigration activists, to the energy of our Creating Change Conferences, it has been a remarkable ride. Just to be alive during a time of such progress over the last many years has been astounding, and to serve the LGBTQ community in my 17 years at the National LGBTQ Task Force has been the joy and honor of a lifetime."

**WINDY CITY TIMES**

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BI, TRANS AND QUEER COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

# WE BACK BIDEN HARRIS

The National LGBT Media Association  
unanimously endorses Democratic ticket.



# Gay business owner/ nightlife figure Bob Yeaworth dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Gay business owner and promoter Robert “Bob” Yeaworth died Sept. 14 from complications due to his ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease) diagnosis. He was 64.

Yeaworth was born Sept. 17, 1955 in Cincinnati, Ohio, and graduated from that city’s Anderson High School. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in industrial design and MBA from the University of Cincinnati. Yeaworth worked in museum design and advanced applications consulting for Herman Miller, Inc.

Among Yeaworth’s many design clients were Bradbury Science Museum at Los Alamos National Laboratory, McDonald’s, IBM, Motorola, ComEd and Bank of Montreal.

Alongside his former business and romantic partner the late Samuel Davis Jr., Yeaworth operated several successful Chicago businesses, including Newbury Muffins and Grand Seafood Grill as well as entertainment venues Deeks Nightclub, Pangea and, in 1990, The Clubhouse—which, for several years, was Chicago’s foremost Black LGBT dance venue.

When The Clubhouse was sold in 1996, Yeaworth founded Clubhouse Productions. Among the many events The Clubhouse produced were the URBANO Blatino LGBT Pride parties at Fantasy (formerly Circuit) Nightclub and SX CHICAGO at Hydrate (formerly Manhole) and The Den.

Additionally, Yeaworth and Davis created and produced the original annual Belmont Harbor “Rocks” party, which was the Pride Parade’s after-party for many years until it ceased operations in 1997.

In 2017, Yeaworth and his business partner Warren Berger opened Club Escape on Chicago’s South Side because they wanted to bring entertainment to the LGBT community in that area of the city. Club Escape partnered with House of Tut Production to produce Saturday Night “Mz. Ruff and Stuff’s Show of Illusion” among other themed night events.

Yeaworth and his longtime life partner Daniel Bekoe met in 2003 and have spent 17 years together here in Chicago and traveling the world creating many memories with family.

He was preceded in death by his father James T. Yeaworth Sr. He is survived by Bekoe, their sons Martin and Manuel Bekoe, his mother Dr. Rosalee C. Yeaworth, brother James T. Yeaworth Jr., sister Susan E. Clarke (Kirby), niece Jessica Bentley (Michael), niece Dr. Nicole Dyer (Dustin), nephew Brett Clarke (Stephanie), many great nieces and nephews and countless chosen family members and friends.

“How can the dead be truly dead when they still live in the souls of those who are left behind?” Bekoe asked. “The journey does not end here. Death is just another path, one that we all must take. How lucky am I to have something

that makes saying goodbye so hard. To me, you were more than just a person. You were a place where I finally felt at home and will be forever my love, Bob.”

“To My Favorite Uncle Bob,” said Dyer. “What more is there to say? Like so many others whose lives you have impacted, you have set such an example for me. You were always there to listen with an open mind and provide wisdom with a level of experience that I would only come to know with time. From telling me what drinks to order at the bar to sound sophisticated (martini straight up dry with a twist), to serenading only me with my favorite Boys II Men song once everyone left the room, to teaching me how to love someone who saw the world so differently than myself, I am so thankful for all our times together.

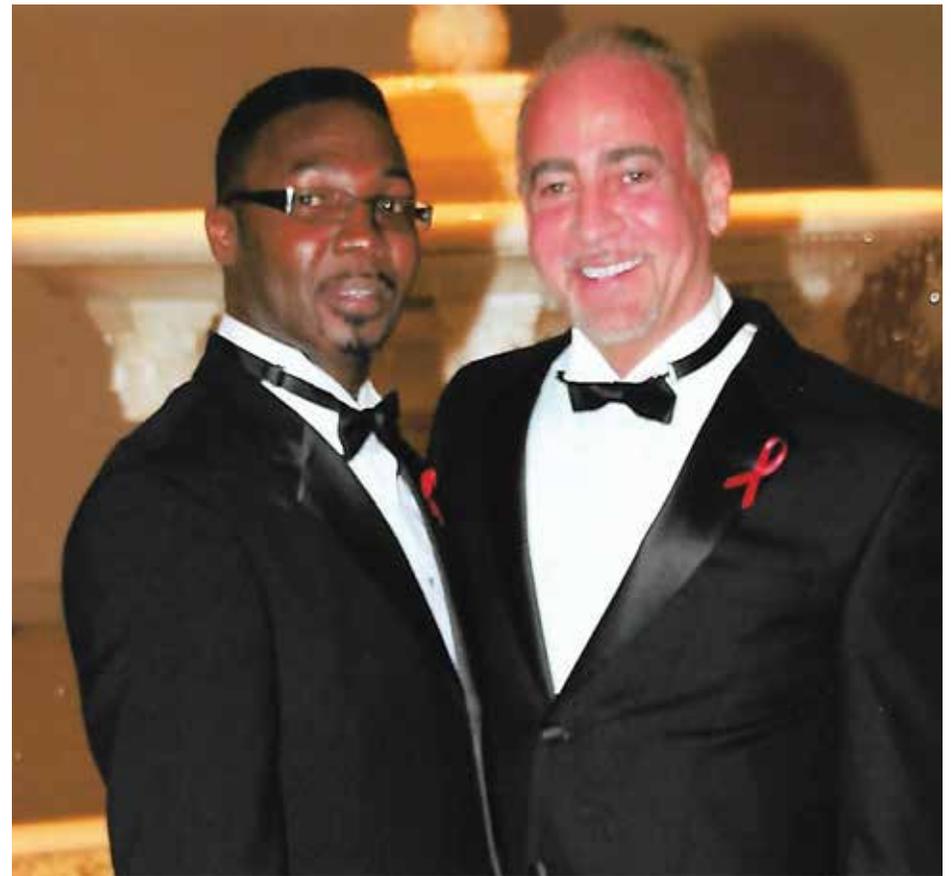
“In 2017, the diagnosis of ALS was devastating, but in some ways I am grateful because it brought me back to Chicago. During this time; I got to see you in action, realize all those you impacted, and truly see your mission in serving the Blatino LGBT community and those impacted by HIV/AIDS. To me, you have always been a celebrity. I am so lucky to have been able to spend so much time with you and to care for you along this journey. Love always, Nikki.”

“Remember: If you do not follow your dreams you will never know what is on the top of the mountain,” said longtime friend and self-described “Chicago’s Heavy Diva,” Otis Mack. “I learned what it meant to follow my dreams from Bob. He was a kind spirited and soft spoken business man and guru promoter. Bob knew what he wanted and how he wanted it executed. Bob gave me the opportunity of a lifetime. It is because of Bob that I had a platform to create my lifelong dream as a host, comedian, entertainer and promoter.

“Bob and Sam hired me to host their weekly Monday night show at The Clubhouse which went on to be one of the longest running and most successful entertainment a drag shows in the city. The stage was graced by some of the best of the best, including Flame Monroe, Grace Jones, Barbara Tucker and Jamie Principal. I am who I am because of Bob giving me a chance. Thank you for being a friend.”

“When it came down to his businesses, Bob was fierce and always got the job done,” said longtime friend Thomas “Tut” Hunt. “For me personally, he was a genuine and loving. He spoke to everyone about everything. Bob’s humor was very quick and sharp and he never missed a beat. I will miss the long conversations about myriads of topics and the great laughs we shared.”

“Entrepreneur, community advocate, promoter and friend—Bob was a man who put his energy and time into securing social outlets and entertainment for the African and Latin American same gender loving members or Chicago’s LGBTQ com-



From left: Danny Bekoe and Bob Yeaworth.  
Photo by Darren Calhoun

munity,” said longtime friend Charles Nelson.

“From the early days of our friendship, Bob has been a champion for HIV education and prevention. He was also a personal supporter of many campaigns, activations and intervention from the beginning of Chicago Black SGL-LGBTQ Pride and many Chicago LGBTQ institutions.

“We not only lost a friend but also lost a man who contributed much to the history and visibility of same gender loving men and women in

Chicago and we must never forget what he did to affect positive change. I will always miss him and the friendship we had.”

A memorial service is pending, due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on large gatherings.

Donations can be made in memory of Yeaworth to the South Side Help Center [southsidehelp.org/](https://southsidehelp.org/) and/or directly to the family with a check payable to Daniel Bekoe, c/o Cremation Society of Illinois, 736 West Addison St. Chicago, IL 60613.

## PASSAGES

### Wayland D. Rogers

Wayland D. Rogers—a singer, conductor, teacher and celebrated composer based in Chicago—passed away Sept. 9 after a long illness. He was 78.

Rogers was born to Othal and Dova (Barrier) Rogers on Dec. 26, 1941, in Wayne County, Kentucky. He was the youngest brother of Lucille Eads (deceased), Inadene Tatum (deceased), Alice Van Hook (deceased), O.D. Rogers, Jr. and Harold Rogers.

He was artistic director/conductor of The Camerata Singers of Lake Forest for 15 years and music director at North Shore Unitarian Church (Deerfield, Illinois) for 25 years. He held faculty appointments at Northwestern, DePaul, Loyola (Chicago), North Park, Western Kentucky and Lambuth universities as well as the Music Institute of Chicago. In 1986, Wayland received a Grammy nomination for best

chamber music award in a recording of Mozart with the Chicago Symphony Winds and was inducted into the Wayne County High School Hall of Fame in 2004.

Wayland is survived by brothers O.D and Harold Rogers and a host of adoring nieces and nephews. Celebrations of Wayland’s life will be held in Chicago and Lexington, Kentucky, once restrictions on large gatherings are lifted.

Gifts in memory of Wayland may be made to the North Shore Unitarian Church (Deerfield) for the Wayland Rogers Scholarship Fund and to the University of Kentucky School of Music Scholarship Fund for a scholarship in Wayland’s name. Please make checks payable to the University of Kentucky with Wayland Rogers memorial in the memo line. Mail to UK Philanthropy, 210 Malabu Dr., Ste 200, Lexington, KY 40502; or visit [UKY.networkforgood.com](https://UKY.networkforgood.com).

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# Former Northalsted bartender Eric Sangster dies at 37

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Northalsted bartender Eric Sangster died Sept. 17 unexpectedly at the age of 37. At the time of this article's publication, Sangster's cause of death is unknown.

Sangster was born June 4, 1983, on a Jacksonville, North Carolina, naval base. Due to his status as a "military brat," Sangster lived in Hawaii, Tennessee and California throughout his childhood. He moved to Chicago for college and received his BA from the now defunct International Academy of Design and Technology. After graduating college, Sangster worked in various retail and hospitality positions as well as real estate. He was also a bartender at various Halsted Street establishments, most notably at the Kit Kat Lounge and Supper Club.

Sangster moved to Miami a few years ago. According to his family, Sangster decided to move to California to be close to them due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He is survived by his beloved dog Dobbie, parents Michael and Theresa (Helton) Sangster; siblings Brandon (Monica), Brenton (Anastacia)

and Caitlin Sangster; second mother figure and aunt Lady Debra (Frank) Basso; sister figure and close cousin Christie Sawochka; nieces and nephews Nevaeh, River and Jameson; and countless chosen family members and friends.

"He was so funny and full of himself," said his mother, Theresa. "He thought he was all that and a bag of chips, and he was. He was my second son and I was hoping for a girl, but he was the sweetest little guy as a child and a hilarious sense of humor. He was always a bit sassy. The biggest impact he had on my life was when he was born and he literally broke my tailbone, and I tell everyone he came out kicking my ass, and he did throughout his life."

"He changed my life when he was born," said his father, Michael. "I most remember his smile and want people to remember his sense of humor."

"I remember when Eric graduated from college," said brother Brandon. "That was a huge milestone in his life, and from there, he grew to become very successful. He purchased a beautiful condo overlooking the area he lived in and had a great job and though this did not impact me



**Eric Sangster.**

Photo courtesy of Anthony Martinez

directly, it impacted my perception of my little brother.

"With Eric's growth and success he was a generous person who wanted to share his successes with everyone. I remember times going back home to Chicago and he would want to take me out and show me his world and treat me to all he had. One of my fondest memories with him was a night at the Kit Kat bar and he introduced me to all his friends and coworkers. He wanted to wine and dine his older brother. He did not have to do that, but he wanted to and this extended to everyone he loved and valued.

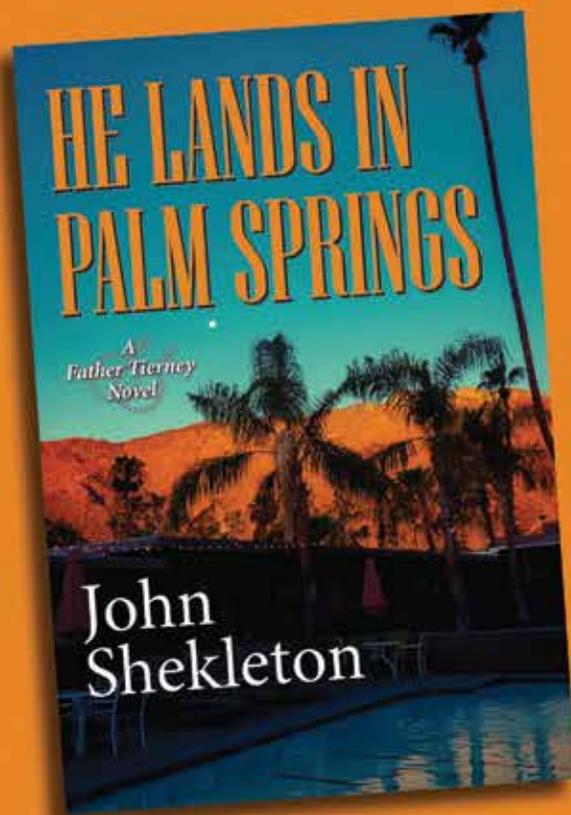
"Eric was part of my chosen family," said close friend and Civil Rights Agenda Founding Executive Director Anthony Martinez. "We were all part of a crew in our twenties that went out in what was formerly known as Boystown (now Northalsted) all of the time and danced, and had so much fun. We were always laughing. He was the person who would see someone down and do something funny or be the goofball to pick them up. We were both Gemini's so we would always joke about our Gemini power and how together we were unstoppable; and maybe a little kooky."

"Eric was an incredible guy," said Kit Kat owner and Sangster's former boss Ramesh Ariyanayakam. "He always had a smile on his face, was an extremely hard worker and was always working to better himself."

"Eric started at Kit Kat as a bartender," added Kit Kat Beverage Director Chuck Hart. "I had the pleasure and honor of training him and that is where we met and became friends. He was known throughout Chicago's LGBTQ community for always willing to lend a helping hand to any of the Northalsted businesses that needed it."

A memorial service will take place Thursday, Oct. 1, from 4-7 p.m. with a celebration of his life immediately following at Muzyka and Son Funeral Home, 5776 W. Lawrence Ave., in Chicago. Social distancing will be practiced and masks will be required for entrance to the service.

Donations in Sangster's name should be sent to his family via Zelle pay at [Therasas79@hotmail.com](mailto:Therasas79@hotmail.com). To send flowers or a memorial gift, visit [muzykafuneralhome.com/obituaries/Eric-Sangster/#!/Obituary](http://muzykafuneralhome.com/obituaries/Eric-Sangster/#!/Obituary).



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- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
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# Trump nominates Ginsburg successor—and LGBTQs react

BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

President Trump announced Sept. 26 his nominee to replace U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and, as expected, she is a jurist LGBTQ groups are expected to vehemently oppose.

In a crowded outdoor event at the White House, Trump said his nominee, federal appeals Judge Amy Coney Barrett, would receive a “very quick” confirmation.

Does this spell doom for existing protections for LGBTQ people under the law? Does it close the door to the Supreme Court for any future LGBTQ plaintiffs seeking their rights under the constitution? LGBTQ legal experts are both deeply concerned and somewhat confident.

Barrett comes to the nomination after serving just two years the Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, where she did not weigh in on any LGBTQ-related cases. However, in her years prior to that, as a professor at the University of Notre Dame School of Law, she signed onto a letter from Catholic Women supporting the church’s views on various issues, including that “marriage and family [are] founded on the indissoluble commitment of a man and a woman.”

During her 2017 confirmation process, one senator asked Barrett, via written questionnaire, how she could assure members of the LGBTQ community that she is committed to rendering decisions impartially and without bias or prejudice?

Barrett responded: “I do not think it lawful for a judge to impose personal opinions, from whatever source they derive, upon the law. If confirmed, I will apply the law faithfully and impartially in accordance with the judicial oath.”

“Do you agree that the church’s view regarding marriage as a union between a man and a woman is irrelevant to the legal question of the right of same-sex couples to marry?” asked U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) in the questionnaire.

Barrett responded with one word: “Yes.”

She then repeatedly stated that several important LGBTQ-related decisions at the Supreme Court were “binding precedent that I will faithfully follow if confirmed.” They included *Obergefell v. Hodges*, *U.S. v. Windsor*, and *Lawrence v. Texas*.

LGBTQ groups opposed Barrett’s nomination then. They said her views on civil-rights issues were “fundamentally at odds with the notion that LGBTQ people are entitled to equality, liberty, justice and dignity under the law.”

In a letter to then-Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Charles Grassley, 27 national and state LGBTQ groups said in 2017 that they were concerned that Barrett’s “religiously-infused moral beliefs would inform her judicial decision-making” on issues of specific interest to LGBTQ people. And they expressed alarm that Barrett had deliv-

ered a paid speech to the “most extreme anti-LGBT legal organization in the United States” (the Alliance Defending Freedom).

In reaction to news that Trump would nominate Barrett to U.S. Supreme Court, Lambda Legal issued a statement, saying, “Barrett will unleash a Supreme Court majority that is hostile to all of our basic civil rights, and the impact will be felt for decades.”

In the coming U.S. Supreme Court session, the court is set to hear *Fulton v. Philadelphia*, a case in which a Catholic adoption service wants the court to declare that it has a First Amendment right to violate a Philadelphia law against sexual orientation discrimination. And a Virginia school district is expected to appeal its loss in a case that tests whether Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act—which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education—prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

There is some optimism still around the Title IX case. That’s because, just last June, a six-to-three majority of the Supreme Court ruled that Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act—which prohibits job discrimination on the basis of sex—also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. That ruling, *Bostock v. Clayton County*, is expected to serve as precedent for the Title IX litigation, too.

While Ginsburg is gone now from that *Bostock* majority, Chief Justice John Roberts, who joined the majority opinion, and Justice Neil Gorsuch, who authored it, are still there.

And “because Justice Gorsuch’s opinion for the Court was so relentlessly textual,” said Stanford University Professor Pamela Karlan, who successfully argued the case for the gay employee in *Bostock*, “I don’t see the Court coming out the other way on Title IX’s coverage.”

Jon Davidson, former legal director for Lambda Legal and current chief counsel for Freedom for All Americans, agrees.

“That majority [in *Bostock*] also should agree that other federal laws prohibiting sex discrimination [including laws barring sex discrimination in education, housing, and credit] encompass discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity because the Supreme Court’s decision [in *Bostock*] did not rest on anything unique to the federal employment nondiscrimination, but rather on the correct conclusion that, as a general matter, one cannot discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity without discriminating based on sex.”

But Both Karlan and Davidson expressed concern for what the Supreme Court didn’t rule on last session: accommodating religious employers, such as the one in the Philadelphia case, set for oral argument Wed., Nov. 4.

“The outcome could have broad implications for the application of nondiscrimination laws and



Ruth Bader Ginsburg (left) and Amy Coney Barrett.

Photo of Ginsburg courtesy of the Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States; photo of Coney Barrett courtesy of the University of Notre Dame

government policies around the country,” said Davidson.

Davidson said he doesn’t think existing marriages of same-sex couples are at risk.

“Those who married same-sex partners after the *Obergefell* decision did so in compliance with the law at the time and have strong due process rights in not having those lawful marriages dissolved against their will,” said Davidson. “Whether a new justice will respect the precedent of *Obergefell* going forward, however, is of course of concern.”

But Jenny Pizer, senior counsel at Lambda Legal, noted that, even with the marriage ruling in favor of same-sex couples, “we still have had to continue fighting for family equality for LGBTQ people and their children.”

“For example, we are in court now fighting for two married same-sex couples whose daughters are being denied citizenship by the Trump administration even though the law is explicit that their American citizen parents’ being married entitles them to citizenship,” said Pizer.

And Barrett, said Pizer, “has been outspoken in her belief that same-sex couples do not have the same fundamental constitutional right to marry that different-sex couples have, and that the marriages of same-sex couples do not deserve legal respect.”

Barrett also wrote a law review article arguing that, while all Supreme Court decisions serve as precedent for lower court decisions and subsequent Supreme Court decisions, some are “super precedents” and others are more susceptible to change. Barrett’s super-precedent theory, said Pizer, “seems designed to create room for reconsidering and reversing precedents that justices do not consider ‘super.’”

Barrett is Trump’s third opportunity to select a Supreme Court justice. He previously nominated, and the Senate confirmed, two other federal appeals court judges to the Supreme Court: Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh. Gorsuch’s nomination was marred by the controversy that ensued

when Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to give consideration to then-President Obama’s nominee, Merrick Garland, even though Obama still had 11 months to go in his second term. McConnell left the seat open until after the 2016 presidential election and, because Trump won that election, the Republican president was given the opportunity to appoint the seat left open by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February 2016.

Kavanaugh’s confirmation was marred by controversy surrounding accusations that emerged following his nomination that he had sexually assaulted women. He denied those accusations, and the Republican-controlled Senate approved his nomination.

The Senate approved Gorsuch’s nomination by a vote of 54 to 45; it approved Kavanaugh 50-48.

Barrett’s nomination also begins in controversy: While McConnell claimed he couldn’t advance President Obama’s nominee because it was a presidential election year, he has promised to rush through Barrett’s nomination even though this, too, is a presidential election year.

McConnell has made clear he has to votes to confirm the nominee and that he intends to rush through that confirmation process ahead of the Nov. 3 presidential election.

President Trump said Saturday that Barrett “will defend the sacred principle of equal justice for citizens of every race, color, religion, and creed.”

Barrett professed “love” for the United States Constitution and said she is “mindful” of the legacy of Justice Ginsburg, whose seat she has been nominated to fill. Ginsburg died at age 87 on Sept. 18, following a long struggle with cancer.

Barrett noted that Ginsburg was good friends with Justice Antonin Scalia, for whom Barrett clerked, despite the fact that Ginsburg was one of the court’s most liberal jurists and Scalia one of its most conservative.

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# Gay history podcast has new host: Studs Terkel

BY JOSHUA IRVINE

For four years, Eric Marcus has been the voice of Making Gay History, introducing listeners to both the infamous and the overlooked of LGBTQ history through his extensive personal archive of audio interviews.

But for the podcast's eighth season, Marcus will cede interview duties to a more seasoned personality: the late Chicago broadcaster and friend of the LGBTQ+ community Studs Terkel (1912-2008).

For the latest season, Making Gay History has partnered with the Studs Terkel Radio Archive to produce eight episodes featuring Terkel's interviews with LGBTQ icons such as Lorraine Hansberry, Quentin Crisp and Jill Johnston. The first episode, featuring a 1977 interview with author Christopher Isherwood, debuts Oct. 1.

The extensive use of the audio archive is a first for the podcast, which has pulled most of its content from tape recordings made by Marcus while working on his 1992 oral history of the gay rights movement, Making History.

Recent seasons drew on outside sources for episodes featuring Baynard Rustin, Ernestine Eckstein and a 1970 interview with trans icons Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson. However, this season will be the first to pull entirely from someone else's archive.

Marcus will still introduce and close out each episode, but he plans to cede the majority of each episode's 20 minutes to interviewer and subject.

"My goal here is to introduce the episode, get out of the way and let Studs and his interviewee present themselves," Marcus said.

The season will also offer a new perspective on the history of LGBTQ persons. While Marcus' interviews were recorded entirely in the late 1980s and early 1990s and featured interviewees reflecting on the social upheaval of the past decades, Terkel's interviews were either recorded concurrent to or even predate the gay liberation movement. The earliest, with a then-26-year-old Hansberry, was recorded in 1959.

Marcus found many of these older interviews fascinating in the way their subjects reckoned with their identities in a pre-Stonewall environment. He singled out one episode featuring a "professional female impersonator" named Les-Lee, who Terkel interviewed in the performer's Paris club in 1967.

"To hear how Les-Lee talks about impersonation, about his personal life... He never mentions the word 'gay,' but it's clear that in talking about being different, he's talking about being gay," Marcus said.

Other interviews touch on world history in unexpected ways—like Isherwood's encounters in 1930s Berlin with Magnus Hirschfeld, a German sexologist later targeted in the Nazi book burnings.

It's unsurprising that many of Terkel's interviews feature LGBTQ persons: He was a longtime

ally of the community. In the 1940s, he ran the aldermanic campaign for his friend Pearl M. Hart, a civil rights lawyer who fought for gay victims of entrapment and harassment. He aired one of the first interviews with representatives from Mattachine Midwest, Chicago's first successful gay rights organization. A shortened version of that interview will appear on the new season.

A famous anecdote, included in Terkel's entry in the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, notes how in the 1970s Terkel came across a picket line outside an alderman's ward fair that had refused to include a gay organization's booth. Terkel spontaneously joined the picket line and then entered the fair, hosted by a local church, to denounce the exclusion of gays.



**Studs Terkel.**

Photo by Raeburn Flerlage

"He had a vested interest in those who were oppressed and those who were fighting for their voices," said Allison Schein Holmes, director of media archives at WTTW and WFMT, who distribute Terkel's tapes.

His leftist politics cost him his television show in the 1950s when he was blacklisted by U.S.

Sen. Joseph McCarthy, and the FBI kept an active dossier on Terkel for more than 40 years.

Terkel's oeuvre is partially responsible for Making Gay History. Making History, Marcus' book, was commissioned by an editor who told him he wanted an oral history like Terkel's 1974 account of working Americans, Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do.

Terkel later interviewed Marcus about Making History on the former's radio show and provided a quote for the book jacket.

Production is nearly wrapped on season eight, but the podcasters are already looking forward. Next, the podcasters aim to return the focus to Marcus as he documents the AIDS crisis from his perspective as a gay man living in New York in the 1980s. He pointed out he was now the same age or older than many of his interview subjects from 30 years previous.

That season is set to debut in June 2021, to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the New York Times' first article documenting what would become known as HIV/AIDS.



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# Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Facebook Live Oct. 13

The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame was founded in 1991 to honor people and entities, nominated by the community, who have made significant contributions to the quality of life or well-being of the LGBT community in Chicago.

The inductees for 2020 were selected from a slate of candidates submitted by Chicago's LGBT community. This year's individuals, organization, businesses and "Friends of the Community" (allies) inductees are as follows:

This year's induction ceremony will be a virtual one, and will be webcast Oct. 13, at 6:30 p.m., a press release announced. Dean Richards will emcee. The event will be live-streamed via Facebook Live.

## Individual nominees

**John Ademola Adewoye:** in recognition of his work in helping offer asylum and counseling to LGBT people from less welcoming environments such as Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe and for providing housing, connections and services to help them navigate their new world.

**Caprice Carthans:** in recognition for her work with many community agencies including AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago House, and Heartland Alliance as a transgender advocate.

**Dr. Raymond Crossman, PhD:** as the longest-serving LGBT university president in North America, Crossman helped pave the way for LGBT leaders in higher education. He co-founded LGBT Presidents in Higher Education and brought the first national conference for LGBT leaders in higher education to Chicago.

**Jay Paul Deratany:** recognized for his work as both a human rights lawyer providing volunteer legal services during the AIDS crisis and working with homeless youth and as a board member of Human Rights Watch, which provides support for international LGBT individuals fighting for their lives in countries that have the death penalty for the LGBT individuals.

**Ronald J. Ehemann:** for 40 years of activism in Chicago's LGBT community. In 1978 Ron Ehemann became one of Chicago's first openly gay attorneys, representing many of the city's bars and organizations. He co-founded Organization to Promote Equality Now (OPEN), Illinois' first gay/lesbian political action party as well as the Greater Chicago Gay & Lesbian Democrats. While doing all of this he helped raise money for community organizations and charities too numerous to mention.

**Denise Foy:** for her long history of service to Chicago's LGBT community. Beginning in 1993 when she served on the board of Horizons Community Services, fundraising to help establish The Center on Halsted. She was a founding member of the LGBT Community Fund at the Chicago Community Trust. She now serves on the national board of SAGE providing advocacy and services for LGBT elders.

**Dalila Fridi:** for 30 years of tireless work to advance the rights of LGBT people in Chicago. She has served as a grassroots organizer supporting marriage equality and political candidates who fight for equal rights for the LGBT community. Dalila has also been an advocate for LGBT rights among Chicago's Muslim community advocating for the understanding of intersectionality between Islam and LGBT rights.

**Terry Gaskins:** for documenting life and activism in Chicago's LGBT community through her services as a photographer and a humanitarian for more than 20 years. She is probably best known as the staff photographer for Gay Chicago Magazine, but she has also donated her time and talents to benefit numerous organizations within and beyond the LGBT community, including animal rights organizations.

**Joel Drake Johnson (posthumous):** was an award-winning, internationally produced Chicago playwright and teacher. He was nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award five times, Emmy nominated and was a member of the Pen America Center. His most commercial successful work, Ra-sheeda Speaking, opened off-Broadway and was nominated for an Outer Critics Circle Award for best new work.

**Steve Kulieke:** honored for breaking barriers while covering and advancing the struggle for civil rights equal justice for Chicago's LGBT community. Kulieke did groundbreaking work as a reporter and editor at Chicago's GayLife weekly newspaper from 1977 through 1982. Kulieke was not only at the center of action he was integral to the community's emergence as a social and political force. In the 1980s Kulieke gained recognition throughout the journalism world as the nation's first ever municipal press corps reporter representing an LGBT paper.

**Matt Stuczynski:** for his work in founding the Chicago chapter of GLSEN (Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network). He has been instrumental in LGBT visibility in schools throughout the Chicago area. Under his guidance, Chicago's GLSEN chapter became one of the most successful in the nation. The chapter donated innumerable amounts of LGBT friendly educational materials to the Chicago Public Schools as well as spearheaded protections an inclusive language in the Chicago Teachers Union and Chicago Public School governance.

**Michelle Zacarias:** for more than a decade of work as a queer, disabled, Latina organizer, she has facilitated social justice, anti-oppression, and LGBT movement work as one of four founding members of the Trans Liberation Collective (TLC), a coalition that formed after the anti-transgender bathroom bills swept the nation in 2017. Michelle continues to positively impact queer communities in her role as a board member of The Brave Space Alliance, a black and brown trans-run non-profit on Chicago's south side, and



This year's inductees include (from left) Ron Ehemann, Caprice Carthans and Dalila Fridi. Ehemann and Carthans photo by Matt Simonette; Fridi photo by Kat Fitzgerald.

through her disability-centered community care workshops.

In addition to recognizing the extraordinary achievements of individuals, the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame also honored one LGBT organization and two businesses as well as three allies, dubbed "Friends of the Community"

## The organization and businesses inducted are:

**The Legacy Project:** an award-winning cultural and educational non-profit dedicated to researching and promoting the contributions LGBT people have made to world history and culture. The Legacy Walk is the only outdoor LGBT museum walk in the world. It spans one-half mile of North Halsted Street. It is anchored by 20 two-story tall steel architectural pylons which feature forty 18" x 24" bronze memorials highlighting the contributions of LGBT people. The Legacy Walk was declared an historic landmark in 2019. In addition, the Legacy Project has developed an LGBT inclusive curriculum and offers a traveling exhibit of LGBT history.

**Windy City Times:** since its inception in 1985, under then publisher Jeff McCourt, through the current incarnation with publishers Tracy Baim and Terri Klinsky, Windy City Times has functioned as Chicago's premiere news source for the LGBTQ community. The award-winning publication recently converted to a digital-only format.

**Women & Children First Bookstore:** since it opened in 1979, Women & Children First has been Chicago's premiere feminist independent bookstore. As dozens of other bookstores closed during the 90s and 2000s Women & Children First has grown to be one of the largest feminist bookstores in the country stocking more than 30,000 books by and about women, children's books, and the best LGBT literature.

## "Friend of the Community," ally inductees include:

**Judy Baar Topinka (posthumous):** for her support of LGBT causes when it was politically risky for anyone, Democrat or Republican, to be associated with the movement. The fact that she did so as a Republican showed an incredible amount of political courage. She supported the Illinois' Marriage Equality Bill and during the Nov. 20, 2013 ceremony at the University of Illinois at Chicago, when the state's marriage equality bill was signed into law, Judy Baar Topinka was the only Republican speaker at the event. Judy Baar Topinka was "a consistent and firm supporter of gay rights. Even when attacked by members of her own party for her gay rights support, she never wavered." She was truly a friend of the LGBTQ community.

**Brenetta Howell Barrett:** honored for her work in the fight for civic and economic rights on Chicago's west side, since the 1960s and for her commitment to addressing homophobia and lack of access to resources in the community. She is notable for her inclusion of the LGBT community in all her endeavors. She has worked with public officials and faith-based community groups to bring greater awareness and resources in the fight against HIV/AIDS, helping reduce the stigma, and fostered greater acceptance. Barrett's commitment to fighting homophobia continues as she enters her 87th year.

**The National Museum of Mexican Art:** for the inclusivity of its mission since it opened its doors in 1987. The NMMA has made it possible for Latinx within a cultural context to celebrate their full identity. The programming at NMMA has always intentionally included LGBT artists and performers, programming and displays.

Founded in 1991 as the Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame, the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame's purpose then, as now, is to honor people and entities, nominated by the community, who have made significant contributions to the quality of life or well-being of the LGBT community in Chicago. It is the first city-sponsored hall of fame dedicated to LGBT people, organizations and community in the United States.

The new inductees to the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame were selected from a slate of candidates submitted by Chicago's LGBT community. That slate of candidates was then reviewed by a selection committee comprised of individual inductees to the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame.

The first Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame ceremony took place during Pride Week and was held at Chicago City Hall. Mayor Richard M. Daley hosted the ceremony and afterwards, photos of the inductees were displayed in City Hall. The Hall of Fame has no physical facility but maintains a website, which allows anyone to visit the Hall of Fame at any time. Traditionally, the City of Chicago has displayed the Hall of Fame materials during induction periods, Pride and in October, Gay & Lesbian History Month.

From its founding in 1991 until 2016 the Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame relied on support from the City of Chicago. The city ceased funding the Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2016, at that time, it was rechristened the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame and has since been supported and maintained by the Friends of the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, a 501c3 not-for-profit organization, with approval from the City of Chicago.

For more information, visit the organization's web site [chicagolgbthalloffame.org/](http://chicagolgbthalloffame.org/) or its Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/groups/56108152083/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/56108152083/).

# Lendale Johnson Excelling on and off the tennis court

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Some would say that Lendale Johnson has accomplished enough in being the first male openly gay professional tennis player. (He's part of the International Tennis Federation. It is separate from the Association of Tennis Professionals—which has figures such as Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic—but has thousands of players, nonetheless.)

However, the Chicago native is also an actor, model, reality-show figure (with his upcoming *Deuces* and *Love*) and director of The Johnson High Performance Tennis Academy (which has a branches in the Windy City, New York City and New Jersey).

**Windy City Times: How are you doing with this pandemic living?**

Lendale Johnson: It's been pretty challenging, emotionally. It's not just because of the Black Lives Matter movement, although just being a Black man during these times is difficult. The tennis academy has been really hot now, so that's good; everyone's keen to get outside and get fit.

Things are okay, but they could be better, obvi-

ously. I've had some pretty big heartbreaks this year. I've had some friends and family members who've passed away; there's been so much death this year.

**WCT: So much has happened, and we still have an election to go. Could you give the readers a little background about yourself? I know you were born in Kalamazoo [Michigan], but I don't know if you grew up there as well, even though you were also in Chicago.**

LJ: It was, like, half-Kalamazoo and half-Chicago. My family's from Chicago, and I feel like Chicago was [pivotal] for a lot of things, such as tennis. I got my first cover and my first acting gig [an appearance on the TV show *Empire*] in Chicago. That city has been a foundation for my success, and New York City has helped even more.

With *Empire*, I had a huge interview on Fox News. People recognized me in public; I couldn't take the subway for a while. [Laughs] People would say, "Hey, *Empire*!"

**WCT: What are your thoughts about the U.S. Open tennis tournament—about how it went, Djokovic [who was disqualified for accidentally hitting a line judge with a tennis ball], etc.?**



**Lendale Johnson.**

Photo by Al Cooley

LJ: Regarding them making it safe for players, I thought it was great. However, I don't agree with some things that happened. There was some controversy about Novak, but I think they threw him under the bus. I think if it had been Roger

Federer, they would not have done that. Let's be real: A lot of people don't like Novak because he's been beating their favorite players.

Also, Novak and [player Vasek] Pospisil and other players are trying to form their own group [the Professional Tennis Players Association]. Tennis players get [a low] percent of what's made off the top; the rest goes to organizers and others. Players are sick of it; you really don't make much money unless you break into the top 500. The top players get a check for just being in a tournament; some people don't know that.

So I think because of that, people went after Novak. Maybe he could've gotten a game taken away or a gotten a warning. But the other players got an opportunity, and there's an extra \$6 million put in the prize-money pool. That's awesome. [Laughs]

**WCT: Why do you think more male tennis players have not come out?**

LJ: I really feel like it's an American issue, a little bit. Being gay is taboo in the sports world. In individual sports, especially, it's really tough. If it's like the NBA or NFL, I think there would be at least a few teammates who say, "I support you."

There's also internalized homophobia within the system—decision-makers and organizers. All of that happens behind closed doors, and you don't know what happens. Sponsorship makes and breaks you, and there are ratings to think about. That's a reality—and I think it's a bigger issue on the men's side. You're supposed to be manly and not cry.

**Read the entire interview with Lendale Johnson at [WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://WindyCityMediaGroup.com).**

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Restoration • Preservation • Fabrication

# Brad Edwards talks investigative journalism, coming out, making history

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Television journalist Brad Edwards has accomplished much in his life, such as winning multiple awards and including serving on the board of directors at the YWCA, whose goal is to “empower women and eliminate racism.” However, there’s one achievement that’s especially noteworthy—especially with this newspaper’s readers: He is the first out member of the LGBTQ community who’s anchoring a Chicago nighttime newscast (at 5, 6 and 10 p.m. on the local CBS affiliate, which is the fastest growing newscast at the latter time slot for 12 consecutive months).

In a wide-ranging interview, Edwards talked with Windy City Times about everything from coming out to dating ABC News meteorologist Ginger Zee to having a passion for investigative journalism.

**Windy City Times: I’ll start with more of a general question: Of course you’re supposed to be objective when delivering the news, how hard is to resist sometimes putting in your own two cents?**

Brad Edwards: That’s a good question. I think we do now, at CBS 2, have a bit of an opinion—a bit of an attitude. But it’s neither right nor left, politically; it’s right in that it’s correct. We lean [toward] what should happen and what’s just.

An example was when we found out Chicago police were consistently raiding the wrong homes. We did stories on that—and reported that the cops were putting guns to children’s heads when the people they were looking for were already in prison. They were mind-blowing gaffes by the Chicago police. We did that story to the point where there is now new legislation, and where we won the Peabody Award—the gold standard of journalism. So the opinion was “[These raids] shouldn’t be happening.”

**WCT: And is that why investigative journalism is so important to you?**

BE: Ah! To me, if you’re not using the microphone as an apparatus of accountability, you ain’t doing it right. If you’re not giving voice to the voiceless, if you’re not trying to right wrongs, change policies or better communities, then why even take it up?

By the way, there’s something that’s so great about this job. It wasn’t just an anchor change that happened [last year]; it was a change in how we approach the news. It’s data-heavy, FOIA-heavy and source-heavy. If you just want to see what happened throughout the day, you can watch one of the other channels; we’re aggressively uncovering news.

I enjoy anchoring our news because I like watching our news. There’s not a lot of news I enjoy watching.

**WCT: You’re the first openly gay local nighttime news anchor. Do you feel any pressure to be a role model, or is there any weight with**

**that designation?**

BE: That’s a really good question. [Actually,] I do. When you’re the first in anything, there is certainly an added pressure to succeed—and I feel that pressure, and I put that pressure on myself. That being said, it’s almost exacerbated because I never thought I’d have this large a role. Growing up in conservative western Michigan, I never allowed myself to dream this big.

When you’re gay growing up in the era I did [Edwards is 41], it was certainly better than the era before—the rule of the land, instituted by a Democratic president [Bill Clinton] was “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” That means “stay in the closet,” so you had to downgrade your dreams accordingly. I loved watching the news and 60 Minutes, but they painted a bleak picture of being gay in the ‘80s and ‘90s. They were letting gays die in California. Ryan White—who wasn’t gay—had our disease: AIDS; what they did to poor kid in his hometown of Kokomo, Indiana. And then there was [serial killer] Jeffrey Dahmer—how those stories being portrayed. With TV being my window to the world, it was a bleak, bleak place.

We still have a long way to go. There weren’t kids who were out back then. I had a truly remarkable coming-out experience but as a kid—when nobody knows you’re gay, and you’re not sure yourself—certain things can invalidate you. [There were] grown men saying the f-word and people you admire telling gay jokes. It’s constant invalidation that leads you to recalibrate your expectations for life—and my expectations were certainly not this [where I am now].

I look at some of the gay men in our community—the Stonewall generation and the AIDS generation—and I bow to them. I am a nighttime gay anchor in Chicago, and the first—but it’s not a big deal in Chicago, and it should be. However, many gay journalists reach out to me, and it’s surreal. I certainly don’t think of myself as a trailblazer, per se, but hopefully it is blazing a trail to equality.

America is going through a remarkable reconciliation with its past, and maybe I’m just a little part of that. But the key is the work, the content. To me, my work and my belief in investigative journalism come from having a chip on my shoulder; you’re damn right I have a chip on my shoulder, although I had a great coming-out experience. I came out to my mom and dad, and my dad hugged me; I went back to college and changed my major to journalism—and now I’m here. I was going to be a teacher; I was going to hide behind books, articles and the history of English, wondering how things would’ve been if I had been a journalist. So many LGBTQ people haven’t had that opportunity.

**WCT: Were your parents the first people you came out to?**

BE: No; I first came out to the girlfriend of my best friend in high school. The second person



Brad Edwards.

Photo courtesy of CBS Chicago

I came out to was my brother. He let me know things were going to be safe.

**WCT: So when you dated Ginger Zee, where were you in terms of...**

BE: I was out. I identify as gay, but I also believe that sexuality isn’t binary. I fell in love with a woman, you know.

**WCT: I do believe that sexuality is a spectrum.**

BE: Yeah. Anyone who judges anyone else within our group, shame on them. But, yes, I’m gay and I dated Ginger—and now we’re best friends.

**WCT: I also saw what Ginger said about her suicide attempts, and that must’ve hit you pretty hard.**

BE: That was actually our bond. We both struggled with mental illness: anxiety, depression, body issues. Mental-health issues were stigmatized a lot back then. We were open about those things with each other and it blossomed into a relationship. Ginger is my biggest advocate now; we still talk a lot.

I don’t know anyone who’s gay who hasn’t struggled, whether it’s depression, anxiety, addiction, body dysmorphia or something else. Hopefully, as America reconciles with where we are, things will change regarding stigmatization.

**WCT: When you recently talked with the Chicago Tribune, you disclosed that you are battling LGL [large granular lymphocytic] leukemia. How are you doing?**

BE: It’s a really rare blood cancer. In 2017, I got really sick and lethargic; luckily, I had the best doctor in the world. By the end, he took gallons of blood out of me to find out what was going on. Finally, it turned out it was the really rare leukemia; a bone-marrow biopsy at the University of Chicago confirmed it.

Thankfully, I’m doing well—I couldn’t be bet-

ter. It’s chronic, so it’s a long fight. I do a lot of cardio and I eat right Monday through Friday, and I’m on a regimen of medications, so you’d never know. It forced me to get really serious about my health. If we can keep it at bay through what we know works ... it’s a long time.

**WCT: I want to go back to journalism for a second. There’s a question I occasionally ask people but I especially wanted to ask you because you are a journalist: If you could ask the current president one question—and be guaranteed to get the truth—what would that question be?**

BE: [Long pause] That’s such a good question. Well, our president is not that different from a lot of Illinois politicians. Sometimes, the first thing I want to do is put them under oath, and then interrogate them for hours.

First, I would ask a lot of Illinois politicians if I could put them under oath. If the answer is “yes,” I’d ask a thousand more questions. One of the questions I would ask Trump is “What’s in those tax returns?” When someone puts up a monumental fight to not disclose something that’s there—for years now—I’d like to know what’s happening. It may all be innocent; he may be doing this on principle. [Note: The New York Times, on Sept. 27, published a report claiming Trump paid only \$750 in personal federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017, and he paid no income taxes in 10 of the previous 15 years.]

**WCT: What would you say is the high point for you so far in your career?**

BE: There are a couple of them. There was a woman named Marabel, in Detroit. She called me and was literally crying for help because she was the last one who was about to go on the street; she didn’t want to move out. We did so many stories on her, and eventually there was a half-hour special. She never moved out; she died. When she went to the morgue and I lost track of her. Then I got a call from a source at the Wayne County morgue—saying that no one had claimed her body. Following that story, we got her body claimed and buried. Then there was a fast-tracking of money to improve that morgue—and it started with one woman’s call to me.

I have no interest in interviewing stars or big-name politicians. I want to shine a spotlight on the downtrodden, like Marabel in Detroit; Shirley [Bennett] and the shack; and Rodney, the cabbie. Shirley was living in a shack near the Cook County Jail; because of the story, she was reunited with the daughter she hadn’t seen in a quarter-century. I fought like hell to tell that story.

I feel like I’m a conduit—like this is my calling.

**WCT: October is National Coming Out Month. Do you have any advice for people who are trying to figure out how to come out?**

BE: This is an important question. If you know you’re [LGBTQ], your best friends probably know—and I think everyone needs to enlist your best friend(s). Come out first to your people, your crew—the ones you know will have your back. You need your team behind you when you decide to come out to your loved ones.

As far as we’ve come—for reasons that confound me—when kids come out to their parents in 2020, there are still some parents who don’t accept their children. It’s inexplicable.







	EI	IFT	PP	PPAC	OIR
<b>60TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Rita Mayfield (D)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>61ST REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Joyce Mason (D) Dan Yost (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>62ND REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Sam Yingling (D) Jim Walsh (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>63RD REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Brian Sager (D) Steven Reick (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>64TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Leslie Armstrong-McLeod (D) Tom Weber (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>65TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Martha Paschke (D) Dan Ugaste (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>66TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Suzanne M. Ness (D) Allen Skillicorn (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>67TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Maurice A. West II (D) Kathleen (Kathie) Jo Hansen (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>68TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Dave Vella (D) John M. Cabello (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>70TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Paul Stoddard (D) Jeff Keicher (R)	Y	Y			
<b>71ST REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Joan Padilla (D) Tony M. McCombie (R)	Y		Y	Y	
<b>72ND REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Michael W. Halpin (D) Glen Evans Sr. (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>74TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Christopher DeMink (D) Dan Swanson (R)		Y			
<b>76TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Lance Yednock (D) Travis S. Breeden (R)		Y			
<b>77TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Kathleen Willis (D) Anthony Airdo (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>78TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Camille Lilly (D) Joshua Flynn (L)		Y	Y	Y	
<b>79TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Charlene Eads (D) Jackie Haas (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>80TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Anthony DeLuca (D) Clayton D. Cleveland (L)		Y	Y	Y	
<b>81ST REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Anne Stava-Murray (D) Laura Hois (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	

	EI	IFT	PP	PPAC	OIR
<b>83RD REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Barbara Hernandez (D) Donald R. Walter (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>84TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Stephanie A. Kifowit (D)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>85TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Dagmara "Dee" Avelar (D) Ron Doweidt (R) Anna Schiefelbein (G)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>86TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Lawrence "Larry" Walsh, Jr. (D)		Y			
<b>88TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Karla Bailey-Smith (D) Keith P. Sommer (R) Kenneth Allison (L)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>89TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Andrew S. Chesney (R) John Cook (I)					
<b>90TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Seth Wiggins (D) Tom Demmer (R)	Y	Y	Y		
<b>91ST REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Josh Gryns (D) Mark A. Luft (R)	Y			Y	
<b>92ND REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Jehan Gordon-Booth (D) Chad Grimm (L)		Y	Y	Y	
<b>93RD REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Scott Stoll (D) Norine K. Hammond (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>94TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Angel Smith (D) Randy E. Frese (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>95TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Chase Wilhelm (D) Avery Bourne (R)	Y	Y			
<b>96TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Sue Scherer (D) Charles McGorray (R) John Keating (G)		Y			
<b>97TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Harry Benton (D) Mark Batinick (R)		Y	Y	Y	
<b>98TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Natalie A. Manley (D)		Y	Y	Y	
<b>99TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Mike Murphy (R)					
<b>100TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Brandon Adams (D) Christopher "C.D." Davidsmeyer (R) Ralph Sides (PGPL)	Y		Y		
<b>102ND REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Mitchell Esslinger (D) Brad Halbrook (R)	Y			Y	
<b>103RD REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Carol Ammons (D) Brad Bielert (L)	Y	Y	Y		

	EI	IFT	PP	PPAC	OIR
<b>104TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Cynthia E. Cunningham (D) Mike Marron (R)	Y				Y
<b>105TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Chemberly Cummings (D) Dan Brady (R)	Y	Y			
<b>107TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> David J. Seiler (D) Blaine Wilhour (R)					Y
<b>108TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Kacie Weicherding (D) Charles Meier (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>109TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> John Spencer (D) Adam M. Niemerg (R)			Y	Y	Y
<b>110TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Chris Miller (R) Kody Czerwonka (I)					Y
<b>111TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Monica J. Bristow (D) Amy Elik (R)					Y
<b>112TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Katie Stuart (D) Lisa Ciampoli (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>113TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Jay Hoffman (D) Mark Elmore (L) Ryan C. Musick (C)	Y	Y			
<b>114TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> LaToya N. Greenwood (D) Dave Barnes (R)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<b>116TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Nathan Reitz (D) David Friess (R)					Y
<b>117TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</b> Dave Severin (R)					Y

**Individual races for which no data were applicable have been eliminated from the print version of this chart.**

**Please see our website for full charts.**

# RUN & WALK

# week

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28  
DOUGLASS PARK

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29  
UPTOWN/LAKEVIEW

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30  
DUNBAR PARK

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1  
LOOP/GRANT PARK

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2  
WASHINGTON PARK  
HYDE PARK

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3  
LOOP/GRANT PARK

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SHAW



ViiV  
Healthcare

CHICAGO'S VERY OWN  
WGN9

William Blair

# JUDICIAL EVALUATIONS

Windy City Times does not endorse candidates. Rather, we list the ratings of legal organizations so that readers can make informed choices when they vote.

## Key to Organizations:

CCL = Chicago Council of Lawyers  
 CCBA = Cook County Bar Association  
 DSL = Decalogue Society of Lawyers  
 ISBA = Illinois State Bar Association  
 LAGBAC = Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago  
 WBAI = Women's Bar Association of Illinois  
 IFT = Illinois Federation of Teachers  
 PPAC = Personal PAC

## Key to Ratings:

Q – Qualified  
 NQ – Not Qualified  
 WQ – Well Qualified  
 HQ – Highly Qualified  
 HR - Highly Recommended  
 R - Recommended  
 NR - Not Recommended  
 NE - Not Evaluated  
 (D) = Democrat  
 (R) = Republican

To view additional ratings from the Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Chicago Area, Black Women's Lawyers Association of Greater Chicago, Hellenic Bar Association, Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois and Puerto Rican Bar Association of Illinois, go to [www.voteforjudges.org](http://www.voteforjudges.org).

	CCL	CCBA	DSL	ISBA	LAGBAC	WBAI	IFT	PPAC
<b>1st Supreme (Freeman vacancy)</b>								
P. Scott Neville, Jr. (D)	WQ	HR	R	HQ	R	R	Y	
<b>5th Supreme (Karmeier vacancy)</b>							Y	Y
Judy Cates (D)								
David K. Overstreet (R)								
<b>1st Appellate (Neville, Jr. vacancy)</b>								
Michael B. Hyman (D)	HQ	HR	HR	HQ	HR	R	Y	
<b>1st Appellate (Simon vacancy)</b>								
Sharon O. Johnson (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R	Y	
<b>5th Appellate (Chapman vacancy)</b>							Y	
Sarah Smith (D)								
Mark M. Boie (R)								
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Bellows vacancy)</b>								
Tiesha L. Smith (D)	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Coghlan vacancy)</b>								
Kelly Marie McCarthy (D)	Q	R	HR	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Ford vacancy)</b>								Y
Laura Ayala-Gonzalez (D)	Q	R	R	Q	HR	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Funderburk vacancy)</b>							Y	
Celestia L. Mays (D)	WQ	HR	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Larsen vacancy)</b>							Y	
Levander "Van" Smith, Jr. (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Mason vacancy)</b>							Y	
Chris Stacey (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (McCarthy vacancy)</b>							Y	
Teresa Molina (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Murphy Gorman vacancy)</b>							Y	
Sheree Desiree Henry (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (O'Brien vacancy)</b>								
Elizabeth Anne Walsh (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Patti vacancy)</b>							Y	
Lynn Weaver Boyle (D)	Q	R	HR	Q	HR	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Roti vacancy)</b>								
Lorraine Mary Murphy (D)	Q	R	R	Q	HR	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Sheehan, C. vacancy)</b>								Y
Maura McMahon Zeller (D)	Q	R	R	NQ	R	R		

	CCL	CCBA	DSL	ISBA	LAGBAC	WBAI	IFT	PPAC
<b>Cook Circuit Court (Sheehan, K. vacancy)</b>								
Jill Rose Quinn (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		Y
<b>Cook Circuit Court-1st Sub (Brooks vacancy)</b>								
Krista D. Butler (D)	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-1st Sub (Crawford vacancy)</b>								
Tyria B. Walton (D)	WQ	R	R	Q	HR	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-2nd Sub ('A' vacancy)</b>								
Sondra Nicole Denmark (D)	Q	R	R	Q	HR	R		Y
<b>Cook Circuit Court-3rd Sub (Filan vacancy)</b>								
Daniel Edward Maloney (D)	Q	R	R	Q	Q	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-3rd Sub (Flynn vacancy)</b>								
Regina Ann Mescall (D)	Q	R	R	HQ	HR	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-3rd Sub (Murphy vacancy)</b>								
Erin Haggerty Antonietti (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-6th Sub (Nega vacancy)</b>								
Jamie Guerra Dickler (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		Y
<b>Cook Circuit Court-6th Sub (Pantle vacancy)</b>								
Eileen Marie O'Connor (D)	Q	R	R	Q	HR	R		Y
<b>Cook Circuit Court-7th Sub (Jackson vacancy)</b>								
Pamela Reaves-Harris (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-8th Sub (Fleming vacancy)</b>								
Jonathan Clark Green (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		Y
<b>Cook Circuit Court-8th Sub (Gubin vacancy)</b>								
Michael A. Forti (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-9th Sub (Axelrood vacancy)</b>								
Thomas M. Cushing (D)	WQ	R	HR	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-9th Sub (Luckman vacancy)</b>								
Julie Bess Aimen (D)	WQ	R	R	HQ	R	R		Y
<b>Cook Circuit Court-10th Sub (Allen vacancy)</b>								
John G. Mulroe (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		Y
<b>Cook Circuit Court-10th Sub (McGing vacancy)</b>								
Maire Aileen Dempsey (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-10th Sub (O'Brien vacancy)</b>								
Mary Catherine Marubio (D)	Q	R	HR	HQ	HR	R		Y
<b>Cook Circuit Court-12th Sub (Hanlon vacancy)</b>								
Patricia M. Fallon (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		Y
Frank R. DiFranco (R)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-13th Sub (Kulys Hoffman vacancy)</b>								
Susanne Michele Groebner (D)	Q	NR	R	Q	R	R		Y
Gary William Seyring (R)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-14th Sub (Bertucci vacancy)</b>								
Gerardo Tristan, Jr. (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-14th Sub (Lacy vacancy)</b>								
Perla Tirado (D)	Q	R	NR	NQ	R	NR		
<b>Cook Circuit Court-15th Sub (Griffin vacancy)</b>								
Nichole C. Patton (D)	Q	R	R	Q	R	R		
<b>18th Circuit Court (Bakalis vacancy)</b>								
Margaret "Peggy" O'Connell (D)								Y
James F. McCluskey (R)								
<b>18th Circuit Court (Sutter vacancy)</b>								
Jill Otte (D)								Y
Ann Celine Walsh (R)								
<b>18th Circuit Court (Anderson vacancy)</b>								
Jeffrey M. Jacobson (D)								Y
Monique O'Toole (R)								
<b>19th Circuit Court, 3rd Subcircuit (Schipper vacancy)</b>								
Marnie Michelle Slavin (D)								Y
Christopher Morozin (R)								

# VOTE



The 1986 Windy City Times Staff  
Credit: Windy City Times

Paid for by Light PAC

**Congratulations to the Windy City Times on 35 years of invaluable service to our community. It is bittersweet to see the print version come to an end, but I know the talented people behind the paper can and will achieve great success as a digital-only publication. We are all looking forward to the next 35 years and beyond.**

**- Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot**

We are proud to support Windy City Times and honor their 35 years of representing Chicago's LGBTQ+ Community!



Alderman Tom Tunney  
44<sup>th</sup> Ward



Congressman Mike Quigley  
Illinois' 5<sup>th</sup> District

Paid for by Citizens for Tunney & Quigley for Congress.

## ELECTIONS 2020

# Guide to the LGBTQs

This year's general elections will feature a record number of openly LGBT candidates throughout Illinois. They include:

## 1. Karla Bailey-Smith

Race: Illinois state representative (88th District)

Website: [Unite88.org](http://Unite88.org)

The skinny: Bailey-Smith was born in Greencastle, Indiana. She earned an undergraduate degree at Illinois Wesleyan University in 1990 and a graduate degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1993. Bailey-Smith's career experience includes working as a painter and scenic artist.

## 2. Kelly Cassidy

Race: Illinois state representative (14th District)

Website: [CitizensForCassidy.com](http://CitizensForCassidy.com)

The skinny: Cassidy, who is married to activist Candice Gingrich, has served her district since 2011. She is unopposed in the general election.

## 3. Kody Czerwonka

Race: Illinois state representative (110th District)

Website: [KodyCzerwonka.com](http://KodyCzerwonka.com)

The skinny: Kody was born in Montrose, Illinois, and graduated from high school in 2011 as well as Eastern Illinois University in 2017. He's pitted against incumbent Republican state Rep. Chris Miller.

## 4. Michelle Darbro

Race: Illinois state representative (20th District)

Website: [DarbroForRep.com](http://DarbroForRep.com)

The skinny: A Norwood Park resident, Darbro is a career firefighter and paramedic who is a 2015 inductee to the University of Chicago Athletic Hall of Fame.

## 5. Michael Forti

Race: Cook County Judicial Circuit Court (8th Subcircuit/Gubin vacancy)

Website: None

The skinny: Forti is a judge for the 8th Subcircuit of the Cook County Judicial Circuit Court in Illinois. However, his current term expires Dec. 7, necessitating a run. He faces no opponents in this race.

## 6. Jackie Gunderson

Race: McLean County Board (9th District)

Website: [GundersonFor9.com](http://GundersonFor9.com)

The skinny: Gunderson has gone from being an Illinois State University student to a full-time employee. Also, she is director of the Penguin Project of McLean County—a non-profit organization creating unrestricted access to the performing arts for children and young adults with developmental disabilities.

## 7. Greg Harris

Race: Illinois state representative (13th District)

Website: [GregHarris.org](http://GregHarris.org)

The skinny: House Majority Leader Harris, who was chief co-sponsor of SB10, the legislation that brought about marriage equality in Illinois

has a district that includes several North Side neighborhoods. Harris (who was first elected to the state House in 2006, and is the first openly gay person in Illinois to become a member of legislative leadership) is unopposed.

## 8. Val Laymon

Race: McLean County Board (7th District)

Website: [VoteValLaymon.com](http://VoteValLaymon.com)

The skinny: Laymon moved to the county two decades ago to attend Illinois State University. Her three-pronged platform embraces sustainability, accessibility and equity. A lover of animals, Val and wife Jean have spent the last two years fostering dozens of dogs for Pet Central Helps.

## 9. Ken Mejia-Beal

Race: Illinois state representative (42nd District)

Website: [KMBfor42.com](http://KMBfor42.com)

The skinny: First-time political candidate in the DuPage County district, Mejia-Beal's platform centers on three major issues he intends to change in his district: halting any revenue increases on alcohol, establishing simpler dis-

tribution of affordable insulin and HIV medication, and ending puppy mills in Illinois. He was recently in the news when his opponent, state Rep. Amy Grant, stated (and then apologized for) anti-gay and racist remarks.

## 10. Jill Rose Quinn

Race: Cook County Court judge (K. Sheehan vacancy)

Website: [VoteJillRoseQuinn.com](http://VoteJillRoseQuinn.com)

The skinny: Quinn, a transgender attorney, has private practice experience includes working at general legal practices in Chicago, Bloomington, Lombard, Glen Ellyn and Franklin Park. She is set to make history as the state's first trans judge, as she is running unopposed.

## 11. Lamont Robinson

Race: Illinois state representative (5th District)

Website: [VoteLamontRobinson.com](http://VoteLamontRobinson.com)

The skinny: Robinson—who runs two Chicago Allstate Insurance offices, in Bronzville and Humboldt Park—made history as the first openly gay African-American person in the General Assembly. He is running unopposed.

## 12. Brian Sager

Race: Illinois state representative (63rd District)

Website: [People4BrianSager.com](http://People4BrianSager.com)

The skinny: Sager is a retired college professor and administrator who has been the mayor of Woodstock since 2005. Among his top legislative priorities are economic and job growth as well political ethics and early childhood education. He faces Republican incumbent state Rep. Steven Reick.

## 13. Levander "Van" Smith Jr.

Race: Cook County Circuit Court (Larson vacancy)

Website: [SmithJrForJudge.com](http://SmithJrForJudge.com)

The skinny: Smith, an Oak Park resident, is waging his first campaign for Cook County Circuit Court judge—but he already sits on the bench. In February 2019, the Illinois Supreme Court appointed Smith as a judge (in the domestic-violence division), with a term set to expire Dec. 7, 2020.

## 14. Maggie Trevor

Race: Illinois state representative (54th District)

Website: [MaggieTrevor4il54.net](http://MaggieTrevor4il54.net)

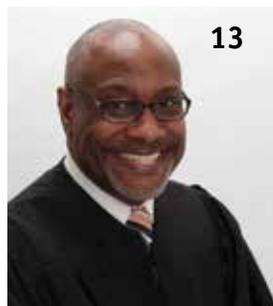
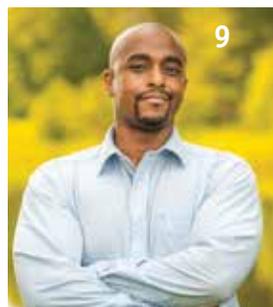
The skinny: Trevor, who identifies as lesbian, defeated Ryan Huffman in the Democratic primary and now faces incumbent Tom Morrison in the general election. Trevor was born and raised in Rolling Meadows, where her parents were among the city's original residents.

## 15. Sam Yingling

Race: Illinois state representative (62nd District)

Website: [SamYingling.com](http://SamYingling.com)

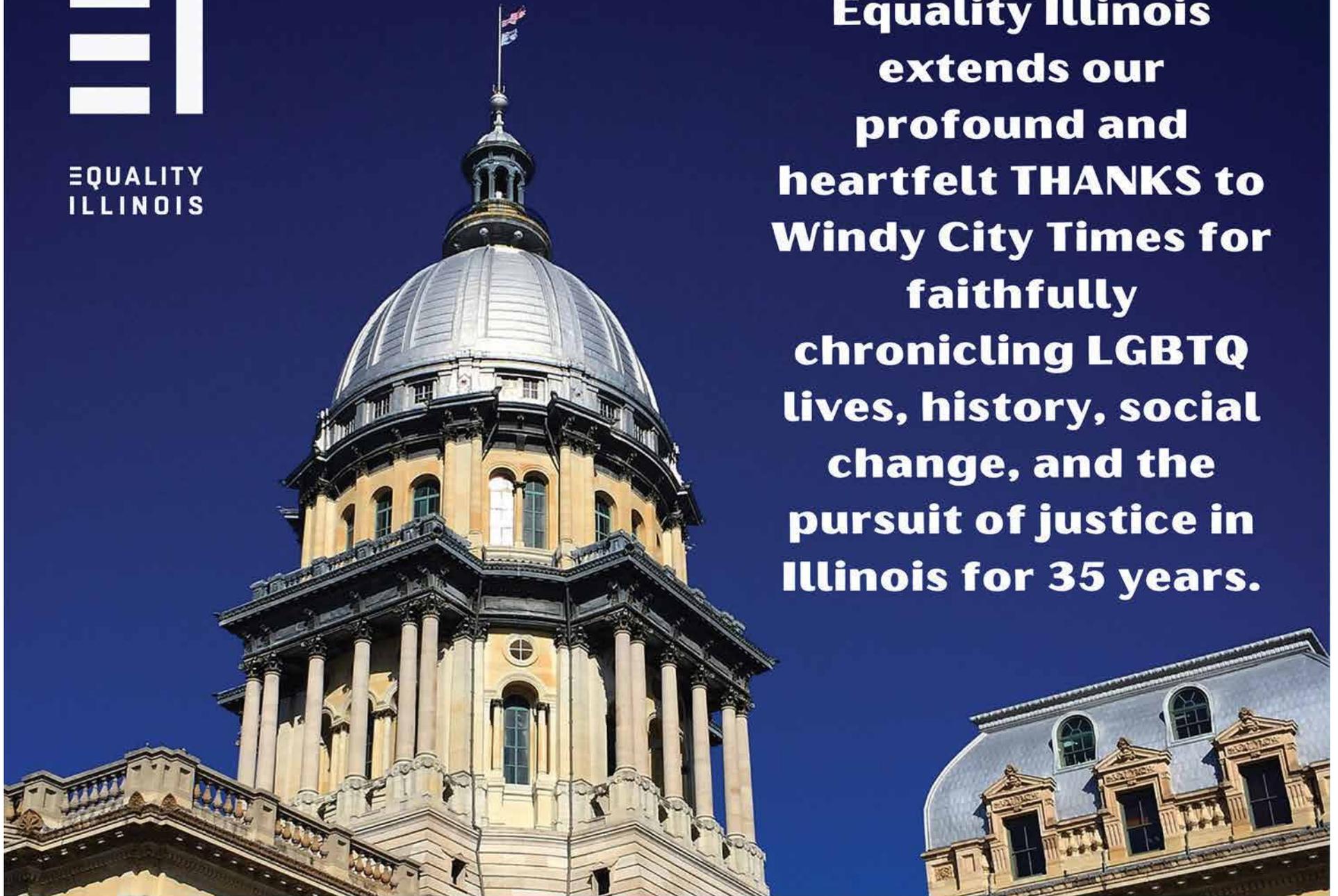
The skinny: Grayslake resident Yingling ran unopposed in the primary for his fourth term. He is the first openly gay House member from outside metropolitan Chicago. Yingling proposed to long-time partner Lowell Jaffe at the party former Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn threw to celebrate the passage of Illinois' marriage-equality bill in 2013. (They married in 2015.)



Cassidy photo courtesy of Matt Steffen. All other photos courtesy of individuals campaigns or WCT staff photos.



EQUALITY  
ILLINOIS



**Equality Illinois  
extends our  
profound and  
heartfelt THANKS to  
Windy City Times for  
faithfully  
chronicling LGBTQ  
lives, history, social  
change, and the  
pursuit of justice in  
Illinois for 35 years.**

**We especially recognize the leaders of WCT: Tracy Baim, Jean Albright, Andrew Davis,  
Terri Klinsky, Matt Simonette, and Kirk Williamson**



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*Terri Klinsky*

## TERRI KLINSKY

Windy City Times  
Publisher  
Started in 1995

Our ship will come in.

Those are the words Tracy and I used to say all the time. Well, she'd say it and later during a particular rough time, I'd ask: "So, where's the damn ship??" I started with the company in 1995. Back then we had Outlines monthly and Nightlines weekly. We joked that when we were older, we'd publish Agelines. We all did everything in those days from delivery to sales to helping with layout (on giant boards with wax) to covering events, photos, ad design and everything in between. The changes in technology from then to now is staggering. We had a stat camera (used to make photos copy ready) that took up a room. We took giant boards to the printer to get the paper printed. A deadline was truly a deadline.

I ended up working for the paper after someone at a Dining Out for Life dinner told me that Outlines was looking for a sales person.



*Andrew Davis*

## ANDREW DAVIS

Windy City Times  
Executive Editor  
Started in 1995

The information superhighway...

That old synonym for the internet (conjuring up days of AOL Instant Messenger and really loud modems) served as my entry into Windy City Times—way back in 1995. Two friends suggested that I pitch Tracy Baim about that, and she accepted.

I guess Tracy liked what I wrote because she then had me write about other things, such as business and health/fitness, and I also wrote for the affiliated publication Blacklines and En la Vida. In 2004, she asked me to be a full-time reporter for Windy City Times.

I didn't know how much of (or how wonderfully long) a ride this would be. However, I knew the position would challenge my very essence. Previously, my life was very structured—a job where I worked 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., five days a week. But Eleanor Roosevelt, of all people, entered my mind with that famous quote: "You must do the thing you think you cannot do."

Journalism was not initially my "thing," as I was a law-school grad. However, I knew I liked writing, and I was bolstered by two things Tracy said about me: that she liked how I wrote and that I turned in everything on time. (I guess the latter was a relatively rare thing.)

I was hired in the midst of the 2004 political season, so it was a trial by fire. One of the first interviews I remember doing was with then-Cook County State's Attorney Dick Devine. He had a phalanx of people standing behind him at one end of a long table, while I was alone at the

other. Once I got through that experience (and Devine was congenial), I thought I might have a future in this business.

There have been innumerable highs and lows during my time at Windy City Times, where I am now executive editor. When I started full-time, I thought the LGBTQ community would be one that was cohesive. (After all, weren't we all in the same boat?) It took me about two weeks to realize that it wasn't the case: Classism, racism, biphobia, transphobia, corruption and fat-shaming were just some of the things I witnessed—and that left me disillusioned. However, I also saw times when the community came together and supported each other—most notably during times of tragedy (the Pulse shooting and, most recently, the death of George Floyd), but also during times of celebration (like the 2006 Gay Games that took place in Chicago, and the legalization of marriage equality across the nation).

Windy City Times has covered it all, thanks to a staff that's beyond incredible (and who mostly have been around as long as I have, or even longer). Publisher Terri Klinsky is the largely unseen thread who has kept the newspaper together in so many ways. Webmaster/distribution manager Jean Albright seemingly juggles 19,000 things with nary a complaint. Art director Kirk Williamson used his myriad skills into making every print issue look incredible. Managing Editor Matt Simonette writes about so many topics (ranging from movies to politics), informing people with

entertaining (and, thankfully, brief) articles.

Then there's Tracy Baim. What can you say about her that hasn't already been said? Not many people would've had the guts to co-found a newspaper straight out of college. What she has done for the LGBTQ community—in Chicago and beyond—is simply incalculable. She made this publication into a vehicle that allowed people to realize that there were/are others like them, whether it's through a hard-news article or a human-interest story—something that was especially important in the days before social media, but which still holds resonance.

I'd like to thank everyone else associated with Windy City Times—including website developer Martie Marro, the delivery drivers and, especially, the many talented writers and artists who have devoted their time and talents to this newspaper. I'd also like to thank the people who have allowed us to interview them and have allowed so many others to peek into their lives—and maybe learn something. Lastly, I'd like to thank the readers; you have made and continue to make this newspaper as it enters the next phase.

Windy City Times looks forward to providing even more news as a digital-only publication. Yes, COVID-19 severely hurt our revenue—but it has not taken away the resolve to inform and entertain.

It has truly been an honor being part of this newspaper.

I was already a faithful reader of Outlines and I was in need of a job that I could feel good about. I was very excited about the prospect of working in the community. I met with Tracy and about 3 minutes after I was there, she asked when I could start. That was the beginning of our now 25-year working relationship and friendship.

While I have always been a news junkie, I never planned on working for a newspaper. I came from a sales background. I believe that to sell something, one has to really believe in the product. This was not a problem for me selling all of the publications. I've loved them all and believed in our message in its entirety. I'm proud of all the different publications we've had over the years.

I've learned a lot over my 25 years here. Aside from learning things like graphics programs, I learned how to go with the flow

a bit (not one of my strong suits) and I learned that many of Tracy's seemingly pie in the sky ideas actually come to fruition—the Gay Games in Chicago, buying the Windy City Times, the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality to name a few.

No one gets rich working for a community newspaper. Newspapers, in general, have had a very tough time. And while our ship never did come in, we did have a great ride and we brought a ton of people with us. Outlines, WCT, etc. has employed hundreds of people over the years and many at a point when they really needed it. From employing people to reporting on and covering the entire community to helping promote all the non-profits and their missions, to working for change for all LGBTQ+ people, it's been an honor to work for a company that truly believes in serving our community.

## My life at Windy City Times

I came into LGBT media completely by accident, having begun as editorial assistant at Windy City Times' competitor Chicago Free Press in 2005. I had done a favor for CFP's managing editor, Louis Weisberg, and he in turn got me some work editing and proofreading at a time when they were particularly short-staffed. Thanks in large part to attrition, I became managing editor in 2008, staying with the paper until the end of 2009.

I freelanced for a few years and came to work as a freelancer for Windy City Times in 2013 at the behest of then-Senior Writer Kate Sosin, who invited me to take part in one of the paper's investigative series. WCT was for years my sworn competition, so I was pretty shocked at how quickly I fell into the groove of working at WCT. Andrew, Tracy, Kirk, Jean and Terri seemed to pretty quickly adapt to my own quirks and idiosyncrasies, and, once I came on board full-time, I was thrilled to be entrusted with interviews such as the Chicago mayoral candidates in 2014. When I expressed interest in adding a film/TV beat in 2018, that was similarly entrusted to me without question.

The most exhilarating times at WCT have been those moments that have required extensive group-participation, even when we were in crisis-mode: going down to Springfield when the General Assembly voted on gay marriage, the horrible aftermath of the Pulse shootings in Florida, election night

2016, the early days of the pandemic. I can actually say I enjoyed staff meetings at WCT—since the company was mobile long before being mobile was a thing, I rarely was in the same room with my co-workers and had a good time when I was.

I appreciate that everyone at WCT has, to be blunt, the same nose for bullshit that I pride myself in having—I've occasionally gotten burned by sources I shouldn't have trusted, but not that often. Tracy and Andrew operate the same way. Friends and family have long-since tired of my cynical diatribes at how I've got the number of how some long-beloved public figure "really" operates.

When I came on board, Tracy and Andrew made clear that part of my job was keeping tabs on the local organizations in whom the LGBTQ community entrusts with their voices. Ninety-nine percent of the time those "tabs" resulted in little-to-no scandal, but, if you are the CEO or executive director of an LGBTQ-centered not-for-profit, chances are I know what you make for a living.

As the media landscape evolves, and LGBT media becomes even less of a presence during these crazy times, I'll miss most the individual storytelling that WCT excelled at—writers such as Carrie Maxwell and Ross Foreman had particular knacks for those. Mainstream media and neighborhood outlets will cover hot-button issues and some of the high-profile fluff, but our community is made up of thousands of people with crazy, beautiful and/or heartbreaking stories, stories that are now less likely to be presented to the world. Here's hoping they're not drowned out in cacophony as social media comes to dominate more and

more of our cultural conversations.

I close by thanking the entire Windy City Times staff for letting me into their tightly-knit band seven years ago, giving me the best job I've ever had. Andrew Davis organized our editorial department with great aplomb, and I always enjoy an email from him, even if it is the 700th one of the day. I always marveled how Kirk—one of the few art directors I've known who pays diligent attention to copy—could quickly deliver an aesthetic cover design on weeks when it seemed like we only had stories about community meetings and author-readings.

Kirk also sold the ads that kept us going, as did Publisher Terri Klinsky, who worked diligently keeping the business side of the paper running. Webmaster Jean Albright got the whole thing online, often dealing at all hours, without complaint, with me micromanaging my typos.

I'm not going to reflect much here on what Tracy Baim brought to this paper and to this community—the pages in this issue do that better than anything I'd have to say, and there are many more eloquent voices than mine on her work. Suffice it to say that as a member of this community, I am grateful for all that she's put into Windy City Times. But I am even more grateful that I got to have some small hand contributing to that work.

But I should reserve my biggest thanks for the readers who invested their trust in Windy City Times, who turned to us for both the breaking and, sometimes, obscure news about our community. That trust is something we never took for granted, and meant the world for us as a newspaper.



**MATT  
SIMONETTE**  
Windy City Times  
Managing Editor  
Started in 2013

## viewpoints


**Rev. Irene  
MONROE**

## Ruth Bader Ginsburg bent the moral arc toward justice

Like so many Americans across the country, I, too, am mourning the news that U.S. Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has died due to complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer. She was 87.

As a soft-spoken firebrand and feminist icon, Ginsburg leaves a titanic influence on the law, a legacy unmatched by any other jurists. As a feisty octogenarian on the Supreme Court bench, Ginsburg earned the moniker “Notorious R.B.G.”—a take on the deceased rapper Notorious B.I.G. And, as a pop-culture phenom, her image as the “Notorious R.B.G.” is on T-shirts and coffee mugs. A 2018 film, *On the Basis of Sex*—which depicts Ginsburg’s life as an attorney—has inspired a new wave of young feminists and little girls to follow in her footsteps.

Ginsburg followed in the footsteps of a legal giant, too. Ginsburg was called the Thurgood Marshall of the 1970s women’s movement. (Marshall most famous court victory was *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).) In referring to Marshall in a September 2014 interview in *The New Republic*, Ginsburg stated, “He was my model as a lawyer. You mentioned that I took a step-by-step, incremental approach; well, that’s what he did until he had those building blocks to end separate-but-equal.”

One of Ginsburg’s famous dissents was the 2007 case of *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company*, on gender discrimination. Lilly Ledbetter argued pay disparity because of her gender, citing that was a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A five-to-four vote favored Goodyear. Ginsburg wrote the dissenting opinion, stating, “Pay disparities often occur, as they did in Ledbetter’s case, in small increments; cause to suspect that discrimination is at work develops over time. Comparative pay information, moreover, is often hidden from the employee’s view.” In a bold move, Ginsburg read her dissent publicly from the bench. In 2009, President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, making it easier for women to challenge wage discrimination.

Ginsburg’s fought not only for women’s right but also, among other things, LGBTQ+ rights, like same-sex marriage (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015), African American voting rights (*Shelby County v. Holder*, 2013), the rights for persons with disabilities (*Olm-*


**Ruth Bader Ginsburg as a senior at Cornell.**

Photo courtesy of the Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States and Focus Features

*stead v. L.C.*, 1999) and environmental justice (*Earth v. Laidlaw Environmental Services*, 2000).

Ginsburg’s lens on justice was intersectional before the word became popular in the public sphere because of her identity with a persecuted group, citing her Jewish history and the Holocaust. “My heritage as a Jew and my occupation as a judge fit together symmetrically. The demand for justice runs through the entirety of Jewish history and Jewish tradition. I take pride in and draw strength from my heritage,” Ginsburg said in a 2004 speech at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Ginsburg’s death comes as a crushing blow to those of us who believe in building a multicultural democracy and a participatory government, where protests are understood as a citizen’s First Amendment right to do so. As Ginsburg is laid to rest, a fierce fight is unfolding over her successor at a time of intense political polarization and with just weeks away from the presidential election. However, in

her final days, Ginsburg told her granddaughter, Clara Spera, the following: “My most fervent wish is that I will not be replaced until a new president is installed.”

As this battle ensues, thousands of women, myself included, recently gathered at vigils that took place across the country to mourn and celebrate the life and work of this feminist icon and trailblazer. Ginsburg’s 27 years on the nation’s high court as a preeminent litigator played an epic role in advancing women’s rights, gender equity and civil rights. She was a voice for all Americans.

Ginsburg was the first Jewish woman to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court. She died on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year. According to Jewish tradition, a person who dies on this High Holiday is a “tzaddik,” a person of great righteousness.

Also, Ginsburg was a humble person who exuded a quiet grace. In a 2015 interview with MSNBC, Ginsburg said she “would like to be remembered as someone who used whatever talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability. And to help repair tears in her society, to make things a little better through the use of whatever ability she has.”

Ginsburg’s advocacy for justice was unwavering and showed it, especially with each oral dissent. In another oral dissent, Ginsburg quoted a familiar Martin Luther King Jr. line, adding her coda: “The arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice,” but only “if there is a steadfast commitment to see the task through to completion.” Like the outstanding Americans we have lost in the last couple of months—civil-rights icon Congressman John Lewis and Black Panther star Chadwick Boseman—and who bent the moral arc toward justice, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg did, too.

R.I.P., RBG.

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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TIMES

## ARTS + THEATER



THEATER

## The Most Important LGBTQ+ Plays

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL,  
MARY SHEN BARNIDGE, SCOTT MORGAN,  
JERRY NUNN AND KAREN TOPHAM

“A gay play?” playwright Robert Patrick wrote, “Is that a play that sleeps with other plays of the same sex?”

We think a gay play reveals one of three things in a significant way: (1) how the world views members of our diverse LGBTQ+ communities; (2) how members of our communities view themselves; (3) how members of our communities choose to engage the world around them. A gay play need not have been written by a queer author. It doesn’t even need to have LGBTQ+ characters, although that may seem counter-intuitive.

For this final print issue of the Windy City Times, the paper’s longtime theater reviewers have collaborated on a list of “The 25 Most Important LGBTQ+ Plays of All Time.” They are not necessarily the best plays ever written (some are, some are not) or the most exciting plays, and certainly our choices are not the most sexually graphic plays with which the gay play genre is replete. Instead, they are plays which have something to display far more profound (we hope) than mere skin and body parts.

All of the plays listed here are drawn from theater of the Western World (indeed, mostly American works), which is to say white-dominant theater. Other ancient and contemporary cultures may have plays—broadly meaning drama, puppetry, dance and musical storytelling—that deal with LGBTQ+ characters and themes, but these are not works (if they exist) to which we have

had access. Perhaps the future will broaden our horizons. There also are far more plays by men than women on this list, and far more gay male plays than lesbian plays; this reflects the traditional male dominance, and the limited access to theater spaces for lesbians and other marginalized communities, within Western theater.

**Edward II by Christopher Marlowe, 1593**—Some historical records call English king Edward II (1307-1327) a sodomite, and one calls Edward’s favorite, Piers Gaveston, “his husband.” Marlowe’s problematic yet extraordinary play is openly homo-erotic as it details the fall and torturous murders of Edward, Gaveston and Hugh Despenser, another favorite. Edward granted Gaveston and Despenser power and privileges they flaunted, and their abuse of power is the play’s overt issue rather than their otherness. Whatever, they were unacceptable to society. Possibly gay himself, Marlowe created homo-erotic themes in several other works.

**La Prisonniere (The Captive) by Edouard Bourdet, 1926**—A success in Paris, Vienna, Berlin and other European cities, it was shut down after 160 sold-out performances on Broadway, where reportedly 80% of the audience was female. *La Prisonniere* was among the first Broadway plays to deal with lesbianism. What’s more, the heroine was depicted as feminine, attractive and seductive, thereby countering the mannish lesbian stereotype and offering a protagonist much more threatening to hetero-normativity.

**The Drag by Jane Mast (pen name of Mae West), 1927**—The *Drag* was shut down in try-outs before reaching New York, and wasn’t performed until 2019. A loosely structured melo-

drama, it was intended to be an open depiction of gay life. West cast exclusively gay actors and allowed them to semi-improvise the script, with a drag ball final scene. The *Drag* was meant as a celebration of gay men, but also touched on drug addiction and violence within gay culture. West cited *La Prisonniere* as her inspiration for the play.

*NOTE: Collectively, La Prisonniere, The Drag and another West play, Sex, led to the passage of a New York State law condemning a broad range of sexual depictions onstage, effectively banning portrayals of homosexuality. Nonetheless . . .*

**Design for Living by Noel Coward, 1933**—New York audiences were rapturous over Coward’s sophisticated menage-a-trois, written for himself and dear friends Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. Critics and censors didn’t seem to understand that Otto and Leo didn’t just trade off living with Gilda. Coward—who remained semi-closeted all his life—scrupulously avoided any overt suggestion of homosexuality, but it’s there anyway.

**The Children’s Hour by Lillian Hellman, 1934**—Pure poison surges through Hellman’s notable drama, in which slander and innuendo wreck lives and careers. Even today, accusations of lesbianism would be ruinous if those accused ran a girls’ school, as Martha and Karen do in the play, and their accuser is one of their students. Hellman reserves a closing twist about the additionally destructive power of suppressed sexuality. Although without overtly sexual situations, the play was denied performance permits in Boston and Chicago due to its subject matter.

**Tea and Sympathy by Robert Anderson, 1953**—This huge stage and film hit appeared

during the Lavender Scare, the federal government purge of LGBT employees which normalized homophobic discrimination policy. The play uses a boys’ prep school as a metaphor, where a boy regarded as effeminate is ostracized and shamed. Somewhat melodramatic today, the play has an older woman make love to the boy to prove he’s straight. It’s one of the first plays to address perceptions of sexual orientation and the destructive prejudice that can ensue.

**A Taste of Honey by Shelagh Delaney, 1958**—This remarkable British play, written by a 19-year-old woman, addresses class, racism, gender and sex identification, which still were mostly taboo topics in Great Britain and the USA. It portrays racial, sexual and social otherness through several characters, with a young, gay art student as the heroine’s one true friend. The play isn’t about being gay, but about being outside norms. This work helped change British attitudes about homosexuality (still illegal then).

**Fortune and Men’s Eyes by John Herbert, 1967**—This now-overlooked play limns the horrors of prison with a focus on homosexuality, sexual slavery and corrupt administration within a reformatory for adolescent boys. Lurid and melodramatic, yes, but also honest and revelatory for the 1960s and tremendously influential, produced in over 100 countries. Herbert, who sometimes did drag, incorporated his personal experiences into the play.

**The Boys in the Band by Mart Crowley, 1968**—Appearing in New York a year before the Stonewall riots, this monster hit was the

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first commercial success to humanize gay men and their day-to-day life issues. Yes, it uses gay stereotypes and, yes, it's an apologia for being queer and, yes, it's improbable and, yes, most of its characters are unhappy—but it's nonetheless a pioneering and daring work which has more to say to non-queer audiences than to LGBTQ+ viewers. Warts and all, this is a courageous work.

**Fifth of July by Lanford Wilson, 1978**—This '70s dramedy concerns several generations of the Talley family in rural Missouri. There's absolutely nothing gay about it, and that's precisely its power: The Vietnam vet son who inherited the family home and his botanist lover just happen to be gay, and nobody cares. The matter-of-fact acceptance of their relationship makes *Fifth of July* a landmark; a work with a central gay relationship that's not about being gay. Wilson received a 1980 Pulitzer Prize for another play, but always felt it should have been for this one.

**Bent by Martin Sherman, 1979**—This is, perhaps, the most widely produced play in the entire canon of modern LGBTQ+ drama, and the first to examine Nazi persecution of homosexuals. Set in 1934 Germany, it centers on Max and his coming to terms with his own gayness while a concentration camp prisoner. Filled with horrors—Max murders his own lover at one point—the play also boasts a famous erotic scene in which the clothed lovers never touch, emphasizing the power of love and suggestion.

**Last Summer at Bluefish Cove by Jane Chambers, 1980**—This pioneering LGBTQ+ work was the first lesbian drama with mainstream appeal. It concerns eight women at a summertime cottage complex on Long Island where love and relationships, life and death are explored. Similar to *The Boys in the Band*, Chambers portrays various types of queer women (or womyn, if you prefer), with the most important focus on a coming-out story. The work is rightly celebrated for its humor and warmth.

**One by Jeff Hagedorn, 1982**—This one character, one-act drama was the very first play written about AIDS. It concerns a young man bewildered by his illness (at that time still minimally understood), seemingly passed on to him after finally connecting with his dream bartender. Wisconsin-turned-Chicago playwright Hagedorn co-founded Lionheart Gay Theatre and SYZYGY, focusing much of his work on AIDS-related stories. He died of AIDS in 1995.

**Torch Song Trilogy by Harvey Fierstein, 1982**—This huge hit presented the pre-AIDS tale of drag queen Arnold Beckoff who, despite his romantic illusions or perhaps because of them, lands two handsome hunks. Of course, there are complications as Arnold pursues a sitcom style normal life with kids and a middle-class home, not the least of which is conflict with his unaccepting mother. Fierstein filled his play with laughter, and dared to make an effeminate gay man the hero, while rejecting the promiscuous gay lifestyle of '70s New York.

**Cloud Nine by Caryl Churchill, 1978**—Sui generis playwright Churchill uses cross-gender and cross-racial casting, plus elements of magic realism, to utterly demolish lingering Victorian Era gender and racial stereotypes. Act I is set in 1879



**Top left: Original Broadway cast of *The Children's Hour*.**

Courtesy of original producer, Herman Shumlin

**Top right: Harvey Fierstein (Arnold) and Estelle Getty (his mother) in *Torch Song Trilogy*.**

Photo by Jerry Goodstein

**Above: Broadway cast of *Richard Greenburg's Take Me Out*.**

Photo by Joan Marcus

**Right: Alfred Lunt (left) and Noel Coward as Otto and Leo in *Design for Living*.**

Photo by Vandamm Studio

Africa and Act II in 1979 London, but only 25 years have passed for the characters. Traditional feminine and masculine behaviors are skewered, and LGBTQ characters are shown both repressed and free as Churchill attempts to normalize otherness.

**La Cage aux Folles by Jerry Herman (music/lyrics) & Harvey Fierstein (book), 1983**—A 1973 hit French farce (1,800 performances in Paris) became a multiple Tony Award winning musical, and was the first LGBTQ+ experience for tens of thousands of theater-goers. Nay-sayers ask why that first impression had to center on a drag queen and a stereotypically butch/femme gay couple. The answer is that true love has neither rhyme nor reason. It's about family too, and also mocks institutionalized political homophobia. And the tunes are great!

**As Is by William M. Hoffman and *The Normal Heart* by Larry Kramer, 1985**—Opening Off-Broadway just weeks apart, these two hit plays put a human face on AIDS and on the inaction of medical and government authorities to address it, in substantial part because of institutionalized

homophobia. The plays are tremendously important today as documents of the time and mindset, and were tremendously important because of how widely they were produced in regional theaters across the country. They also both happen to be bang-up dramas that really grab an audience.

**Angels in America by Tony Kushner, 1991**—One of the great works of 20th century world drama, it incorporates elements of magic realism in an epic about American politics and the threat of neoconservatism, brilliantly using the 1980s AIDS crisis as its framing device. Written during the Reagan Presidency, and peopled with real and fictional gay characters, *Angels in America* challenges political power which attempts to narrowly define what it means to be American. We need this play now more than ever! The arch-villain of this work, the real-life closeted Roy Cohn, was mentor and teacher to the young Donald Trump.

**Marvin's Room by Scott McPherson, 1990**—Chicago playwright McPherson shot to fame with this play as he was dying of AIDS. Although without gay characters or situations, it was McPherson's deeply compassionate, quirky-funny



response to the AIDS crisis. Focusing on a small extended family—mother, her two sons, her two sisters and unseen dying gramps—the play is about family responsibility, fear/acceptance of mortality and healing emotional wounds. *Marvin's Room* is simple, spellbinding, often funny and heartfelt and just begins to reveal the writer McPherson might have become.

**Love! Valour! Compassion! by Terrence McNally, 1995**—Another "gangbang" in which a cohort of gay men spend summer holidays together in Upstate New York. Most characters are showbiz professionals, which makes this one of McNally's most personal plays. The boys in this band are witty, wise, funny, lonely, hunks, devious and self-centered. No apologia here; good, bad or ugly, they are who they are in this strong expression of being gay in the early 1990s. McNally's 1998 *Corpus Christi*—an allegory about a gay Jesus and Disciples—was a runner-up for this list.

**I Am My Own Wife by Doug Wright, 2002**—A one-person play about Charlotte von Mahlsdorf,

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## PLAYS from page 32

born Lothar Berfelde, a transgender woman who survived the Nazi and Communist regimes in Berlin after killing her Nazi father during WWII. Her home became a gathering place for East Berlin's repressed LGBT community, although her actions were not always supportive. This tale of an ultimate survivor requires the solo actor to play 40 characters. A transgender actor played the role for the first time in a 2016 About Face Theatre revival.

**Take Me Out by Richard Greenburg, 2002—**An extremely important "what if" play, *Take Me Out* concerns Darren Lemming, the charismatic mixed-race slugger for the New York Empire, who could win the pennant. When Darren comes out, he quickly comes into conflict with the team's star relief pitcher, a Southern-born, racist homophobic. When written in 2002, no Major League Baseball player ever had come out publicly during his career (has any done so yet?). Despite extremely serious plot twists and themes, Greenburg tempers the play with brilliantly funny passages for which he is known.

**The Color Purple by Marsha Norman (book) and Brenda Russell, Allee Willis and Stephen Bray (music and lyrics), 2004—**Alice Walker's miraculously simple but profound tale was a hit as a novel, film and Broadway musical, with Celie's discovery of sexuality, love and self-love through a lesbian romance at the center. Set within a Deep South rural Black community of the early 20th century, Walker's work and powerful characters have an authenticity that carries into this musical.

**The Temperamentals by Jon Marans, 2009—**Those ignorant of history are doomed to repeat it! Before Stonewall, before Gay Lib there was the Mattachine Society, the first sustained LGBTQ+ rights organization in the United States, founded in 1950. This well-written docudrama chronicles the founding of the Mattachine Society and the relationship of co-founders Harry Hay and Rudi Gernreich. This play helps us know our roots, and honor those who went before us.

**Fun Home by Lisa Kron (book, lyrics) and Jeanine Tesori (music), 2013—**This Tony Award winning musical is based on Alison Bechdel's autobiographical work, and was the first Broadway musical with a lesbian protagonist, let alone an adolescent coming-out story. Filled with much humor—kids have fun playing in the family funeral parlor—*Fun Home* turns serious as Alison comes out and seeks her father's acceptance, forcing him to confront his repressed homosexuality. Almost like *A Star is Born*, the success of one seems fatal to the other in this landmark work.

**Bootycandy by Robert O'Hara, 2014—**To be young, gay, Black and precociously self-aware in late-20th century America; such is the situation for the autobiographical hero of *Bootycandy*, a serious, satirical work disguised as a comedy about sex, Black culture and race relations. Its tools are laughs, exaggerated acting and comic-strip style (as directed by O'Hara himself at the Windy City Playhouse in 2017). Sissies will love it, but not prudes or the faint-of-heart. A rare insider look at Black homophobia (in part) and white stereotypes of gay Black boys (in part).



James Lee in Windy City Playhouse's *The Boys in the Band*.  
Photo by Michael Brosilow



Travis Turner, Robert Fenton and Osiris Khepara in Windy City Playhouse's *Bootycandy*.  
Photo by Michael Brosilow



Cast of *The Color Purple*, the musical from Alice Walker's book.  
Photo by Scott Suchman

Danni Smith in *Fun Home* at Victory Gardens.  
Photo by Liz Lauren



## STREAMING THEATER REVIEW

### Rastus and Hattie

Playwright: Lisa Langford  
At: 16th Street Theater online at [16thStreetTheater.org](http://16thStreetTheater.org)  
Tickets: free with donation  
Runs through: Oct. 24

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Content warning: *Rastus and Hattie* includes racist caricatures, racism and violence.

Since their inception in 1920, robots in fiction have typically looked like humans and talked like machines. Nowadays, in our age of Westworld-style technology, "bots" can be heard discoursing in the soothing tones of nannies and yoga instructors, but trade practice among real-life manufacturers of mobile mannequins advises strenuously against precision accuracy in replicating androids and gynoids (even sex dolls are carefully crafted to evidence overt reminders of their artificial infrastructures).

The robots in Lisa Langford's fable can trace their ancestry to an automaton invented by the Westinghouse Electrical Corporation and exhibited at the 1939 World's Fair, before its line of succession was abruptly curtailed by the onset of World War II. Its sole descendants are Rastus and Hattie, a pair of household appliances made in

the image of antebellum house servants, but recently restored by Marlene's husband David to assist the busy parents in their childrearing chores. The presence of this antiquated iconography in the white couple's home proves disconcerting to the Marlene's girlhood chum, African-American scientist Needra, whose research into genetic manipulation—specifically, the therapeutic viability of "erasing" DNA-linked memories of crippling trauma—has earned her a teaching fellowship at an Alabama university.

Even playgoers ignorant of eugenics, lobotomies, the myth of "pre-natal influence" and the wisdom of heeding past errors to avoid repetition of same, can identify the potential menace inherent in this proposal.

Not until after a wrong turn on the route to Dixieland propels Needra, her husband Malik and their infant son through a hole in the Space-Time Continuum into the Deep South circa 1850, however, does she come to understand the unforeseen consequences of her benevolently-conceived but ultimately inhumane manifesto. Marlene and David undergo enlightenment as well: after discovering that Needra has stolen/kidnapped/emancipated their—uh, property, they proceed to pursue their neighbors across the Mason-Dixon line, where they are likewise hurtled into a social system flagrantly designed to facilitate the worst aspects of their cruel WASP heritage.

Langford's parable, densely packed with insights elevating it far above simplistic finger-pointing,

includes descriptions of racist caricatures, practices and violence, but the restrictions on group performance imposed by current health-related conditions spare audiences live-action depiction of the atrocities documented in this 16th Street Theater production. Director Lanise Antoine Shelley has rescripted Langford's intelligent and articulate text to radio-drama configuration featuring the voices of seven actors, meticulously arranged by sound designer Olanrewaju Adewole and audio engineer Nathan Cox-Reed. Visual narrative is conveyed in graphic-novel fashion as a series of silhouette-collages, created by Roy Thomas and animated right before our eyes by video editor Peter Marston Sullivan.



Act One Scene in *Rastus and Hattie*.  
Still of Illustrations by Roy Thomas



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Windy City Times was an early and regular supporter of the Hideout since we opened in 1996. We will never forget that Windy City Times was the FIRST publication to list the Hideout in an annual "Top Ten List" in 2000. (Vern Hester's The Year in Concerts, #6: Chris and Heather's Calendar Show). We feel that your enthusiastic support helped promote us to thousands of people, who have directly led to our critical and popular success for over two decades. WCT has been essential in helping the Hideout build, and be part of Chicago's diverse and inclusive community. You were here for us when we were "nobody's". Like so many other people, businesses and organizations, we will always be grateful to WCT and your impact on our culture, our business, our politics, our lives. We're ready to venture into the digital world with you. We need WCT to stay strong and keep giving a voice to those who haven't been handed their mic yet.

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Tim, Katie, Mike and Jim, and the Hideout Staff.

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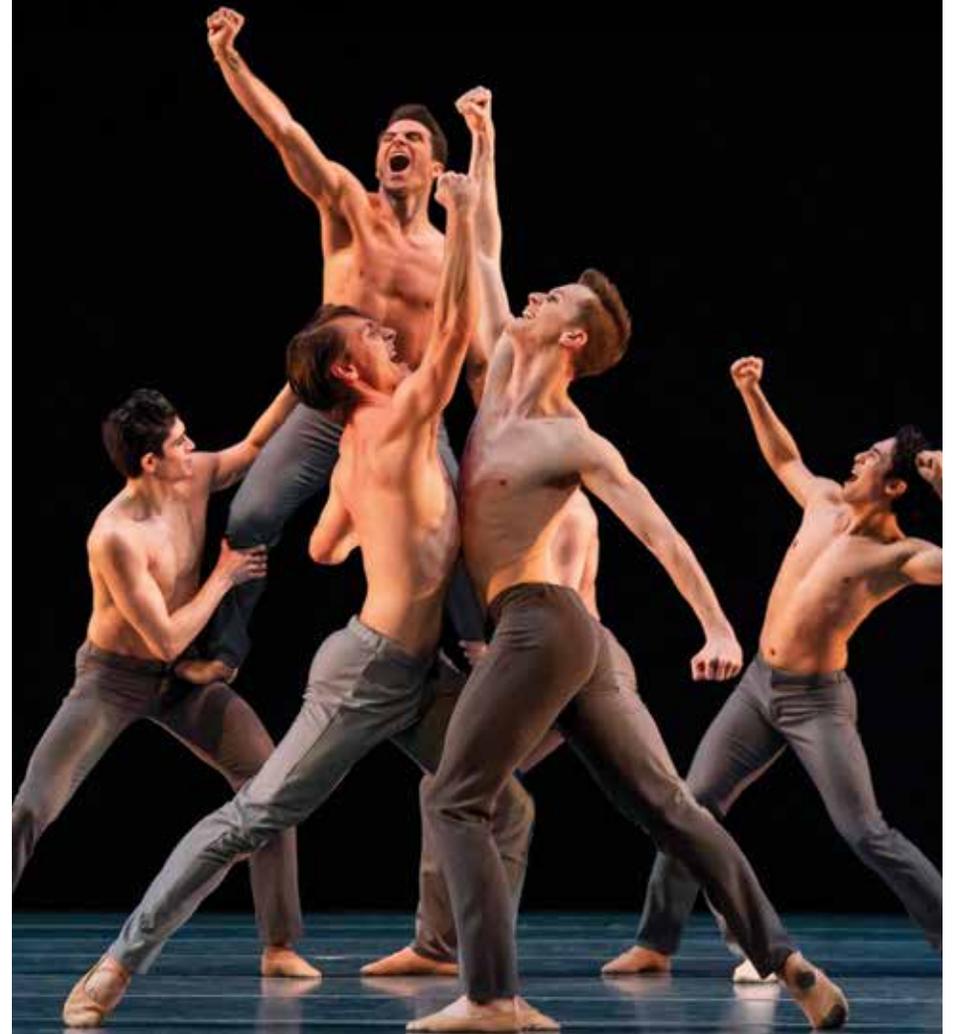
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Joffrey Company Artists: Aaron Renteria, Derrick Agnoletti, Graham Maverick, Jonathan Dole, Hansol Jeong. Photo by Cheryl Mann.



A Skeleton in the Closet.  
Photo courtesy of Chicago Filmmakers

## Reviewing the films of Reeling 2020

BY STEVE WARREN

For complete festival information and to buy tickets, visit <http://reelingfilmfestival.org/2020>. Ratings are on a ★★★★★ scale but I'm a tough grader, so nothing gets over ★★★.

*Note: This year's installment of Reeling: The Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival officially takes place online and begins Sept. 24. The festival lasts through Oct. 4, although select films will be available for screening for a few days past closing.*

**Tu Me Manques (★★★★)** (Sept. 30-Oct. 3)

Writer-director Rodrigo Bellott makes his drama needlessly complex but handles it so well it's worth sticking with to develop strong feelings for the characters in one of the festival's best films. Two Bolivians meet in New York in 2014. In 2015, Sebastian (Fernando Barbosa) is back in Bolivia staging a play he wrote about his love affair with Gabriel, who was still repressed from his Catholic upbringing. It ended with Gabriel's death, which Sebastian heard about from Jorge (Oscar Martínez), Gabriel's father, who came to New York to learn about the son he never knew. It's overly arty, but terrific.

**Luz (★★★★)** (Oct. 1-4)

Some guys think they'll find Mr. Right on Grindr. Writer-director Jon Garcia (The Falls trilogy) makes a pretty good case for prison as an alternative. Innocent-looking Ruben (Ernesto Reyes) is immediately attacked by Carlos (Jesse Tayeh), his cellmate. Before Carlos' release, they've had sex—or have they made love? That will be resolved in three years when Ruben gets out, as will whether Ruben will be able to get his young daughter back from his criminal cousin. While I have some minor issues with the script, Luz is shot and acted like an "A" movie, certainly not festival filler.

**A Skeleton in the Closet (★★★1/2)** (Oct. 1-4)

I hope your family reunions are more pleasant than Manuel's (Facundo Gambandé). It's his first time back from college in Buenos Aires since he came out to his family on Christmas Eve. He's hoping to score funds at his parents' anniversary party to join his boyfriend in Denmark. Manuel has three siblings, one an international tennis champion, and a homophobic grandmother. With so many characters, situations and secrets to introduce, there's little time to go anywhere with them; but I'll admit I teared up at the end, indicating I got more attached to Manuel and his family than I realized.

**Minyan (★★★1/2)** (Oct. 4-7)

This coming-of-age story of a gay teenager in New York in 1986 follows David (Samuel H. Levine), who moves in with his newly widowed grandfather (Ron Rifkin) to a subsidized apartment. David starts to become sexually active, especially in two hot scenes with a bartender (Alex Hurt)—who should be practicing safe sex. Minyan's various attempts to spread its appeal to diverse audiences may limit the film's appeal to any of them, however.

**Sublet (★★★★)** (Oct. 4-7)

With its intergenerational leading men, will Sublet be a story of love or friendship? Michael (John Benjamin Hickey), a New York Times travel writer doing a piece on Tel Aviv, sublets an apartment from Tomer (Niv Nissim), a film student half his age he winds up rooming with because Tomer has nowhere to go. More important than the sex they may or may not have, one gives the other memories of youth, in return for a projection of a possible future. Israeli filmmaker Eytan Fox, making his first English-language film, builds the story slowly and carefully, with very fine results.

## MOVIES

# 'Disarm Hate' features LGBTQ+ gun-control activists after massacre

BY VIC GERAMI

Narrated by the iconic actor Harvey Fierstein, the film *Disarm Hate* seeks to create awareness about gun violence against the LGBTQ+ community following the 2016 Pulse Nightclub massacre in Orlando that took 49 lives as the impetus.

Directed by Julianna Brudek, the film chronicles nine diverse LGBTQ+ activists who come together after the Pulse nightclub massacre to join Jason P. Hayes, a hairdresser, and an activist from New Jersey who is on a crusade. Without political experience, Hayes builds a national rally to demand LGBTQ+ equal rights, fight the NRA, and challenge America's obsession with gun violence.

"I wanted to bring awareness to how disproportionately gun violence has affected the less privileged members of our community. Two weeks before Matthew Shepard was brutally murdered, Rita Hester, a trans woman of color, was murdered, and the media buried the story. Forgotten forever," said Julianna Brudek. She added, "I did not want that to happen to the Hispanic LGBTQs that lost their lives at Pulse Nightclub. As a community, we must remember the hate crimes, and work together to stop the violence perpetrated on each one of us."

Beginning as a road trip, the journey turned into so much more than anyone could have expected. Exploring their similarities and differences, the group develops a life-changing bond as they visit prominent sites of gun violence that have affected LGBTQ+ people nationwide. This common ground opens discussions between the travelers and the people they meet along the way, that look to alleviate these horrific hate crimes and bring a better understanding for all.

The renowned trans activist and media personality Ashlee Marie Preston who is a cast member

and an executive producer said, "The threat of gun violence is intersectional. When someone's identity overlaps with multiple marginalized groups, their risk is compounded. Black Americans are 10 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than white Americans. Being a woman and trans exacerbates those odds." She continued, "*Disarm Hate*," which focuses on the discriminatory culture within America that informs the violence marginalized communities face. If we are ever to eradicate gun violence, we must interrogate the attitudes and beliefs that fan the flames of hate. Our journey was not about taking away people's guns, it was about removing the barriers that obstruct their ability to recognize our humanity."

The documentary successfully probes the emotional journeys of the activists, who squabble, laugh, cry, and even fall in love throughout their trip. It also examines opposing views and counterpoints to their calls for gun reform from a pro-gun perspective, as they visit a shooting range and engage with a member of the Pink Pistols, a pro-gun LGBTQ+ group.

Harvey Fierstein, who narrated the film, said, "Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life; define yourself."

**Disarm Hate is available on multiple streaming platforms including Amazon Prime Video, FandangoNOW, Google Play/YouTube Rentals, On Demand (Comcast & Cox), Microsoft Store, and Vudu.**

**A noted journalist and columnist, Vic Gerami is also a radio-show host and media contributor who is also publisher and editor of The Blunt Post. Gerami is the host and producer of his prime-time radio show, THE BLUNT POST with VIC on Independent Radio KPFK 90.7 FM (Pacific Network).**

## 'Schitt's Creek' dominates Emmys

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The Canadian LGBTQ+-centered comedy series *Schitt's Creek* cleaned up for its final season when the Television Academy showcased the Emmy Awards the evening of Sept. 20.

This was the 72nd Emmy ceremony, and was largely virtual thanks to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"Right now, do we need fun," said host Jimmy Kimmel, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. The broadcast opened with him intercut with footage of an enthusiastic, celebrity-filled audience. After a few minutes, however, viewers saw Kimmel was actually in a nearly empty auditorium. Nominees stood by remotely from various locations around the world.

"You know how you can't get your parents to use FaceTime? Imagine that, times 100," Kim-

mel said.

*Schitt's Creek* received 15 nominations, winning nine and sweeping the major comedy categories, with wins for Outstanding Comedy Series; Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series (openly gay co-creator/co-star Dan Levy); Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series (Eugene Levy); Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series (Catherine O'Hara); Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series (Daniel Levy); and Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series (Annie Murphy). Daniel also won for directing.

"Our show is at its core about the transformative effects of love and acceptance," said Dan. His father, co-creator and co-star, Eugene Levy, praised his son for turning their premise into a celebration of inclusivity and a repudiation of homophobia.

Whenever *Schitt's Creek's* title was mentioned, ABC superimposed the show's title to emphasize that the speaker was not using an

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**AMY MATHENY**

Journalist and Host of Windy City Radio,  
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"I decided very early that I wanted to write. But I don't think of it as a career. I didn't even think of it as a profession...It was the most exciting thing, the most powerful thing, the most wonderful thing to do with my life."

—Mary Oliver

## STREAMING THEATER REVIEW

### Broadway by the Decade

Playwright: Various composer & lyricists  
At: Streaming on Vimeo  
Tickets: PorchlightMusicTheatre.org; \$15-\$50  
Runs through: Oct. 25

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Most musical-theater fans will get a kick out of this well-produced and very well-sung 45-minute dive into Broadway history. Inevitably, however, serious students of musical theater (me) will have quibbles about what's been included and what hasn't.

This streaming revue is narrated by Porchlight artistic director Michael Weber, who also directed it. Weber offers a general introduction about the origins of American musical theater (which didn't exist 150 years ago) leading to 10 songs, one for each Broadway musical decade from the 1920s to the present. This eliminates George M. Cohan,

James Earl Jones II performs "Who Am I?" in Broadway by the Decade.

Photo courtesy of Porchlight Music Theatre

Victor Herbert and early shows by the Gershwins, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin among others (although the Gershwins and Berlin are represented by later works). Why not a one-hour show (vs. 45 minutes) so early 20th-century songs could be included?

What IS included is choice material performed by an ensemble including Neala Baron, Blu, Darilyn Burtley, Lucy Godinez, Donterrio Johnson, James Earl Jones II, Michelle Lauto and Michael McBride (pianist and musical director), each of whom participates in several numbers either solos or combos.

Burtley kicks off with a smoky rendition of

"Can't Help Lovin' That Man of Mine" from Show Boat (1927), accompanied by McBride at a white grand piano. The physical vibe says "nightclub," with potted palms, red velvet drapes and shadow lighting.

The clubby setting of the first four numbers appears to have been shot in a dance studio (not that it matters) before videographer Austin Packard takes us elsewhere. There's a wonderful endless tracking shot down a corridor, as Blu and Donterrio Johnson perform the title song from Guys and Dolls (1950). Then, various rooms of a spacious all-white loft apartment host the remaining numbers.

## STREAMING THEATER REVIEW

### We're Gonna Die

Playwright: Young Jean Lee  
At: Theatre Y, streaming online at Theatre-Y.com  
Tickets: Free  
Runs through: Oct. 4

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

"To be, or not to be" may have once been a dilemma to beguile wealthy Danish princes, but the riddle baffling us today is why we continue to endure so many terrible things—pain, sorrow, injury, abandonment, imminent extinction. What can we do to halt these "thousand naturalshocks that flesh is heir to" and what solace can we offer to those undergoing them?

In 2011, playwright Young Jean Lee mused on this enigma in a series of monologues with music that recounted moments in her earlier life when she was spurred to confront the perplexities of our inexorable journey to the grave: eavesdrop-

ping on an uncle beset by self-loathing, a sister obsessed with lurid murders, a cohabitant lover whose merciful efforts to banish evidence of his previous occupancy prove futile, a mother's lullaby promising, "you will sleep, by and by" and, finally, the story of her father's death after an excruciation steeped in suspense, suffering and unimaginably bitter irony.

You can present this material as a straightforward spoken-word solo performance (its premiere featured Lee herself gently assuring her audience, "I won't try to make you smile") or you can serve it up as a screw-you-reaperboy rock concert like the 2017 Haven Theatre production did. A small screen viewed in solitary seclusion, however, invokes an intimacy beyond any achieved in a communal setting—circumstances making for Theatre Y's visual concept composed almost entirely of enigmatic objects viewed in extreme close-up, with only a few brief glimpses of live human beings.

Said objects encompass such personal treasures as black-and-white snapshot photographs, postcard-sized artwork, a Nikon-style camera in a leather case, and a Peter Max-style animated cartoon. A recurring motif is suggested in a pair

Tenor Jones knocks it out of the park with "Who Am I?" from Les Miz, while Baron and Godinez cut loose with big alto voices on "I Am My Own Best Friend" from Chicago (1975). Godinez also nails "She Used to Be Mine" from Waitress (2015), the final song in this compilation. Along the way, Lauto scores with "Don't Rain on My Parade" from Funny Girl (1964).

McBride at the piano accompanies several songs, while others are backed by a full orchestra, seeming to play the original Broadway arrangements. I don't know how this was accomplished, but it's a neat trick! Likewise, audio engineer Eric Backus manages to record most of the numbers without any microphones visible (overhead mics?) for much richer and more professional sound than folks singing into their computer cameras.

Quibble: I'd have skipped the songs from Les Miz (a foreign show) and Beauty and the Beast (written for the movie) and kept the songs all American and all written for the stage.

**Jonathan Abarbanel is a member of the American Theatre Critics Association. His reviews also can be heard on 90.9 WDCB-FM "The Arts Section" every Sunday morning."**

of lighted Christmas-Caroler candles whose slow meltdown is echoed in a time-lapse filmed sequence of a gradually thawing ice-cream sundae and in portraits of our narrator with her face masked under thick makeup that cannot stop the flow of her tears.

Accompanying this gallery of images is an audio montage in which traces of chamber orchestra, music-box and rewinding reel-to-reel and cassette recorders can be detected. Oh, and did I mention that all this takes only a little more than an hour?

Lee is not content to leave us floundering in melancholy, though, instead proposing death—not as a cataclysmic tragedy conceived to punish each of us individually, but as the inevitable conclusion to the life that we share with everything in the universe. Whether that brings you comfort or not, the multisensory collage assembled for this streaming production by an ensemble of talented artists—most notably, actor Emily Bragg as our questioning pilgrim, along with cinematographer Justin Jones and film editor Kevin Hurley—delivers a mesmerizing contemplation on the great mystery even science has never been able to solve.



We're Gonna Die.  
Photo by Justin Jones

## EMMYS from page 36

obscurity when they uttered the word "Schitt's." RuPaul, who had already won an Emmy the night before at one of the Creative Arts Emmys ceremonies for hosting RuPaul's Drag Race—his fifth consecutive honor in that category—won another Sept. 20 when his show was named Outstanding Competition Program.

"It is an honor to make television," RuPaul said. "All the kids get to tell their story on our show and it's beautiful." He further urged the show's viewers: "Don't give up on love."

LGBTQ programming and creative personnel were most prominent amongst streaming and ca-

ble offerings; major networks got only a minute number of nods associated with LGBTQ material in major categories, thanks largely to the final season of Will & Grace, which received five nominations this year.

Among LGBTQ performers who did not win were lesbian actress Holland Taylor for her portrayal of Ellen Kincaid in executive producer Ryan Murphy's series Hollywood. Openly gay actor Jim Parsons was also nominated for his portrayal of agent Henry Willson in Hollywood.

Tituss Burgess earned another nomination for his portrayal of Titus Andromedon in this year's Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt: Kimmy vs. The Reverend. Billy Porter received another nomination



Schitt's Creek's Dan Levy.  
Photo by Drew Altizer

for Pose this year—but lost to Jeremy Strong's performance in HBO's Succession. Lesbian actor Cherry Jones won for a guest-starring role on Succession in the Sept. 19 Creative Arts ceremonies; she also won last year for a guest appearance on Hulu's The Handmaid's Tale.

Tyler Perry was also given the Academy's Governors Award Sept. 20. During his acceptance speech, he emphasized principles of diversity among employees at his Atlanta-based studio, noting that LGBTQ individuals were among the workers there. Transgender actor Laverne Cox was among the presenters that night—a group which, aside from television personalities, also included essential workers across the United States.

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Miss Toto.

Photo by Adam Ouahmane



DRAG

## Miss Toto builds a full-bodied career in Chicago

BY JERRY NUNN

Miss Toto blew into the Windy City toting a tornado of talent after leaving Cumberland, Maryland behind. Toto quickly made a name for herself as "Chicago's Bodybuilder Barbie" and landed bookings all over the city. Toto identifies as queer and in drag uses she/her pronouns. Out of drag, Toto uses pronouns they/them.

Toto talked about their blossoming career and an upcoming gig at the Soldier Field parking lot that includes RuPaul Drag Race season 10 competitor The Vixen and recent Windy City Times interviewee RuPaul Drag Race season 12 winner Jaida Essence Hall.

**Windy City Times: Where does the drag name**

**Miss Toto come from?**

Miss Toto: "Toto" is Dominican slang for "pussy." It is also a brand name for luxury toilets and the dog in The Wizard of Oz. My real name is Rock Evans.

**WCT: You are from Maryland?**

MT: Yes, originally. I started doing drag in Miami in 2015. I moved to Chicago last March.

**WCT: What brought you to Chicago?**

MT: I wanted to be closer to home, so I could drive to Maryland in 10 hours if necessary. I wanted to be a part of the drag scene in Chicago. Specifically, I wanted to be surrounded by the Black drag performers that I had been looking up to ever since I have been doing drag.

**WCT: Who is someone you looked up to?**

MT: The list is long, but huge inspirations to me in the city were Lucy Stooile, DiDa Ritz, Shea Coulee and The Vixen. The Unfriendly Black Hot-ties I just wanted to be around, which are Bambi Banks-Coulee, Kenzie Coulee and Khloe Coulee.

I was looking for a more immersive Black experience because I had never had a big, Black friend group, aside from my family. I was in a rural part of Maryland with not many Black people and in Miami most of the diversity was coming from the Latin community.

**WCT: Was it hard to break into the drag community in Chicago?**

MT: No, because I was visiting for a year before I moved, so everyone was familiar with me. I was actively working before I moved here and made it public that I was moving.

**WCT: What do you bring to the table that others don't?**

MT: The way my mind works creatively is not the same as other people. My thought process works differently than others. With going digital, I wanted to make it bigger and crazier than what anyone else has ever done.

There is also the obvious, with me being a bodybuilder and I have this physique. This gives me a little edge that others don't have.

**WCT: How often do you work out?**

MT: Five days a week.

**WCT: How have you exercised during the pandemic?**

MT: For the first five months, I was living in Pennsylvania with my partner. We did home workouts. I was still training and doing fitness classes over Zoom. Now that gyms have opened up again, I try to be in there only 45 minutes and off times where I am not around people.

It's a mix of working out in the home and not being in the gym too long.

**WCT: What do you think of Kameron Michaels, who was also known for a strong drag body?**

MT: She's cool, but not a bodybuilder and has not competed. She's a fit person. If someone calls themselves "The Bodybuilder Barbie" they need to have competed onstage at least once. I am a full competitor and have won competitions. I think it's great that Kameron has a brand, but she also hides her physique in drag, so not sure why she has that brand.

You see my bodybuilding in my drag. You see my arms and abs. You see my work in the gym, as opposed to hiding it in a sleeve.

**WCT: Where have you competed with bodybuilding?**

MT: I competed mostly in Miami and once here in Chicago last year. I am very familiar with the South Florida NPC circuit, which stands for National Physique Committee. I prefer to go to Florida to compete, because I feel more comfortable there. I know the competitors, so it feels very family oriented and welcoming.

I won the Miami Classic in 2018. I had lost that competition the year prior with second place, so it was really gratifying to return and win my class.

**WCT: Do you lift onstage or pose?**

MT: I do posing. Power lifting is a different competition and this NPC competition is all about physique.

**WCT: Is being on RuPaul's Drag Race a goal of**

**yours?**

MT: Not really. I think it is great for people that have that as a goal, but I feel I am carving my own path very well by myself without using the show as a platform. I am happy for my friends who have been on the show, but I am forging my own path my own way.

For me, right now, I am focusing on what I am doing. I am putting out the best content and art for people to enjoy safely at a time like this, because we are looking for a moment to disconnect from the world.

Doing drag and giving people drag gives me a mental break to be able to do something creative and put it into the world. People connect with me still, despite not being able to be in the clubs.

**WCT: I saw you speak at the Drag March for Change. How was that moment for you?**

MT: It was full circle for me. I was looking at the panel that I had looked up to since before even doing drag the first time. I felt validated and in the right place. I have worked very hard to get to where I am. I was sitting on a panel with people that I have admired for five years. I was able to hold my own and hopefully be an inspiration for other Black drag performers, too.

**WCT: What inspires your cosplay drag looks?**

MT: It is really all over the place. I love horror movies, but I want to stand out as a character. If I watch a cartoon and see myself in that costume, it might spark something where I want to transform the 2D character into a 4D person, but it also has to be a drag look as well. I may put nails on with lashes and bigger hair. I crank it up to the next level.

I feel that is what separates regular cosplay from drag cosplay. There is something special about the way drag performers do cosplay. We are not just making a look, but also a story to the character.

**WCT: What is your latest song to lip-synch to?**

MT: On the digital platform it is more about creating music videos. Once I make a music video then I run it around to different shows. When I am done I put it on my social media for everyone else to enjoy.

For the Drive-in, I am performing an Ariana Grande song, but with a spooky Halloween twist. I have only performed a few times live since the pandemic and didn't love the experience because I am not comfortable being around crowds currently. I don't touch money and that is part of the issue. Some places that are booking queens still want people to walk around, interact with the crowd and touch dollars. We have to make our money somehow, but I don't feel safe doing that.

This is my first opportunity to perform live onstage and not feel the pressure to be in the audience. I have been working with CircuitMOM for a year now as a dancer, choreographer and in drag. This level of production hasn't been seen in a drag show in forever, so I am looking forward to it!

**The Drop Dead Drag Pageant has two shows from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 16, at the Lakeshore Drive-In, 1362 S. Linn White Dr.**

**Tickets for car passes are available at CircuitMOM.com and LSDriveIn.com.**

**For more on Toto, visit TheMissToto.com.**

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## COMEDY

# Local musician/comic Becky Raisman aims to show passion in performing

BY EMILY REILLY

Becky Raisman—a 38-year-old singer and comedian who is part of the LGBTQ+ community—has been singing ever since she was in elementary school. She now both covers and writes her own songs, performing them in local venues.

Raisman is originally from Highland Park. She sang in choirs throughout her time at school and eventually pursued performing arts in acting and singing at Columbia College. She recently moved to the Charleston area in South Carolina and has been performing at venues there since. Raisman discussed how she goes about her song-writing

and creation process.

"Usually I would write lyrics and a melody and I would get tracks off of soundbetter.com. It's a website where you can find people to collab with or get tracks and stuff," said Raisman. "I've done many singing competitions and open mics in the Chicagoland area."

When it comes to competitions, Raisman has performed on stages in both Chicago and Charleston.

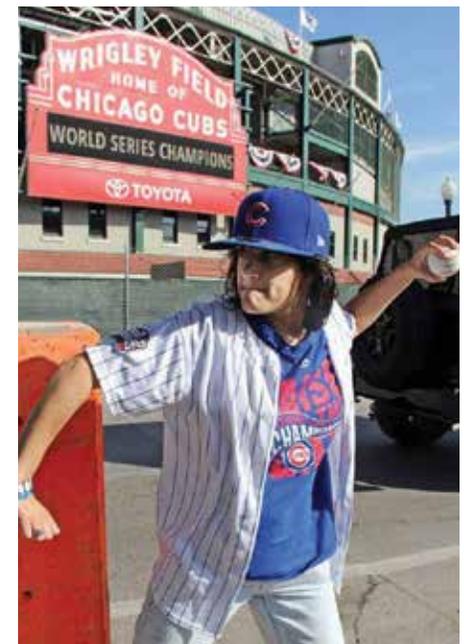
"I've been in a singing contest at RJ's Idol, a restaurant I used to go to," said Raisman. "I was in a few contests at Club Icon, a gay nightclub in Kenosha and one time I did a Highland Park's

Got Talent Contest. I had a friend I knew in high school who owned a store in Highland Park called Silk Thumb and she was running the contest and convinced me to do it. I've tried out for all those singing shows like The Voice, I tried out for America's Got Talent, all those shows. Unfortunately I didn't make it on, but I'm hoping to one day get my big break hopefully."

Raisman records many of her songs at Charleston Sound Studios and Omnisound Studios and has released them on ReverbNation and YouTube. She spoke about how she has been out of the closet for 20 years and stressed the importance of listening to artists that are supportive of the LGBTQ+ community.

"I really like the LGBTQ+-friendly artists like Ariana Grande and Taylor Swift," said Raisman. "I like all kinds of pop music. I was a teenager in the '90s so I also like a lot of '90s stuff. I've also listened to Dolly Parton since I was a little kid. She's really amazing."

Beyond singing, Raisman also plays the keyboard, acts and frequently performs stand-up at local venues.



**Becky Raisman.**

Photo by Dan Jacobson

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"I have been doing stand-up for over three years," said Raisman. "I took a class at the Annoyance Theater and then I did a showcase there and some open mics at the Laugh Factory. I also studied improv over at Improv Playhouse in Libertyville."

When it comes to inspiration for writing and performing, Raisman talked about how she really enjoys late-night comedy shows. She looks up to Jenny Hagel, an LGBTQ+ comedian and comedy writer who has appeared on Late Night with Seth Meyers' desk segment Jokes Seth Can't Tell.

"I like to write jokes about my sexuality, I write jokes about the 'softball lesbian,'" said Raisman. "I also write jokes on straight women, queer women and you know stuff in general that a lot of people think would be funny and stuff like that."

As of right now, Raisman has moved her comedy and musical talents online due to performance venues being closed. She is keeping up creatively by writing songs and performing at virtual comedy showcases.

"I'm working on another song right now actually, it's called Moment with You," said Raisman. "And I do write some comedy. I've been doing some Zoom stuff for open-mics."

Becky also has other original songs that she's written called "What Ya Say Baby," "Sun," "Girlfriend" and "Summertime Sugar." Clips of her stand-up performances can also be found on YouTube.



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## Sky's season ends with loss to Connecticut

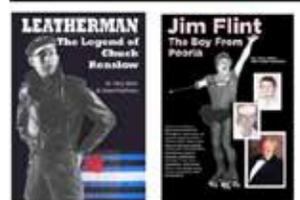
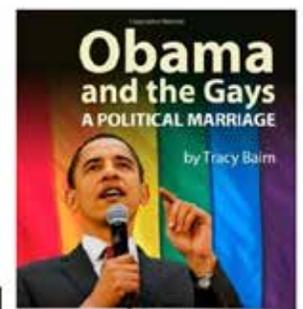
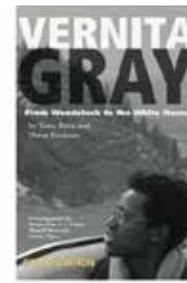
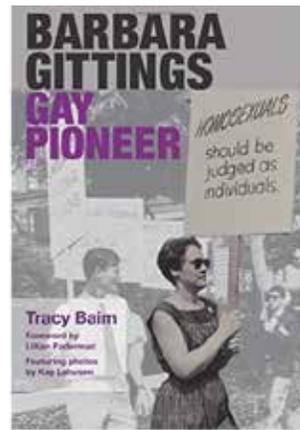
The Chicago Sky's season came to an end Sept. 15 with a 94-81 loss to the Connecticut Sun in the single-elimination first round of the 2020 WNBA Playoffs at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Florida.

When asked if he thought the team showed its true identity during the game, Sky General Manager and Head Coach James Wade responded, "No, like [I] knew some things that we wanted to do that we needed to do to win the game and we didn't get it accomplished. So, it's tough.

"We live in a profession where it's hit or miss and if you don't set yourself up for success by doing the little things then you're more than likely gonna lose."

Wade added, "I told [the players] thank you and how much I really appreciated them coming. I know, you know, because of COVID [19], because of, you know, social-injustice issues. It was just a tough time for everybody, especially some of the players that play overseas that haven't gotten a chance to see their parents or their loved ones. For them to commit to the team, for them to commit to us as a coaching staff, commit to the Chicago Sky, I thought it said a lot from them."

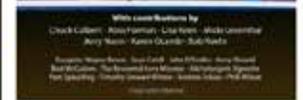
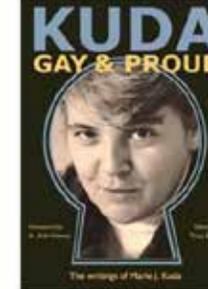
On leaving the Florida bubble where the teams were stationed, guard Allie Quigley said, "Just mixed emotions; obviously it's sad because, you know, we just ended our season. I feel like the end always comes just faster than you would want it to come. I don't know—it's kind of an emotional roller-coaster."



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Davis Mallory.  
Photo by Wes and Alex

## MUSIC

# Davis Mallory name-drops Jane Fonda with new song

BY JERRY NUNN

Openly gay singer Davis Mallory has debuted a new pop song called “Jane Fonda” for the masses. The track was written in Stockholm, Sweden and the video was directed by Cooper Smith in Nashville, Tennessee.

Many may recognize Mallory from his MTV Real World days in 2006 or his later appearances on the network’s Challenge competition shows.

He has gone on to DJ and write music over the years. His EP Loud dropped in 2017.

Along with the “Jane Fonda” single, songs such as “Shirtless,” “Sun and Moon” and “Getting 2 Close” are planned for a forthcoming album.

**Windy City Times: Where does the name “Davis” come from?**

Davis Mallory: I’m a fourth, so my full name is James Davis Mallory IV. My mom wanted to differentiate me and had me go by “Davis.” Everyone above me went by “James.”

**WCT: You grew up in Atlanta, Georgia?**

DM: Yes—I was born there.

**WCT: You knew you were gay in sixth grade?**

DM: Pretty much. I remember liking a girl in sixth grade, but also remember liking a guy around that age. I told my mom, then realized I let out something I shouldn’t have, because of the way she responded to it.

It grew as I got through high school and I was more aware of guys.

**WCT: How did you celebrate Pride this year?**

DM: I was going to play some Pride festivals this year, but those were cancelled. I was booked in California, North Carolina and was in talks with Germany and Australia. All four of those would have been new to me.

When Pride actually happened, I didn’t really do anything.

**WCT: How was being an out cast member on MTV overall? Was it positive or negative from fans of the show?**

DM: Mostly it was positive. I am sure there was some negativity, but I remember the positive. Many people identified with me and still message me to this day that they came out after seeing me on that show. That is always nice to see.

**WCT: Do you watch the current MTV Challenge show?**

DM: I watched some of last year’s shows. MTV used my song “Shirtless” on one episode.

**WCT: This new music was planned to be released before the pandemic?**

DM: Yes. Two summers ago I was in Sweden for a performance and I wrote five songs. I have only released two of them so far. “Shirtless” was the first and “Jane Fonda” was the second. I started writing more and more in the same style. One of them is called “Atlanta,” which is produced by the same person that did “Jane Fonda.” I was going to call the album Atlanta, but decided to name it something different. I haven’t announced it yet, so I will hold that back until later.

**WCT: Why did you pick actress Jane Fonda for the new song?**

DM: She held a big name in Georgia, being married to Ted Turner. Turner Broadcasting was based out of Atlanta. Her name felt like a melody and I built the concept around it.

I will admit I had heard the Mickey Avalon song by the same name in my youth and I always thought it was cool.

**WCT: Do you have to get the rights to use the name?**

DM: I reached out to her team and showed them the song prior to releasing it. I asked for her involvement. She declined to be in the video, but gave permission to use the clips.

Her rep said she is very focused on her activism and doesn’t want to distract from that.

**WCT: Why not pick Ricky Martin as the subject instead?**

DM: It’s not necessarily a heterosexual song. The lyrics are “you are stunning and fine like Jane Fonda” and, for me, that’s about a guy.

Prince was a big inspiration for that song, because after he died I listened to every song he made. His [androgyny] influenced me as an artist, as well as George Michael’s career. My management suggested that I could be the next George Michael made me want to cater to a female fanbase.

The song is not me. I did “Shirtless,” which is about how good looking men are when their shirts are off. I didn’t want to make a career off of me being gay.

**WCT: Was there a moment in Jane Fonda’s career that was your favorite?**

DM: Her workout videos were inspiring. I do watch Grace and Frankie, her recent work too. Barbarella is super-cool with the styling.

**WCT: Is your song “Anyone Would Know” about coming out?**

DM: That song was about a guy I dated in New York prior to moving to Nashville. I find myself journaling about things when they are not good to help with stress. I brought that journal into the co-writing session. The words “anyone would know that I’m with you” are from my journal. I wrote it to boldly show him how much I loved him. He was jealous of me and Mike C. Manning from The Real World: DC having a friendship. That was the reason we broke up in the end.

It was a big song for me because it got me as-

signed to a label.

**WCT: You put out a song called “Lost” with a Peruvian DJ?**

DM: Yes. I wrote that with a girl that I lived with at the time and stars in the music video with me. It was a topline, where a DJ needs lyrics written over his music. I wrote it and he approved it. The video was nominated in DJ Mag Peru for Best Music Video the year it came out.

I like the message of the song. It’s about if someone’s life is not heading the right way that God has their life under control. I was raised with a Christian upbringing.

**WCT: How is living in Nashville working out for you?**

DM: Nashville has been a great place for me. I moved here after living in New York, Chicago and Atlanta all for two years in each place.

Now, I have been in Nashville for seven years. People are here for music. It is not just country music, but many different genres. I have been able to write and produce songs here. I do have an itch to go live in LA, or maybe Europe.

**WCT: How has COVID affected your career so far?**

DM: I have not been able to go out and perform, so I have mainly stuck to online promotions. I just did a virtual Chicago Ryan Banks Academy fundraiser with Jeff Garlin as the host this past June where I sang one song. I think I’m putting the song on the album. I wrote it at the start of COVID and it is very churchy!

**Put your leg warmers on and dance over to DavisMallory.com for information on “Jane Fonda” and Mallory’s other work.**

## GALECA announces inaugural Dorian TV award winners

Hugh Jackman, Janelle Monae, Billy Porter, John Oliver and Schitt’s Creek creator-star Dan Levy, plus stars and producers of Killing Eve and Watchmen, offered heartfelt thanks as they virtually accepted awards—and were treated to a symbolic raise of the glass—from GALECA: The Society of LGBTQ Entertainment Critics during the group’s recent first TV special.

The Dorians TV Toast 2020—a recorded two-hour program hosted by opinionated talk-radio figure Karel and airing on the LGBTQ+ streaming platform Revry—was a hybrid of awards and chat/variety shows.

Presenters included actor Josh Thomas (Freeform’s Everything’s Gonna Be Okay), Alex Newell (of NBC’s hit Zoey’s Extraordinary Playlist), comic actresses Margaret Cho and Lea DeLaria, Hollywood wit Bruce Vilanch and RuPaul’s Drag Race All Stars champ Chad Michaels.

Watchmen star Regina King—a nominee for the miniseries and a previous Dorian film award winner for If Beale Street Could Talk—thanked the Society for “not one but two Dorian Awards. Love it, Love it!”

Monae—accepting her joint-win with singer-actor Billy Porter for Best TV Musical Performance for their duet at the start of last Feb-



Hugh Jackman in Bad Education.

Photo courtesy of HBO

ruary’s Academy Awards—said the experience of performing that night “was a dream” and that, when it came to asking Porter to join her, “There was no other person I could think about sharing that stage with.”

Jackman won Best TV Performance—Actor for his portrayal of a true-life public school embezzler in HBO’s Bad Education. The actor thanked GALECA, his director and co-stars (including Rafael Casal, who played Jackman’s character’s lover), said his Dorian award “really, really means a lot ... [making Education] was just one of those incredible experiences. This is just icing on the cake.”

The full list of contenders, across 14 categories, can be found at DoriansToast.com. For more about GALECA, see GALECA.org.



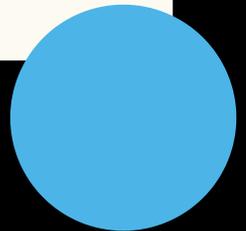
**AFFINITY COMMUNITY SERVICES**  
25 YEARS OF BLACK LGBTQ+

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**AFFINITY IS CELEBRATING 25 YEARS  
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Thank you, Windy City Times for being a vital part of our 25 year legacy.  
Let's continue the journey and congratulations on 35 years!

“There will not be a magic day when we wake up and it’s now okay to express ourselves publicly.

We make that day by **DOING** things publicly until it’s simply the way things are.”

—Tammy Baldwin, U.S. Senator  
First openly gay senator elected to the U.S. Senate

Thank you,  
for **DOING**  
publicly & in print  
for the **LGBTQ+**  
Community.  
You are magic!  
We love you.



# TRACY BAIM



years for the **LGBTQ+** Community

About Face Theatre • Lilly Be • Jim Bennet & Terry Vanden Hoek • Susan Blake & Pat Ewert • Laura Chernicky Freudenburg  
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Patricia Robles • Alma Rodriguez • Theresa & Mercedes Santos-Volpe • Ava Santos-Volpe • Tamale Sepp • Andrew Volkoff  
Liz Weck • Jackie Weinberg • Jennifer Welch • Keaton Wooden

## BAIM from page 7

my article about the new Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues appointed by Mayor Harold Washington.

The years 1985–87 were among the most devastating and exciting in Chicago's gay community. AIDS was tightening its terrifying grip on our city, slightly delayed from the East and West coasts. We lost some of our own staff and one of our WCT founders, Bob Bearden, to AIDS. There was a large push for the city's gay-rights bill, gays were running for office, more gay businesses were opening, sports and culture groups were thriving, new nonprofits were starting, the 1987 March on Washington sparked a huge growth in local groups back in cities such as Chicago, and ACT UP formed to take a no-prisoners approach to fighting for access to a cure for AIDS.

During my 18 months as managing editor of *Windy City Times*, until May 1987, I was so excited and honored to cover this incredible growth in the community. The highlight was a huge downtown rally in July 1986, when all parts of the community came together to push for a city gay-rights bill vote. There was a buzz unlike any I had witnessed earlier. There were people of all races and genders, thousands strong in Daley Plaza. I snapped photos, took notes, and had tears in my eyes seeing such community unity. We ran the phone numbers of all 50 aldermen and encouraged readers to call their elected officials.

That unity has rarely shown itself, but when it does, I am a sucker for the emotions of the moment. Yet I am also realistic, and for the most part the community's divisions have been the hardest part to cover. The sexism, racism, ageism, classism, ableism, and geographic divisions make this city a smoldering pot, not a melting pot. I was called a "cunt" and other names by men threatened by a woman publisher.

Of course, there are also the sinister elements, those who are gays gone bad, who steal from nonprofits, abuse drugs and alcohol, destroy businesses and organizations, or even in some cases commit murder. I have covered my share of serial and spree killers within the gay community, those so distorted and so ashamed of their own true selves that they have to kill to cope, from John Wayne Gacy (who was arrested long before I started but who was put to death in 1994) to Larry Eyler (who was on the scene when I started at *GayLife*) and later Jeffrey Dahmer and Andrew Cunanan.

The high-profile cases of murders and suicide have been especially traumatic to write about. The 1998 killing of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, the murders of numerous transgender, lesbian and gay Chicagoans, and the spike in reported LGBTQI youth suicides are very difficult to report. *Windy City Times* did a series on youth suicide in 2010, and at that time I wrote about my own suicide attempt while in college. I have infrequently used personal difficulties to relate the stories of our movement, but it is not easy getting so personal with the political.

So it is not all parades and galas, bartenders and athletes, that keep this gay world spinning. As a journalist, you can get pretty disgusted and burned out with the difficult stories.

But then, what always kept me going was the



Tracy Baim interviews Mayor Harold Washington in late 1986.

Photo by William Burks

true heroes of our community, those who were martyred for our movement in deaths due to AIDS, cancer, murder, car crashes or other tragedies, or those who have been able to soldier on, keeping committed to their activism for decades, despite the burnout, despite the bitter community infighting.

### Notable Moments

There were many other notable moments over my 36 years:

— Meeting and interviewing Mayor Harold Washington in 1986 was a highlight for me as a 23-year-old journalist. He was a big teddy bear of a man, warm and fierce at the same time. Covering his re-election was exciting and rewarding. And I even had the guts to ask him about the rumors about his sexuality. (He denied them.)

— The push for the city's human-rights ordinance was at a fever pitch in the mid-1980s. The forced (and failed) vote under Washington led to heightened community activism, and eventual passage under Mayor Eugene Sawyer in 1988. The work of the Gang of Four and hundreds of other activists and politicians was fantastic to watch and cover. Reporting about the City Council for the final winning vote in 1988, under Mayor Sawyer, was phenomenal.

— In 1985, I drove to northern Minnesota to interview Karen Thompson in one of the more tragic stories of the 1980s gay movement. Her partner, Sharon Kowalski, was severely injured in a November 1983 car accident, and Sharon's family won court victories to keep Karen out of her life. This badly affected Sharon's recovery and future health. Interviewing Karen less than two years after the accident, and after Sharon had been moved to a nursing home, was difficult, but her story served as an example to gay couples across the country to get their legal paperwork in order. Sadly, these types of cases still happen.

— Attending and covering the 1987, 1993 and 2000 Marches on Washington were life-changing experiences, as was being at the 1994 Stonewall 25 March combined with the Gay Games in New York. Priceless. The 1987 march and related

events were especially pivotal and inspiring, including taking photos of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, and Chicago attorney Renee Hanover and others being arrested at the U.S. Supreme Court protest.

— I witnessed the courage of Black LGBTQI activists in pushing for inclusion in Chicago's Bud Billiken Parade. Janice Layne recommended applying to be in the parade, and when activists won (with the help of Lambda Legal) and subsequently marched in the event, I was happy to walk the route taking photos. This was a wonderful event to cover, and the acceptance from the onlookers brought tears to my eyes. I had watched the parade as a child, because my mom, Joy Darrow, covered the parade for the *Chicago Defender*. It inspired Latino/a activists to march in other Chicago parades including Mexican and Puerto Rican events.

— Starting *BLACKlines* and *En La Vida* newspapers brought emotional highlights for me, especially the first-anniversary party for *BLACKlines* at the DuSable Museum, with my mom mixing the punch. This was just shortly before she died, so it is an important memory for me. Since Joy, as a white woman, had been managing editor of the *Defender* for eight years, she was especially proud of me for launching *BLACKlines*. The economics couldn't support those papers after 10 years of publishing, but I was very happy to have been a publisher of such important monthly media.

— Receiving the 2005 Community Media Workshop's Studs Terkel Award, presented by Terkel himself, was a career highlight. I am also thankful for the other journalism and community awards I have received, including induction into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame at age 31, and induction into the Halls of Fame for NLGJA (the Association of LGBTQI Journalists), and Chicago's Society of Professional Journalists and Association of Women Journalists chapters.

— Being co-vice chair of the board of Gay Games VII in 2006 was a once-in-a-lifetime experience as an organizer, showcasing Chicago to the world—and breaking even financially. I think we did our city proud, despite the odds (and

people) against us. Doing outreach for the Games and speaking in more closeted towns, including Crystal Lake (where our rowing events were held), proved educational even to this jaded journalist. It also forced me out of my newspaper bat cave and across the world, especially to Europe and South Africa.

— Founding the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce in 1995 was also an important accomplishment for me. I believe it was the first gay and lesbian business group to use the word "chamber" in its title, and now that has been replicated all over the country. Around that time I also received the Crain's Chicago Business 40 Under 40 Award, which made me feel accepted beyond the gay community. They are now the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois.

— The *chicagogayhistory.org* website has been a labor of love for me, interviewing hundreds of current and former Chicagoans on gay issues. I want to do many more—only time and funding restrict all it can be. I also loved making the *That's So Gay!* 2,400-question trivia board game in 2013.

— Producing the films *Hannah Free*, starring Sharon Gless and terrific Chicago actors, and *Scrooge & Marley* with a host of actors—well, those are experiences I can't even compare to anything else. And they are simply other ways to tell our community's stories—journalism on the big screen. I also was proud to produce a film of poet e. nina jay as she spoke the words of her book *Body of Rooms*.

— Interviewing Barack Obama in 2004 for his U.S. Senate run, and doing a 2010 in-depth book on him, *Obama and the Gays: A Political Marriage*, are certainly high points of my journalism career. Going to the White House for his June 2012 Pride Month reception, and getting a hug and kiss from the president, was amazing. I have since done other books that touch on segments of Chicago gay history, including biographies of prominent gay and lesbian leaders, some co-written with Owen Keehnen (Chuck Renslow, Jim Flint, Vernita Gray and national legend Barbara Gittings). Owen is an amazing collaborator.

— Producing the 2013 March on Springfield for Marriage Equality was absolutely one of the highlights of my life. Most LGBTQI leaders said it couldn't be done, but I believe too much in my own community to listen to those who don't. With four months planning, and by recruiting support from across the state, we were able to get 5,000 people in the rain to lobby for marriage rights in our state capitol. Combined with insider lobbying, the march helped lead to the successful marriage vote within a few days.

— My work on LGBTQI youth homeless projects started in 2014, after WCT had done a large, award-winning series on the topic, but nothing seemed to change. I am so proud of the conferences we did, and the projects we completed, including a foundation-funded Chicago Youth Storage Initiative, and pushing the needle on tiny homes for the homeless. The work continues as Pride Action Tank, a project of AIDS Foundation of Chicago, with my PAT co-founder Kim Hunt at the helm.

— The funniest thing happened to me two years ago, which I could have never predicted or

**Turn to page 50**



# THANK YOU WINDY CITY TIMES

for lifting up our voices and always speaking truth to power.

For 35 years, you've championed our cause for equality...celebrating our progress and holding us all accountable for the work that remains.

We are a stronger community and better advocates because of you.

With love and solidarity,  
The Lambda Legal Midwest Team

*Join us October 21 for our virtual Bon Foster celebration.  
Details at [lambdalegal.org/bonfoster](https://lambdalegal.org/bonfoster)*

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making the case for equality

## BAIM from page 48

even planned for. In October 2018 I took over as publisher of the Chicago Reader, the city's legacy alternative paper, founded in 1971. The new owners asked me to try and save this legendary media company, and as it moves to a nonprofit in 2021, we are doing our best to celebrate its 50 years in style—and by staying alive in this new media world. When I started this work in 1984, having an open lesbian publisher of the Reader or any mainstream paper would have been quite an aberration. Now, my work in community media has been an asset. Thanks to the owners who saved the Reader, Elzie Higginbottom and Leonard Goodman, and to the first board members, Eileen Rhodes, Jessica Stites and Dorothy Leavell.

## Journalism Juggling 101

The funny thing for me all these years has been the multiple hats I have had to wear, just to keep doing what I love most: reporting. Some people have criticized the conflicts of interest I have to navigate in doing this, but it was the only path I knew to follow in order to keep doing the work. I decided to run my own paper in my early 20s so that I could control my own destiny—as a writer. It took me a long time to claim the title of “publisher” at Outlines, even though that was what I was—and nobody else was doing that work. For decades, I have been lucky enough to have shareholders in the paper who have allowed me to make a lot of mistakes as I worked through sleepless nights on a very long learning curve.

So I did sales, writing, editing, photography, delivery, opinion columns for The Huffington Post, and whatever else it took to keep Windy City Times visible and thriving.

And I did not take that surviving lightly. Hav-

ing almost died a few times in my life, I have never taken my days for granted. I also came of age as a gay media reporter when the city had just a few dozen diagnosed cases of AIDS. This was like coming into a war zone, as people on our own staff, and all over the gay community, began to die very quickly, with no end in sight. I was covering the deaths of men (and some women) my age or just slightly older. Many of them never received coverage in the mainstream media, so it fell on the gay press to document their lives. Looking back over thousands of obituaries over the years, and hundreds of funerals I attended, it was the greatest honor to cover the war years, as a young person just getting to understand what her “community” was, making sure our community's heroes are not forgotten.

I remember their faces, their smiles, their anger and their tears. And that is what keeps me motivated. It is unbelievable that HIV/AIDS is still rampaging across this planet, nearly 40 years after it first felled humans.

## Thank yous

As we come to an end to this era of Windy City Times, closing our print editions on the 35th anniversary of the paper's founding, there will never be enough ways that I can thank this community, my friends, my family, my partner, my staff, and all who played a role in LGBTQI media these past 36 years of my career, and 35 years of WCT. I list a lot of specific people in the Windy City Times essay, but here are a few more below.

I especially want to thank my full-time staff these past two years, some of them with us more than 25 years: Publisher Terri Klinsky, Executive Editor Andrew Davis, Managing Editor Matt Simonette, Art Director and Associate Editor Kirk Williamson, and my partner Jean Albright, who has

worn many hats but most importantly as digital editor and circulation director. Our bookkeeper Ripley Caine has helped us hold it together these past eight years, along with our accountants and other vendors. Some of our delivery drivers and freelance writers and photographers have been with us for decades. Their work has always been key to what we do.

I also want to thank the many and various owners of WCT/Outlines over the decades, for their patience and support, especially early backers Nan Schaffer (and Karen Dixon), Scott McCausland and Pete Thelen (and Terry Childers). Our advertisers, donors, event attendees, and readers, have kept us motivated, have fueled our work in many ways, and there is no way we could have done it without all of these things.

In addition, hundreds of people helped support WCT through donations and friendship. Especially important have been Michael Leppen, Sam Coody, Sari Staver, Peggy Garner, Deborah Schmall, Mona Noriega, Evette Cardona, Jane Saks, Emma Ruby Sachs, Art Johnston, Jackie and Ann Kaplan-Perkins, Laura Ricketts, Brooke Skinner-Ricketts, Jackie Boyd, Kathy Munzer, Sam Abeysekera, David Strzepek, Tod Tatsui, Sandra Klein, Diane Dodin, Sharon Zurek, Lisa Kouba, e. nina jay, Fawzia Mirza, Barb Kay, Julia Simmons, Sharon Brown, Karen Griebel, Martie Marro, Lisa Hernandez, Katie Jacobson, Nancy Johnson, Kelly Martin, Deb Bayly, Precious and Myles Brady-Davis, Kim Hunt, Mary DeBacker, Diane and Jeanne Statts-Mareci, Sharon Mylrea, Kat Fitzgerald, Mary Morten, Willa Taylor, Kelly Saulsberry, Dr. Traci Beck, Michael Bauer, Kevin Boyer, Suzanne Arnold, Joanne Siebers, Leslie Fisher (and her late wife Geegee), Cathy Seabaugh, Becky Frey, Alison Stanton, Jan Dee, Janet Gutrich, Gail Morse, Lauren Verdich, Pat Ewert, Susan Blake, Nabeela Rashid, Emmanuel Garcia, Theresa Volpe, Liz Valenti, Vivian

Gonzalez, Mercedes Santos, Sam Kirk, Cathy Milano, Pat McCombs, Paula Gee, Claudia Allen, Deb Murphy, Kay Miles, Ann Christophersen, Linda Bubon, LV Jordan, Yvonne Welbon, Megan Carney, Eric Kugelman, Lori Cannon, Victor Salvo, Julio Rodriguez, David Sinski, LaGenia Bailey, Marilyn Wilson, Sarah Hoagland, Anne Leighton, Toni Weaver, Mark Ishaug, David Munar, John Pellar, Imani Rupert-Gordon, Evy Grace, Lisa Roehl, Kim Pierce, Nancy Poore, Riva Lehrer, Tina Feldstein, Alex McCann, Kay Lahusen, and yes, I could go on and on. And the order above is as random as I could get! I thank everyone who in any way made WCT, Outlines, BLACKlines, En La Vida, OUT!, Nightlines/Nightspots, and the other media possible, through money, work, and so much more.

Finally, my family. In addition to Jean, my sister Marcy and her son Anthony, my brother Clark and his daughter Eden, my late mom Joy Darrow and stepdad Steve Pratt, my dad Hal Baim, and my close and extended family. They are my rocks, endlessly supporting and encouraging all my crazy dreams.

We will keep the website [www.windycitytimes.com](http://www.windycitytimes.com) active and hopefully with a lot more to come online. But I will miss the print issues, those curated weekly or biweekly summaries of our Chicago LGBTQI world.

**Windy City Times is trying to cover its bills to also pay its staff and drivers severance. If you can donate, for all the years we have been free in print and online, please see <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/donate.php>. You can also buy extra copies of this last issue at that link, and soon, copies of a new book of WCT and other local gay media covers.**

**This essay is adapted and updated from an essay in the 2012 book *Gay Press, Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America*, by Tracy Baim.**



Left: Tracy Baim riding her Mustang and handing out Outlines newspaper in the 1987 Chicago Pride Parade. Right: Tracy Baim speaking at the 2013 March on Springfield for Marriage Equality. Right photo by Hal Baim



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**Thank You!**

On behalf of the LGBTQ Latinx community in Illinois, we want to thank The Windy City Times for capturing our community's stories when no one else would.

Your commitment to our communities have made our city and state a more equal and fair home.

**¡Gracias!**

En parte de la comunidad latina LGBTQ en Illinois, queremos agradecer a The Windy City Times por capturar las historias de nuestra comunidad cuando nadie más lo haría.

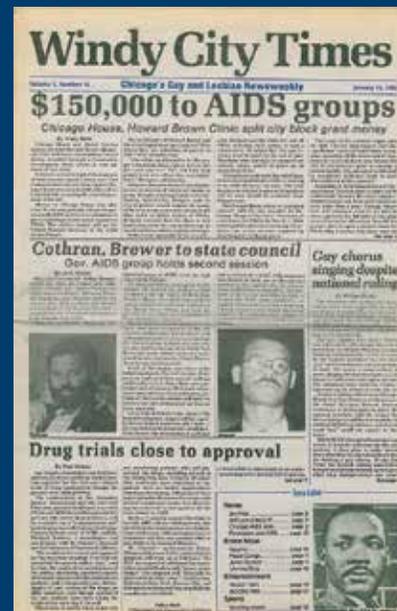
Su compromiso con nuestras comunidades ha hecho que nuestra ciudad y estado sea un hogar más justo.

**ALMA**  
 Association of Latino/as Motivating Action  
 Asociación de Latino/as para Motivar Acción

# WINDY CITY TIMES

IN PRINT 1985-2020

Windy City Times' first issue was Sept. 26, 1985. The staff was primarily from GayLife newspaper, which had been around since the 1970s and lasted until 1986. From the start, WCT focused heavily on Chicago-area HIV/AIDS news, politics, legislation, crime, culture and sports. It also covered national and world news important to the LGBTQ community. Around 1994, Outlines newspaper first went online, and when Outlines purchased WCT in 2000, the online push continued. For almost all of its 35 years, WCT was a weekly newspaper. About two years ago, it went to a biweekly format. Now, as WCT finishes this last regular print edition, the windycitytimes.com website will continue. It includes hundreds of thousands of articles and photos going back to the late 1990s, and will continue to be updated, along with its companion website chicagogayhistory.org.



**Windy City Times**  
Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly  
September 4, 1987

**Mayor discusses gay rights issues**



**50-hour prayer vigil for persons with AIDS/AIDS**

**Ad hoc 'clearinghouse' formed for rights work**

**Windy City Times**  
Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly  
September 11, 1987

**Chicago House opens new residence**



**Britt to attend Sable benefit**

**Study links traits to AIDS virus**

**Windy City Times**  
Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly  
September 18, 1987

**Candidates forums set by Town Meeting**



**'WCT' co-founder Robert Bearden dies**



**Windy City Times**  
Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly  
March 1, 1988

**Thousands expected at historic D.C. gay march**



**Harry Britt aims for Congress**

**Sable race called 'victory': possible Council gains**



**Windy City Times**  
Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly  
June 14, 1987

**AIDS measure amendment killed**



**Bayard Rustin to be honored**



**Student suspended in 'Iron Fist' case**

**Windy City Times**  
Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly  
August 1, 1987

**Gays and lesbians to aldermen: 'We're waiting'**



**Gay choruses join stars for AIDS benefit**



**Windy City Times**  
The Decade in News, Entertainment, and Women's Culture  
Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly  
December 11, 1987

**'World AIDS Day' Marked by Arrests**  
Group Leaders and Activists Demonstrate Outside the White House



**Gay Law Firm Director Resigns**  
Charges of Financial Mismanagement Topple O'Leary



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**Windy City Times**  
Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly  
November 1, 1987

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Gays Score Unprecedented Nationwide Successes




**Health Dept. Will Hand Out Condoms in Schools**



**City Scrambles to Speed AIDS Before Deadline**

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Happy Anniversary  
to the Windy City Times.  
**Congratulations!**

Your work to tell LGBTQ stories  
with great dignity and integrity  
is imperative today and always.



[www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

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Featuring Special Guests

**JANE FONDA, CECILE RICHARDS & KIM FOXX**

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**Heather Booth** *Founder of the Jane Collective, "We Are All Jane!"*

**Bryan Howard** *President & CEO of Planned Parenthood Arizona*

**Toi Hutchinson** *Senior Adviser to the Governor on Cannabis Control*



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Please RSVP by Friday, October 2, 2020

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**WINDY CITY TIMES**  
FOR 35 YEARS OF PRINT COVERAGE  
OF CHICAGO'S LGBTQ+  
COMMUNITY AND BEYOND!

*Co-founded by Tracy Baim, Pride Action Tank is a project incubator  
and think tank that is focused on action that leads to improved outcomes  
and opportunities for LGBTQ+ communities in the Chicago region.*

Thank  
you

...to **Windy City Times**,  
for 35 years of serving  
Chicago's LGBTQ community.



**TPAN**

[positivelyaware.com/WCT](http://positivelyaware.com/WCT)

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**Historic Pride**  
The Windy City Times' 25th Anniversary Issue

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*Jean Albright*

## JEAN ALBRIGHT

Windy City Times  
Digital/Circulation  
Director  
Started in 1995

For most of my life, I've had a print paper, a physical product, to show for my efforts each week. I've got far too many copies of Outlines, Windy City Times and even Stars & Stripes, where I worked for many years, in boxes, serving not just a record of the work but as a diary of moments of learning.

The yellowing souvenirs remind me of the state of the world on each of those publication dates and the state of my understanding at those times. One gay newspaper in one big Midwestern city founded in turbulent times and published through decades of change has meant more to me than an index of the headlines would show. Remember the times:

While LGBTQ+ people were right to be afraid for loss of jobs and family, the front pages of Windy City Times and Outlines showed how nontraditional lives could be lived and challenges overcome.

While some people died from a misunderstood disease and others turned heartless out of fear, Outlines and later Windy City Times had headlines about, on one side, ineffective treatments, privacy, stigma and quarantine and, on the other, protest and a historic volunteer response. Each new year's headline for Coming Out Day or World AIDS Day had a different tone and reflected an evolving world.

In 2014 and 2015, Windy City Times had headlines about homeless LGBTQ youth. During that winter, community members stayed out all night in the snow to learn firsthand about that hardship.

When LGBTQ+ kids suffered bullying or neglect by government agencies, they saw respectful attention paid in the pages of Windy City Times.

When Chicago's gay community had internal struggles, Windy City Times helped the self-examination begin, challenging leaderships and supporting the new insights in service of all stakeholders. The paper sometimes took the hit for exposing difficulties but those challenged organizations later became partners again for the larger vision.

And during each and every Pride celebration since 1985, Outlines/Windy City Times recorded our community

speaking out and showing up in words and photos. Thousands of photos. Because, let's face it, our community is pretty interesting to look at.

In 1994, shortly after completing 20 years in the military, my learning curve was steep when I started with Outlines. One good lesson was that people with means would write checks and those without would volunteer time. And I didn't know that what it took was some clear-eyed community journalism showing people where the needs were and where their money or time would do the most good.

As director of circulation, I learned a life lesson in loyalty from our drivers. We've been lucky to have a dedicated team of delivery drivers with us through every season, every Pride and every deep winter storm. Each of our current drivers has been getting the paper out regularly and reliably for nearly 20 years, including the major-event winter storm of 2011 when we knew the storm was coming, went to press early and, as it turns out, were the only newspaper available in news boxes on the publication date. Reaching each newsbox involved digging through a snowbank to clear a path to it.

Our deepest appreciation for years of behind-the-scenes heroics goes out to Allan Zlatarich, John Collins, Vee Sonnets, Sue Landon, Dan Noone and Ashina Hamilton.

If you're reading this in print right now, it's because our drivers have made their last regular delivery of this community newspaper, undeterred by the risks and obstacles of COVID and downtown protests

So, as Windy City Times goes out of print, I'm having another learning moment. I realize that it was comforting to think that the information, voices and viewpoints committed to paper were firm and complete and fully represented their moments in time. I realize that it was a triumphant and hopeful act to place those newspapers in the news boxes. I realize that I'll miss the concreteness of a newspaper, with a certain weight for postage, a certain heft for delivery and a certain inherent optimism.



**A day in the life of Windy City Times delivery: Drivers Allan Zlatarich and Vee Sonnets work to maintain the boxes (above); Vee on the road bringing you the news (left and below).**  
Images from Vee Sonnets



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to Tracy and the whole WCT family for your decades of support and commitment to our community. What an amazing ride you all have had these past 35 years. You have been an important source and refuge to many in the LGBTQ+ family. We are forever in your debt and wish you much happiness and success for the future.

**Dalila Fridi**

(2020 Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame Inductee)

**Elizabeth McKnight**

(Long time LGBTQ Supporter)

**John Litchfield**

(2009 30 under 30 WCT Honoree )

**Joe Olszewski**

(2016 30 under 30 WCT Honoree )

# The Passing Parade: Cultural Reporting in an Age of Heroes

BY JORJET HARPER

There are several large plastic storage bins in my office filled with stacks of clippings of articles I wrote for the Chicago gay and lesbian newspapers *GayLife*, *Windy City Times* and *Outlines* during the 1980s and early 1990s, and for other LGBTQI publications, including New York's *OutWeek* magazine, the *Bay Area Reporter* in San Francisco, *Frontiers* in Los Angeles, *Bay Windows* in Boston, the *Washington Blade*, the *Dallas Voice*, *TWN* in Miami, *Southern Voice* in Atlanta and the *Lambda Book Report*.

Looking through these articles and photos from decades ago is a weird experience for me. The stories themselves are from a bygone era—with names and faces, events and controversies that seem so distant now, in light of where we are today—and yet I can relive the emotional environment of that time as if I'd been there just yesterday.

It's difficult to convey how exciting—sometimes even thrilling—it was to work in Chicago's gay and lesbian media at that time in U.S. history. To be in the midst of the gay and lesbian cultural renaissance (or more accurately, naissance, since nothing like it had ever happened before) that took place in the latter half of the 1980s, to think about it and to report on it, was nothing short of exhilarating. All those passionate discussions we had about the burning issues of the day, and marches, and demonstrations, and kiss-ins! At the same time, the appalling horror of AIDS—the plague that came out of nowhere and snuffed out so many gay lives—cast its shadow over everything and everyone I knew. The highs and lows we experienced were steep, to put it mildly, and sometimes followed so closely on one another that there was hardly room to take a breath in between.

## Feminism First

The first newspaper I contributed to in Chicago, after moving here from New York in 1979, was a little feminist periodical called *Blazing Star*. *Blazing Star*—named, for some symbolic reason I no longer remember, after the liatris flower—was the project of a group of socialist-leaning lesbian feminists I met sometime in 1980 who were members of a Chicago chapter of a national socialist-feminist organization called the New American Movement (NAM). Judy MacLean, Hannah Frisch, Chris Riddiough and Elaine Wessel were the core members of the *Blazing Star* group. There were quite a few other, more occasional participants whose names I no longer recall, some of whom had nothing to do with NAM and simply wanted to work on a lesbian-feminist newspaper.

We met weekly at each others' apartments, discussed ideas for articles we thought would be good to have in the next issue, and parsed out who among us would write them or who we could tap in the women's community to write on

a particular topic. During production time, at a storefront office location, we met with a lesbian (unfortunately, I don't recall her name, either) who never offered input on content but donated her time typesetting and laying out the pages for us.

The paper was all-women-written and all-women-produced, and it was one of a number of feisty little lesbian-feminist, we-are-women-hear-us-roar newspapers that appeared and disappeared in the feminist adrenalin surges of the 1970s and early 1980s. In general, these papers communicated news, ideas and literature of various political and social congruences, sometimes not overtly lesbian but usually with a core of lesbian-feminists to spur them on, and were part of the larger Women in Print movement that was politically robust at that time.

Times have definitely changed, but it should be said that when women got together without any participation by men, without being observed by men, it was often profoundly freeing and powerfully creative. Events that took place in "women-only space," produced by women, were, in my opinion, a vital component of the women's liberation movement. In those days, meetings of lesbians interested in print media could be by turns inspiring, enlightening, touching, heart-wrenching, stirring, amusing and goofy—and occasionally lunatic (not in the good sense of the word) when they became dominated by strident separatist ideologues.

As one example of many, I remember a Women in Print conference I attended in Madison, Wisconsin, where discussion went on in all seriousness for about an hour on the merits of including in the group's statement the "demand" that public libraries keep all lesbian books and periodicals under lock and key and allow only lesbians to view or borrow them. Questions of how this was to work in practice were fielded: How can librarians determine who is a lesbian? Should there be a separate card catalog as well for these women-only books? If the librarian is a man, can he look at the books? And even: But aren't we "allowing librarians too much power" if they are the gatekeepers of "our" books, unless the librarians are also lesbians? Etc., etc.

The first time I sat through a meeting where this kind of radical posturing was going on, I was astonished, looking around to see if the speakers were tripping; later on at these types of discussions I just gave up expecting any conversation to emerge that had practical consequences, and amused myself doodling in my notebook.

There were also discussions about the best way to spell "women" so as to eliminate the "men" from the latter half of the word—"wimmin," "womyn," "womon" and even something like "wombmoon" were proposed and used in various radical separatist contexts. It was silly, yes, but also an indication of how, in those heady days of second-wave feminism, everything, even orthography, was scrutinized for signs of sexism.

In contrast, the *Blazing Star* group was very sharp, witty and sincere about effecting social change, and I gravitated towards them. We distributed each issue of *Blazing Star* ourselves, of course, delivering bundles of papers to designated lesbian locations. I remember that once, in Hannah Frisch's car, we got a flat tire in the rain and had to pull up right outside a gay bar on Clark Street a few blocks north of Fullerton Parkway.

The car was so loaded down with newspapers that we had to take the heavy bundles out of the trunk in order to jack up the tire. Though *Blazing Star* was an all-women (code: lesbian) newspaper, some gay men in Chicago certainly

really a revolutionary leftist politico, so I was much more interested in our discussions of gyn/ecology, compulsory heterosexuality and archeological evidence of ancient goddess worship than I was in talking about cultural hegemony, dialectical materialism or the differences between the Leninists and the Trotskyists—but I was willing to hear about Gramsci as long as we also got around to talking about Adrienne Rich.

Even with our enthusiasm, feminist zeal and the latest gossip, it was a shitload of work to put out each new issue all on a volunteer basis, and those who had been at it quite a bit longer than I had were in various stages of burnout or looking to do something different with their



Jorjet Harper and Kathleen O'Malley in the Chicago Pride parade circa 1989, riding in the *Outlines* newspaper float.

knew of it. Rather than pile all the bundles on the street and ruin papers in the rain, we went into the gay bar to ask if we could stack them there for a bit. Initially, all the men inside (and it was only men) were very unfriendly and treated us like intruders—one loudly shouted "Fuck off!" at us—until they saw what newspaper we were delivering. Then they instantly became very nice to us, helping us lug the paper bundles inside, and in minutes three of them had even fixed the tire for us.

I mention this story to illustrate that while there was certainly a cultural energy barrier between many gay men and lesbians in the early 1980s, there was still a very real sense of community that was protective, and a recognition that we were all in it together.

During our weekly *Blazing Star* meetings, much time was spent discussing the intersections among lesbian liberation, feminism and socialist politics; the latest ideological crisis (there always was at least one) inside the lesbian community; and the gossip about which couples had broken up or gotten together. As a newcomer in Chicago, I often had no idea who was being gossiped about, but as a newcomer to the community, I found both the ideological discussions and the trash talk highly educational.

I was a feminist former hippie acid head, not

politics. Also, as I recall, NAM was becoming reluctant to foot the paper's printing costs. After not too many months, and many discussions that were both heartfelt and heated, the core group of women of *Blazing Star* decided to stop printing as an independent newspaper and become a section in the city's main gay newspaper, *GayLife*.

## GayLife

Embedding *Blazing Star* in *GayLife* worked out pretty well for a time, but the *Blazing Star* group as a whole disintegrated. Judy MacLean moved to San Francisco (and went on to write for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *The Advocate*, among other publications), and Chris Riddiough moved away (to Washington, D.C., and continued her feminist and socialist activism there). Attempts to recruit new group members failed. Several of the less-active volunteers, who didn't like the idea of working in any way with "the boys" and were therefore not happy with the "merger" decision, splintered off to create more new and, unfortunately, short-lived women's newspapers.

Soon after *Blazing Star* "merged" with *GayLife*, *GayLife* changed management from Grant Ford—the publisher who had invited *Blazing Star* into *GayLife* and who, the group felt, was sincere in his desire to boost lesbian readership of the pa-

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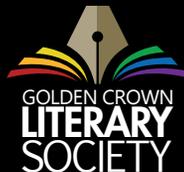
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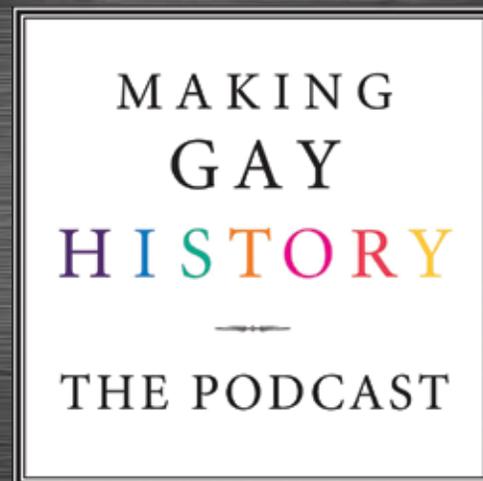
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Join us beginning October 1 for our 8th season, produced in association with Chicago's Studs Terkel Radio Archive. You can find us at [makinggayhistory.com](http://makinggayhistory.com) or subscribe wherever you get your podcasts.

## HARPER from page 60

per—to Chuck Renslow, the colorful, notorious Chicago leatherman who didn't seem to care one way or another about whether lesbians read Chicago's gay newspaper.

As the *Blazing Star* section of *GayLife* imploded, I began to write articles directly for the editor of the paper, Steve Kulieke. He seemed content to let me write about whatever topics interested me—usually some aspect of the growing women's-music movement or the lesbian-feminist movement. For example, I reviewed the groundbreaking book *Lesbian Nuns* and did a feature article on Mary Daly, music reviews of Ferron and Margie Adam, and an interview with Holly Near (you can Google these people if you've never heard of them, of course). I covered women's-music festivals and interviewed local musicians in the Chicago gay and lesbian entertainment scene. I even drew several cartoon strips for the paper.

The first time I wrote an article about a gay man rather than a lesbian, the editor (by then Steve Kulieke had left for San Francisco, too, and it was Bill Williams) decided that I was enough of an asset to be paid for my pieces. He offered me \$15 an article. Which I took.

I had been writing reviews and interviews for *GayLife* on and off for three or four years when Tracy Baim, right out of journalism school, became editorial assistant in 1984. When she was promoted to managing editor in the summer of 1985, that shook things up a bit. I started doing more and more writing, and since I could type well, she showed me how to use the typesetter so I could also begin to help out with the typesetting and make more money. She also instituted a new women's section in the paper, *Sister Spirit*.

Let me explain a bit about production procedures back then. Imagine a newspaper office without a single computer. (I know—it's hard for me to imagine, too, and I was there.) Think *Mad Men*, except everybody is queer and in bluejeans, in a setting that was darkly Dickensian rather than brightly lit Madison Avenue.

As a freelancer, I typed on my electric typewriter at home. When I was satisfied with my often copious rewrites and had a clean typed copy of my story, I took the bus to the *GayLife* office to drop it off with the editor. The office was located at 222 West Huron Street, behind the Merchandise Mart in the *Blazing Star* "merger" days, then it moved to the Andersonville neighborhood, just two doors north of Renslow's well-known bathhouse (lesbian separatist "fundamentalists" thought of it more as a spunk-encrusted patriarchal den of iniquity) *Man's Country* on Clark Street.

The editor read the pieces of paper, maybe made some pencil marks on the sheets, and then put them in a bin with other stories. The typesetter retyped by hand every sheet of paper in the bin, on the keyboard of a typesetting machine. This machine was massive—perhaps the size of two refrigerators put together—and it arranged the words in neat columns with justified margins on photographic paper, developed the paper internally in a self-contained "darkroom," and dropped it out of a chute on the side of the machine, still wet with chemicals.

After the photo paper dried, the art director

would take these sheets, cut them close-cropped around the text with scissors or a paper cutter, roll a special sticky wax onto the back, and position each one on a large layout sheet. The wax made each little piece of paper sticky but removable, so the arrangement could be changed like puzzle pieces until the designer or art director was happy with it. When ready, each of these layout pasteup sheets would have many such pieces of paper stuck to it, and this would become the original for that printed page when it was taken to the printer. Everything in the newspaper—columns, ads, page numbers, lines that separated the space visually—was laid out by hand.

The *GayLife* office was long and thin, dusty and funky, with this big old typesetting machine about halfway to the back. I remember that one afternoon, while I was typesetting, a group of employees, all men, were gathered around the small office television to watch a report about AIDS; the report claimed it was possible that one gay man in five was already infected. To be "infected" back then was a death sentence. There were five gay men watching the report, including Bob Bearden, *GayLife*'s sales manager. "My God," he said, "if that's true, one of us is going to die." They all just looked at each other. What could you say? It was incomprehensible.

I had attended my first AIDS funeral that May—Chicago entertainer Christopher Street, someone I had known from my open-mic guitar-playing days at His n' Hers bar. He had come down with a cold that turned into pneumonia, and he died three weeks later. That was typical then; almost as quickly as you heard someone had been diagnosed, he (or, much more rarely, she) was already dead. No cocktails, no nothing.

Gay papers and magazines were all speculating with increasing urgency as their obituary sections became noticeably longer, and the tabloids were shouting about the "gay plague." The general public was just beginning to realize the scope of the epidemic. Reports about AIDS at that time were confusing and often conflicting. Nobody really knew how contagious it was—only how lethal. Everyone was spooked. The mainstream media began reporting widely about AIDS only after actor Rock Hudson died in October 1985. Many straight people were doubly shocked, because they'd had no idea he was gay.

In early 1985, Bob Bearden's lover Jeff McCourt, whose nom de plume was Mimi O'Shea, became *GayLife*'s entertainment editor. We met one evening at the old Parkway diner at Clark and Fullerton to discuss future articles I might write.

Jeff had a closeted day job in downtown Chicago as an options trader; his style was the antithesis of Bob's. Bob was calm, soft-spoken and charming. Jeff was operatic and hyper—but he certainly had a lot of energy. At our meeting, he talked nonstop, hardly letting me get a word in edgewise. He had big ideas for how to improve the entertainment section, he said, and was writing articles in that week's paper not only as Mimi O'Shea but also as Hanz Gunther.

He said the Mimi O'Shea name started as "a kind of joke." He didn't tell me what the joke was, but I sat there trying to interject a sentence now and then about my concerns as a writer, and I managed to get in one or two remarks that seemed to register.

I mentioned that I wanted to review the recent biography of Alan Turing by Andrew Hodges. Jeff had never heard of Turing, but was quite interested when I began telling him about Turing's vital importance to British intelligence in World War II and in the history of computer science, and how as a gay man he was later sentenced in court to a "rehabilitation therapy" of estrogen injections that probably led to his suicide. Jeff said by all means I should go ahead with the review. My Turing story ended up as the lead feature in the entertainment section of the *Pride* issue. Jeff was effusive in his praise. He said it was the best piece he'd ever seen in *GayLife* and it "saved" the entertainment section of the *Pride Week* issue.

After that, Jeff was receptive to all my ideas for biographical and cultural features. And as managing editor, Tracy was a little human dynamo, filled with seemingly boundless enthusiasm for the gay and lesbian movement and how she could contribute to it as a journalist. But *GayLife* was in bad shape financially. Paychecks began bouncing—more and more frequently—and there's nothing that erodes employee loyalty like having to hastily cash a paycheck for fear it will bounce. Sometime in the late summer, Jeff and Bob were in negotiations with Renslow to purchase *GayLife*. Then Jeff told me that after reviewing all the finances, he and Bob were thinking of simply starting an entirely new paper.

Bob, who was bringing money into the paper as sales manager only to see his own paychecks bounce, was ready to walk. Tracy—whose paychecks had also been bouncing—trusted and admired Bob, and if he went, so would she. And I trusted and admired Tracy, so if she was going to leave *GayLife* to help start a new paper, I was onboard with that. The art director, Drew Badanish, came in as the third investor (with Bob and Jeff) to start the new paper.

This was the first staff "mutiny" in the so-called Chicago Gay and Lesbian Press Wars. But it wouldn't be the last.

Jeff came up with the new paper's name: the *Windy City Times*. He told me he thought it would be best—easier to sell ads to non-gay businesses—if there was nothing "gay" in the title. I didn't like that—to me it sounded closeted. But I was just a freelancer and part-time typesetter, after all—and after a while I warmed to the name.

### Windy City Times

I no longer have a copy of the first issue of *Windy City Times*, from September 26, 1985, but I recall the herculean efforts, the long hours, and cycles of excitement and exhaustion during those initial months, as the paper started to get off the ground.

I had a lot of new ideas for things to write for *Windy City Times* that had never occurred to me at *GayLife*. Being there at the beginning of the new enterprise, I felt more involved. All sorts of exciting topics in feminist, lesbian and women's writing in general began to emerge for me on this expanded writing horizon, and gay men's literature was, at the time, just at the beginning of an astonishing burst of creativity, one that was fascinating to follow.

At first, the office was in Jeff and Bob's big condo apartment on Melrose Street just off Lake Michigan. We had use of typesetting equipment

in a Loop office building at Lake and Wabash right next to where the el tracks curved, but we could only use it on nights and weekends. This typesetting machine was quirky; it didn't run properly if the room temperature was higher than 60 degrees. Tracy, Toni Armstrong Jr.—who also typeset—and I spent many an evening in this uncomfortable cold, working from late evening until dawn.

It isn't easy to typeset with gloves on; my fingers were often numb by the time the pile of articles was all entered into the machine. I remember nights when Tracy and I took turns, one typesetting while the other tried to get an hour or two of sleep on the office rug. The huge empty office building was creepy enough, but braving the Loop streets to get to a 24-hour hamburger joint for your "lunch" at 4 in the morning meant you had to navigate your way through a seriously scary obstacle course, dodging hookers, pimps, drug addicts, bellicose drunks and gang kids on the prowl, with the frequent loud sounds of smashing glass in the alleyways to keep you frosty. (In the '80s, the Chicago Loop had not yet been transformed into the evening entertainment hub it is today, with its many office-to-residential building conversions, late-night dining establishments and high-end hotels.)

By that November, Jeff and Bob somehow managed to install a typesetting machine into the empty basement of their condo building. I don't know how they placated their neighbors, and there was a spot of trouble with a city inspector since it was a residential building. I was glad I didn't have to be in the Loop at midnight anymore, but if anything, it was colder than in the creepy office building, since the basement was unheated and had a broken window. In fact, the door that led to the street was broken off its hinges, and you had to lift the whole door to move it.

Imagine trying to type in an unheated basement when it's 8 degrees outside. The bulky typesetting machine surrounded you like the flat faces of giant ice cubes, freezing to the touch, and a penetrating cold kept leaching into the room. I brought a small space heater from home, and that helped a bit, but it couldn't really compete with the cold. Were we dedicated or just crazy?

Bob reinforced the windows with plastic and tried to arrange plastic draperies around the machine to keep the heat in for us—and not incidentally to keep dirt and debris from the basement ceiling from falling on the typesetting machine. In short, working conditions were less than ideal (probably, now that I think back on it, a fire hazard, too). But we were activists on a mission, so we pressed on. Everyone worked really hard, determined that the new paper should succeed.

By November, just about everybody got sick from spending extended periods of time in that unhealthy basement atmosphere. Bob, however, never got better. He became noticeably thinner and continued to be sick into December. I saw him now and then in his bathrobe upstairs in the office part of the condo, where at least it was warm. By late January, he was hospitalized, near death from AIDS, on a respirator. He got better, and worse, and better again. Bob managed to

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ALD. MARIA HADDEN & NATALIA VERA



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## HARPER from page 62

fight off the pneumocystis but then developed some other immunodeficiency-related problems, including a blood infection.

Understandably, Jeff was a basket case, and Tracy, who was a lot closer to Bob than I was, was devastated. But Jeff had to double up and do Bob's job as well as his own. For a while, Jeff alternated between stoically going out with his attaché case to sell ads, and lying in what appeared to be a semi-catatonic state on the living-room sofa of their condo, staring at the ceiling. We struggled on, very demoralized and sad, but gathering new recruits and supporters and advertisers.

We published issues that I thought were far better, more comprehensive, more wide-ranging and readable, more balanced in reporting, than *GayLife* had been. After a while, Jill Burgin assumed the sales rep responsibilities. Drew Badanish continued as art director for a few more months. Tracy was running the entertainment section as well as the news. Jon-Henri Damski divided his time between writing his whimsical, philosophical columns and visiting Bob in the hospital.

As it happened, the first actual *Windy City Times* AIDS death was not Bob Bearden's but that of our travel writer, Richard Cash, who was a longtime friend of Bob and Jon-Henri. He went into the hospital to get tests to see if he had AIDS and died there two weeks later. It was another serious shock to the barely 4-month-old newspaper.

That spring (rather miraculously, under the circumstances, and largely because of Tracy's efforts, in my opinion), *Windy City Times* was still going (*GayLife* had by then gone out of business) and the "office" finally moved into an actual office space—in the building behind the Rodde Center on Sheffield just north of Belmont. A new mood, more businesslike, set in. There was far more space, on two floors (having no basement with falling debris or broken windows was also a big plus), and the paper was finally functioning like an actual business, with more freelancers and staff coming on. I kept on writing and typesetting, but also became the books editor.

At this stage, I remember a lot of arguing and shouting. A lot. At the condo, I think people refrained from shouting since Bob was sick in the next room. There were no such restrictions now, and tempers were just as frazzled.

Every LGBTQI newspaper back then had to figure out how to balance the tension between business practices and advocacy. *Windy City Times* wasn't "just" another newspaper, but a political voice for gay and lesbian rights and for the community. Different people, both on the staff and in the community, had different ideas about what that political voice meant, and different levels of concern, and different opinions of what should be done, and how. We were all pretty much making it up as we went along.

But Jeff became more and more rigid, possessive and dictatorial, though he often clearly didn't know what he was talking about and had little patience for learning about the dynamics of community organizations. I remember one big staff meeting where we were all sitting with our chairs in a circle. Jeff, in a major freakout over some little photographic arrangement he didn't



**Jorjet Harper  
in 1986.**

Photo by  
Kathleen  
O'Malley

like, leaped into the middle of the circle, threw down several copies of the paper and vigorously stomped up and down on them, screaming all the while, like a child having a tantrum. Everyone, myself included, froze. But I thought to myself, OK, he's under a lot of pressure, but I can't put up with this abusive crap much longer.

At the time, Bob was still alive, home from the hospital but not capable of returning to work again or of doing much of anything. He mostly stayed in his bedroom at home. After a final, terrible bout of seizures, Bob died in January 1987; it was just a year and a half after that AIDS television report we watched at the *GayLife* office.

In the year of *Windy City Times'* founding, 12,000 people in the U.S., mostly gay men, were diagnosed with AIDS—and half of them were already dead. It was a chilling, alarming statistic then—two years before ACT UP was founded, two years before the first AIDS quilt panel was sewn. Today, while thousands of people worldwide still become infected with AIDS every day, it's no longer the science-fiction-made-fact, apocalyptic crisis it was within the LGBTQI community when every week young, otherwise healthy gay men, whom you knew and liked, vanished off the face of the earth from a rampaging disease caused by an as-yet unknown organism.

After Bob's death, Jeff's behavior spun further out of control. He became even more erratic and irrational—insufferable, really. There were murmurs that he had become addicted to cocaine. I don't know if that was true but, judging by the way he was acting, it was certainly plausible.

By the summer of 1987, many of the staff of *Windy City Times*, including Tracy, myself, Jill Burgin and others, were poised to start a new paper yet again. There was a certain inevitability to this, since Jeff was no longer someone any of us wanted to work for, but we still wanted to do gay and lesbian journalism—and there was an attitude that, hey, we'd done it once, so we could do it again.

### Outlines

Outlines, the newspaper that was founded by refugees from Jeff McCourt's *Windy City Times*, began publishing in June 1987. (In 2000, Tracy

Baim and her company bought the name *Windy City Times* from McCourt, and the Outlines name was transformed back into WCT.) Tracy initially tried to buy the paper (with investors) through an anonymous offer but, when Jeff found out she was behind it, he was outraged—even though he had considered selling it after Bob died. After driving his staff away with his crazy behavior, Jeff's animosity toward his new competition was sometimes cloak-and-dagger, sometimes Laurel & Hardy. I recall one organizational meeting of Outlines in which a columnist who had previously written for WCT, sitting on a sofa, bent over and a tiny tape recorder fell out of his pocket and bounced onto the rug—he was recording our meeting to take back to Jeff! I never found out if Jeff had sent him on this burlesque attempt at espionage, or if it was his own idea, but this same fellow was spotted more than once lurking in the street, looking up at the Outlines office windows late at night. Weird stuff like that went on during Outlines' beginning year or two.

The owners who invested in Outlines included Tracy, Nan Schaffer and Scott McCausland. Schaffer and McCausland were, luckily, very hands-off, allowing the paper to grow and giving Tracy the latitude she needed to make well-considered, independent editorial decisions.

I joined Outlines as its arts and entertainment editor. It was my first full-time job on a gay and lesbian paper—full-time meaning hovering around 80 hours a week. Some nights I'd have just enough time to go home and take a shower, nap for two hours with my girlfriend, and go back into the office. I was never so exhausted in my life. Yet I remember those intense years at Outlines now with great fondness.

Tracy had a vision of a truly balanced gay and lesbian newspaper—in the sense of providing equal coverage of men's and women's news. Previously, gay and lesbian papers were generally aimed at one group or the other: papers run by gay men that were exclusively gay or overwhelmingly gay with a smattering of lesbian news thrown in, like *GayLife*, and small all-volunteer newspapers like *Blazing Star* that were strictly for lesbians, or for feminists and produced by lesbians. The fact that our paper consciously strove

for parity between men and women was something quite innovative. Outlines also featured stories by and about bisexuals and transgender people—though it would be years before the community "officially" recognized itself as LGBT, and much later still as LGBTQ. It has been fascinating to have witnessed that evolution.

When I think back to all the LGBTQI newspaper offices I spent any time in, the first Outlines office is the space I remember best, probably because it was filled with light. It was essentially one large open space, on the third floor of a loft building on Belmont Avenue at Lakewood, about six blocks west of the Belmont el stop and eight blocks west of what was then fast becoming "Boys Town" on North Halsted Street. A few people found it annoying that the space was so open, because almost everything in the office could be overheard by everyone else. But this stimulated really interesting off-the-cuff office conversations that sometimes led to new ideas, articles and opportunities.

The building housed a number of little corporations, arts groups and some light manufacturing. Right next door to our offices was, I remember, a business that manufactured action figures and other small toys. Its staff often kept their door open and, walking by, I could see people inside making little figurines from molds; the smell of hot resin and plastic often wafted into the corridor. For a while the Chicago-based progressive monthly newspaper *In These Times* (which coincidentally had some ties to NAM and former *Blazing Star* members) had offices on the floor below us, and the building was owned by that paper's publisher.

The loft building was run-down but exuded a bohemian charm I found very appealing—real exposed brick walls in places, big, tall windows that let in thick columns of sunlight during the day, and beautiful high ceilings. This charm could fade quickly when the heat didn't work or the bathroom pipes clogged, but it was a great space for a newspaper. Our office furniture was, well, let's say eclectic; each of us had gone to the used furniture warehouse on Western Avenue and picked out the desk and chair and lamp we preferred, so nothing matched and some pieces were quite scuffed, but we were all comfortable, having chosen to our own liking. The look of the place was unified visually by the original solid wood flooring and the equally old ornate ceiling tiles.

We had a lively pigeon hangout on the roof and, more often than not, during our frequent, animated office conversations about the current state of homos and homo sapiens, the wind outside would shift and we could hear a chorus of cooing and mating noises from the birds upstairs.

Rather than the standard behemoth typesetting machine, Tracy invested in multiple early Apple computers—which themselves would be considered antiques now, of course—that were a great advancement in sizing and arranging articles on a page. We learned to use Quark as the layout program, and now writers could "typeset" their words onscreen or, if they had a home computer, bring them in on a floppy disk so they could flow right into the layouts without the need to be retyped. This was a huge time saver. But every story

**Turn to page 66**

TRACY, ANDREW, MATT, TERRI, KIRK, AND JEAN

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## HARPER from page 64

that came into the office on paper from a freelancer still had to be hand-typed into the computer, because there was no such thing as email.

Plus, every phone call still came through a single land line that had an extension at each desk. How was that even possible? How did reporters ever find out about anything in a timely fashion, all of us clicking extension buttons and shuffling through paper Rolodexes to find phone numbers? And anyone who was out of the office and not at home was simply unreachable. I can't fathom how we managed anymore. Stone Age. Pre-Gutenbergian.

Of course, there were no digital cameras, either. Ages ago, I had taught adult-education courses in film-developing. I took up photography again while at Windy City Times and, by the time Outlines started, I'd built a darkroom in my apartment. I spent a portion of my working time painstakingly (compared to today) developing my film and that of other staff photographers who had no darkroom facilities, then making prints for the paper. (Once made, those prints would still have to be professionally transformed into halftones by an outside firm.)

Outlines staff members I recall most clearly (35 years later!) are Scott Galihier, Jill Burgin, Stephanie Bacon, Richard Small, Janet Provo, Bill Burks, Rex Wockner, Johanna Stoyva, Pat Bechdolt, Rhonda Craven, MJ Murphy and Rachel Pepper. Tracy Baim, freelancer Michèle Bonnarens, Toni Armstrong Jr., and Angie Schmidt are still among my close friends today. There were many others—freelancers, activists from various organizations—who were in and out of the office frequently, and even more writers who sent in stories from California, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere.

You never knew when a well-known gay author or a nationally known activist might stop by, as they often did. It was fantastic to be able to call up Larry Kramer for information and to interview Audre Lorde or Lily Tomlin. It was a time of further discovery for me, too—freelancers would send in eye-opening interviews with Hollywood celebrities, stories on new filmmakers such as Gregg Araki, reviews of a groundbreaking new book by Vito Russo.

And every week, I found out more about authors and artists and historical figures who were gay or lesbian, as new books about them came out, and I'd turn what I'd learned into an article on Joe Orton, or Constantine Cavafy, or Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap. I did a lengthy series of articles on Sappho—the original Lesbian—and what was known about her, in articles that formed the basis for my later “Tenth Muse” columns in HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture.

In my capacity as a writer, I continued to concentrate on cultural events but also did some news reporting. For instance, I did Outlines' ongoing updates of Karen Thompson's efforts on behalf of her lover, Sharon Kowalski, who had been severely disabled in a car crash in 1983. The legal battle went on for years, as Kowalski's homophobic father, who was her legal guardian, kept Kowalski isolated from Thompson in a nursing home with no rehabilitation and refused to

accept that his daughter was a lesbian. The case inspired books, plays and a documentary film, and it brought attention to the need for durable powers of attorney for gay and lesbian couples. It was finally resolved in Thompson's favor in 1991 and became a landmark in establishing gays and lesbians as legal guardians of their partners.

I did movie reviews, interviews, opinion pieces, puff pieces, pieces about housewares and real estate and jewelry and wines, all sorts of things, basically whatever we needed written that I couldn't or didn't have time to assign to anyone else. To make the paper appear to have more writers than we did (à la Jeff McCourt at GayLife), I came up with several pseudonyms. I wrote Lyric Opera reviews under the regal name Johanna Buckingham (a composite of my two grandmothers' names); I did theater reviews under another name—Lisa something; and home lifestyle reviews as Randy Levertov.

A lot of us who worked at Outlines lived and breathed community current events, and the sense of community-building was palpable. When we weren't actually working on specific newspaper tasks, we'd sit around the office and discuss the waves and waves of controversies that were always swirling around and, in one way or another, making news. Some of these discussions resulted in opinion pieces.

I recall especially a “debate” in the form of two opinion pieces side by side, that began as an office conversation when Rex Wockner complained that he wasn't being allowed entry to cover a debate about racism in the women's community that was held at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse, a local all-women's venue. Rex argued he should have been admitted; I argued for the coffeehouse's right to keep men, including reporters, out if they wanted to.

I also did a lengthy interview with the newly selected International Ms Leather at the time S&M was just beginning to be discussed widely. I knew little about it, but that turned out to be an advantage since I asked basic questions, and the few leatherdykes I knew (and I didn't even know I knew any till they came out to me after the interview) were quite happy to see the topic featured in the newspaper. I also did long interviews with Mary Daly and Sonia Johnson. I could go on and on. I found almost all of this intellectually engaging, even when I didn't agree with others' opinions about some aspect of culture or politics or sexual psychology.

There was always more to do and a feeling of urgency about the time I had to do it in. On the nights when I wasn't working late at the office, I'd be going to gay and lesbian plays, readings, musical performances, dances—or going to a funeral. The reality of AIDS intensified my commitment to gay and lesbian rights, and I think this was true for many LGBTQI people at that time.

The Wikipedia article on LGBTQI history dismisses the 1980s as “a dismal period for homosexuals.” “Dismal” is not how I'd describe it at all. Frightening, yes, and calamitous, with AIDS hanging over the heads of so many talented, earnest young men I knew, and with the obituary section of the paper ever-growing, week after week. But the '80s were also a time of enormous expansion in activism (most prominently, the rise of ACT UP), advances in gay rights, and the birth

of cultural institutions.

Not dismal. Energizing. Often even amazing. The gay and lesbian movement was coalescing into some new primordial landmass, rising from the sea right in front of my eyes. I had the freedom to let my mind roam wherever my curiosity about new gay and lesbian cultural territory would take me, and to write about it, and enlist other writers who wanted to write about it, too. Though the pay was meager, the hours were endless, and the deadlines were often stressful, I felt that those of us working at Outlines were involved in important, meaningful work that was effecting real social change.

Local gay cultural organizations—choruses, art groups, bands, drama and dance troupes—and professional organizations that had begun in the late '70s and early '80s had, by the mid-to-late '80s, sprung up in so many places that they were starting to have annual regional and national gatherings that we covered. And there were the many annual women's-music festivals back then. Out gays and lesbians were still nowhere to be seen on television (the first ongoing gay TV character I ever saw was played by Martin Mull on Roseanne, in the early 1990s, though there were apparently a few such roles on earlier shows). But there were enough independent films made about us by then to spark the growing number of gay and lesbian film festivals. As arts and entertainment editor, part of my job was to make sure these events were given ample coverage, and the films, presentations and concerts were reviewed with thoughtfulness and care—especially since we knew that some of these LGBTQI-themed offerings, no matter how excellent they might be, would not be covered anywhere in the mainstream media.

In the early years of my involvement in gay and lesbian journalism, I had assumed that most mainstream stories simply had no gay or lesbian “angle.” By the late 1980s, as an editor at Outlines, I realized that there were very few stories that didn't have one—though you might have to look a little more closely to find it.

The mainstream press was still loath to report anything at all about gays and lesbians except AIDS-related news. This became glaringly obvious after the “Great March”—the October 11, 1987, National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, in Washington, D.C. Those of us who worked in the gay and lesbian press scurried from event to event there, taking notes for articles, snapping photos, doing interviews and viewing the AIDS Quilt at its unveiling. Almost everyone from Outlines had made the trip to D.C., and the emotional impact of that trip served to further cement us together as a newspaper team. The number of marchers was estimated by activists during the day as half a million, and by the police at close to that number, but it was reported in The New York Times as 200,000. This blatant minimization of the crowd numbers underscored the ongoing vital need for our own media, since the mainstream was still bent on ignoring our issues and our impact.

The same muting of our visibility by the mainstream news was apparent at the Olivia Records 15th-anniversary concert at Carnegie Hall in 1988, with a gala reception afterward in the Waldorf-Astoria's Grand Ballroom. I was part of a

large Chicago contingent at the event, and it was quite spectacular, with hordes of dykes in tuxedos strolling up Park Avenue from the concert hall to the Waldorf. Today, mainstream newspapers and magazines would be all over a story like that. But back then, according to Wikipedia, “the two [Olivia] concerts at Carnegie Hall in New York were the largest-grossing concerts at that venue in its history. Yet The New York Times barely mentioned the show.” We did a full-page spread on it, of course, with lots of photos.

I have an especially vivid memory of one night at the office in early December 1987. James Baldwin, the most eminent Black gay author of the 1950s and 1960s, had just died—only three days, in fact, after the sudden death of Chicago Mayor Harold Washington. It was snowing outside, beautiful fluffy flakes, and I was alone in the office all night writing my full-page tribute to Baldwin, which was due the next morning, and would be the opening feature of the arts and entertainment section in the next issue.

It was more than a bit eerie, alone in the cold winter quiet of this big space, with a desk phone ringing once in a while in the empty office (and the occasional unnerving sound of pigeons mating outside the window). But I remember what a deep sense of satisfaction I had, putting into words what Baldwin had meant to me growing up, and explaining the extent of Baldwin's importance as an out gay Black intellectual to people who might not know, or be too young to remember, how groundbreaking his books had been during the 1960s.

I began freelancing for out-of-town publications, too, in the late 1980s. I wrote a number of stories for Outweek, the brash, no-apologies weekly LGBT magazine that started up in New York in 1989. I did a cover story for them that, I'm pleased to say, was the first story written by anyone in the history of the planet, apparently, on the subject of lesbians in the Girl Scouts. A picture of Patsy Lynch, one of Outweek's own photographers, graced the cover of that issue—she had her hand up in the gesture of a pledge, and looked very somber in her actual old Girl Scout uniform. (That image was conceived to avoid potential lawsuits, as editor Andrew Miller had been advised by Outweek's lawyers—since Patsy had been a real scout and was dressed in her own personal merit-badge sash, the publication couldn't be sued for “impersonating a Girl Scout”!) For that story, I spoke with dozens of former and current scout leaders and camp counselors; the ones still involved in scouting all requested anonymity. I also interviewed some very nervous spokespeople at Girl Scout headquarters in New York. The piece was later reprinted in Nancy Manahan's anthology about lesbian Girl Scouts, On My Honor.

Outweek was a fun mag to read as well as write for, with Mike Signorile's cogent rants about outing and Susie Day's clever, often-sly humor pieces. Outweek brought the issue of outing to the forefront of community debate and, in fact, did a very controversial, even notorious piece on outing that was simply a list of celebrity names, with the headline “Shhhh ... .”

I started writing a humor column myself in 1991, called “Lesbomania,” in a little weekly



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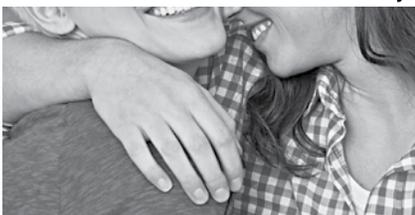
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2000-2019

Honoring local LGBTQ people 30 and younger who excelled in entertainment, politics, health, activism, academics, sports and other areas, Windy City Times' 30 Under 30 Awards ceremonies, which started in 2000, were held during Pride Month. The events (co-sponsored by various local LGBTQ organizations) have been held in various venues, including Ann Sather restaurant, Center on Halsted and, most recently, Polo Cafe; co-hosts have included current and former WCT staffers such as Amy Matheny, Kirk Williamson, Jerry Nunn and Andrew Davis. Photographers through years have included Hal Baim, Kat Fitzgerald, Dave Ouano and more. Many of the awardees have gone on to prominence and success.



*Thank you for your vision, thank  
you for your commitment, and  
mostly thank you for your love.*



Susan O'Dell, PhD



Tracy, Jean, and the Windy City Times Team:

Thank you for thirty-five years of chronicling our  
heartbreaks, triumphs, and fighting the good fight.

the Kitschy Cabinet



2015



2017



2019



2016



2018

Cheers to Windy City Times and its induction into the Chicago LGBTQ Hall of Fame. 2020 wouldn't look as different from 1985 without Windy City Times.

2021 will look different without your printed product, but your mission and cause continue.

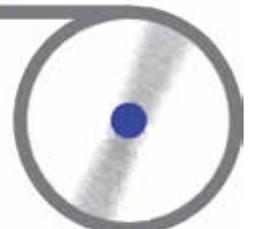
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# OUTLINES

1987-2000

Outlines newspaper started the first week of June 1987. Tracy Baim and most of the staff of Windy City Times left to launch Outlines after major disagreements in personality and goals. Outlines started as a weekly, then had to go monthly for many years, converting back to weekly in the late 1990s. In the summer of 1999, WCT suffered another staff walkout, and within a year was closed. A few weeks later, Outlines purchased WCT and merged into WCT that September of 2000. The next year, WCT purchased LesBiGay Radio and turned it into Windy City Radio, which ran for more than a decade, with primary host Amy Matheny.

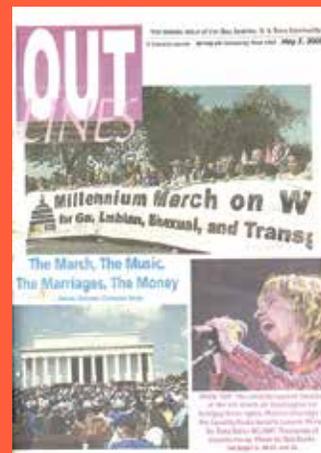
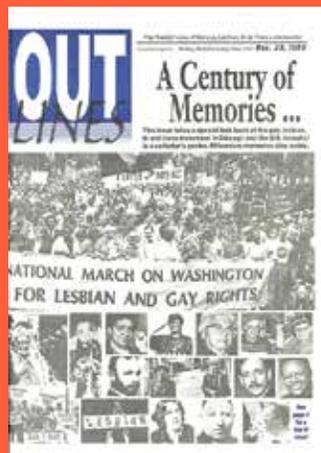
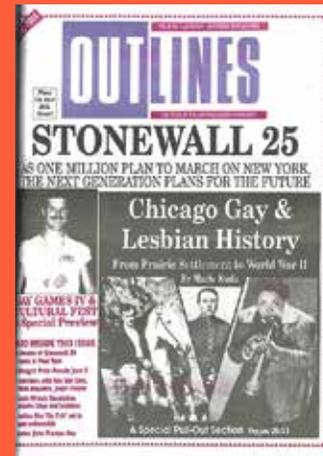
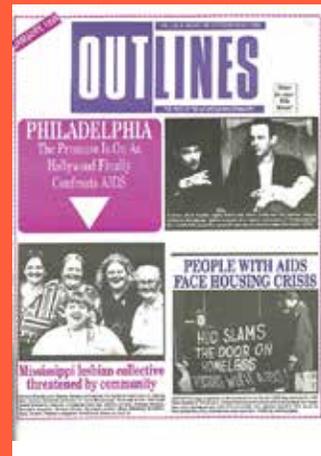
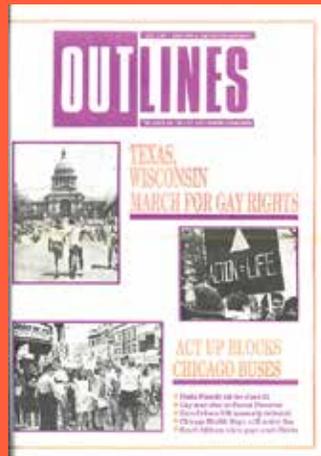
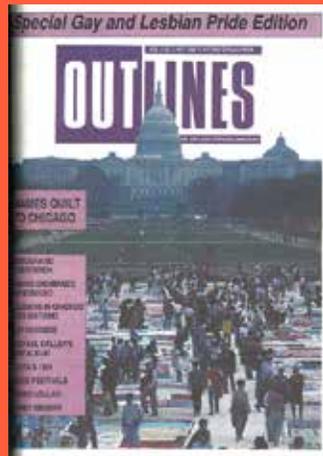




Photo by Joel Schachtel

### Thanks for the memories

You helped us find community. Here's to 35 years and the monumental difference *Outlines & Windy City Times* made to our lives and collective march forward. Tracy Baim, your voice is still needed.

*Nan Schaffer & Karen Dixon*



Photos by Kat Fitzgerald, Lisa Howe-Ebright, Tracy Baim, Hal Baim and more

## You did good

Because I was once quite the gay-press guy, and that began in Chicago, they asked me for 600-800 words. I wrote some drafts but in the end, all that's needed is a few sentences:

The paper version of the venerable Windy City Times was done in by the internet, the smartphone, the mainstream media's embrace of LGBTQ news, the success of the LGBTQ movement and, in

the end, by COVID-19.

The goal of everything we did was to create a world where LGBTQ is unremarkable. Apart from the attempted backtracking on trans by the current administration, which courts have mostly blocked, we have pretty much done that.

You can get married, you can't get fired for being LGBTQ, you're all over the TV, the pride parade is many cities' biggest annual event, and go ahead and kiss your spouse at the airport.

Goodbye, dead-tree WCT. You did good.



## REX WOCKNER

Right: Wockner (center right, beard, glasses, camera) covering the world's first registered partnerships granting same-sex couples the rights of marriage in 1989 in Denmark.

Photo by Peter Jørgensen



## KATE SOSIN

### The Times We Wrote About:

### The gift of Windy City Times

"I feel like we're living in times people write about," Matt said as we walked home from the train, dusk settling into Brooklyn for the night.

I didn't know what he meant. It was 2008. From where I was standing, everything seemed painfully dull. My \$200,000 liberal arts degree had scored me the opening shift at The Victory, a coffee bar the size of two phone booths in downtown Brooklyn.

"The economy is crashing," Matt explained.

"Right, right," I replied.

Matt was a writer for the New York Times, ostensibly at the peak of his career, a career in the field I wanted. It wasn't lost on me that we took the same train home, to the same dingy two-flat building.

Everybody warned me that the first year out of college was the hardest. Nobody told me that if you decided to be a reporter, the first year was actually a preview of most of your career.

It was three years until I finally found a full-time job in journalism, a job I hoped was a stepping stone to something better. Tracy Baim made me a full-time reporter for Windy City Times in 2011 for a salary of \$23,000.

I never wanted to work in LGBTQ media. I wanted to be at the Chicago Tribune or the Sun-Times, some place my parents would want to tell their friends about, some place less gay. But being visibly queer and an out trans person in the middle of an economic downturn foreclosed that. Tracy and Andrew Davis gave me a chance when

Turn to page 94

Windy City Times  
WINDY CITY TIMES  
WINDY CITY TIMES  
WINDY CITY TIMES  
WINDY CITY TIMES

WINDY CITY TIMES AT 35

A collection of covers from Windy City Times, Outlines, Nightlines, BLACKlines, En La Vida and more

# WINDY CITY TIMES AT 35

A book of covers from Windy City Times, Outlines, Nightlines, BLACKlines, En La Vida and more

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**Friends of The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame would like to thank Windy City Times for 35 years of covering the stories of the LGBTQ community.**

# Windy City Times: Making 35

BY TRACY BAIM

The internecine battles of the gay community are legendary. They are not limited to Chicago, or to any one segment of the community. And the gay media have certainly not been immune to these growing pains of the fledgling modern gay-rights movement.

Chicago's gay media have strong and deep roots. In Chicago, Henry Gerber started what is believed to be the first U.S. gay publication in the 1920s. Friendship and Freedom lasted just two issues, thanks to harassment by the postal service and police, but Gerber's work did not go unnoticed. And his courage still inspires Chicago journalists.

In the 1950s, Chuck Renslow and Dom Orejudos started the men's physique magazines Triumph, Mars and Rawhide Male. In the 1960s, the Mat-tachine Midwest Newsletter was a vital source for community news and information, including reports on police harassment, mainstream media bias—and the 1969 Stonewall protests in New York.

Soon more radical gay publications sprang up, including newsletters and tabloid newspapers. Most of the 1970s publications were all-volunteer, but by the end of the decade more business people got involved and tried to professionalize gay media with salaries and to pay for freelance stories, photography and delivery drivers. The local newspapers Chicago Gay Crusader and GayLife even added newspaper distribution boxes on the streets in the 1970s. Lavender Woman newspaper, based in Chicago, was an important 1970s national lesbian newspaper.

By 1984, GayLife and Gay Chicago were the two primary gay publications that survived the 1970s publishing startup frenzy. Gay Chicago was a magazine, focused mainly on what was happening in the bar and entertainment world. GayLife was a serious newspaper with coverage of news locally, nationally and internationally, plus entertainment, sports and features.

But by 1985, GayLife was being criticized as part of the old guard, and its publisher, Chuck Renslow, was especially under fire. Renslow was politically active and an owner of multiple businesses—the newspaper, bars and a bathhouse (at a time when AIDS was just beginning to strike hard in Chicago). He led the local Democratic gay organization and had run to become a convention delegate for U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy's presidential campaign in 1980. People were concerned that he had unfair influence over the community through the newspaper. I started working for Renslow in June 1984 and never saw a misuse of power, but in our community, perception becomes reality.

Sales manager Bob Bearden and his partner, Jeff McCourt, a part-time writer for the paper (under the pseudonym Mimi O'Shea), were making a move to buy GayLife that summer. But instead they went behind Renslow's back and de-

cidated to start their own paper, Windy City Times. Bearden, McCourt and Drew Badanish, from the art department, all lobbied me intensely to come with them. They each put in \$10,000 to start WCT. I had been the managing editor of GayLife and would keep that post at the new paper. But I was just 22 years old. I didn't have the negative experience to lead me to a decision to abandon ship. After some soul-searching, and trusting in Bearden, I made the difficult decision to be part of the new company.

We launched Windy City Times on September 26, 1985. To say we started on a shoestring would be an understatement. While McCourt boasted of

After McCourt's passing in 2007, Chicago magazine published an article about his death and noted: "Looked at today, the first issue [of Windy City Times] seems inadvertently portentous. The front page has three stories, one on Mayor Harold Washington assembling a 15-person committee on gay and lesbian issues—a first for Chicago—and two on a subject that would dominate gay life and politics for the next decade: the AIDS epidemic."

It was a struggle psychologically and emotionally, not to mention physically and financially. While GayLife staggered and then folded within a few months after our start, leaving us with no direct competition, it was still not easy trying to do a gay newspaper in 1985. Bob got sick within a few weeks, eventually learning it was AIDS. He became a hermit, and my girlfriend at the time, a nurse's assistant, helped him.

Jeff put pressure on Bob because the paper needed his talents—to sell ads. Bob just could not. He struggled out that Halloween, just four

deteriorated.

Many people stepped up to help—in a freezing basement with the typesetting machines, writing articles and helping our reputation in the community. But I felt I was letting them down—Jeff and I were having power struggles. Jeff had no journalism background—he had only written gossip and entertainment prior to starting the paper—and I was very young.

Jeff had promised a hands-off approach to the news side, but he soon realized that was where his community power could come. He started writing editorials, including political ones. He and I came to a difficult decision in the 1987 aldermanic campaign when openly gay Dr. Ron Sable first challenged 44th Ward Alderman Bernie Hansen. Jeff wrote an editorial endorsing Hansen, and I did one for Sable. He started fuming about silly things like photo layouts, while people were not getting paid and didn't have insurance. I, for one, went a six-month stretch with no paycheck.

When an attacker came into the office with a bat one day, he asked for and went after Jeff directly, causing injury to one arm. No one else was hurt, but it was played by Jeff as a hate crime (he even testified in Springfield, Illinois, about the attack as part of a push for gay legislation). There were many ugly rumors, including some about drugs. The police calmed our staff down by hinting that it was not a general attack but probably drug-connected. The truth never came out, but it also made it difficult for all of us. When I left a few months later, one of Jeff's loyal allies even spread a rumor that I had hired a hit man to target Jeff.

With Bob gone, and with Drew Badanish bought out by Jeff, I had decided enough was enough. Not only was the office too stressful, but some of us now worried for our lives as well.

I started looking for investors to buy Jeff out. Jeff had indicated he was burned out and depressed, so it seemed like a good idea at the time. We made an offer through an attorney, but when Jeff found out I was behind the deal, he was furious. Sales Manager Jill Burgin had to step between us for fear something might happen. I wanted to walk out right then, because I was ready to start a new paper, and most of the dozen or so full-time staff were coming with me. But several of the staffers, including reporter Bill Burks, convinced me the right thing to do was stay and put out two more editions of the weekly Windy City Times. I agreed, as long as Jeff stayed away from me (we were on separate floors).

After those two weeks, we moved full force into starting Outlines, in the In These Times office building at 1300 West Belmont Avenue.

As Chicago magazine noted in September 2007: "Mccourt also enjoyed a good fight. When Tracy Baim left to found her own publication, Outlines, five months after Bob Bearden's death, she touched off what will probably go down in history as Chicago's last great newspaper war."

Even though I was the same gender as before, the fact that I was a woman with her name on "top" of the masthead made it easy for Jeff to really play the gender card. He successfully influenced advertisers away from Outlines, saying it was "just" a lesbian paper. He said I hated men, even though most of the people who left his em-



**Group photo circa 1986 of Windy City Times staffers and freelancers at the Belmont El stop, front row from left: Tracy Baim, Jeff McCourt, Larry Shell, Benjamin Dreyer, William Burks. Back row: M.J. Murphy, Chris Stryker, Hugh Johnson, Steve Alter, Shani, Jorjet Harper (hidden behind Shanti), Lawrence Bommer, Yvonne Zipter, Bill Williams (partially hidden), Chris Cothran, Jill Burgin, Jon-Henri Damski and Mel Wilson.**

Photo by M.J. Murphy

making a lot of money as a Chicago Board Options Exchange trader, the truth was that it was just bluster, at least by the time WCT started. And Renslow fought against Windy City Times for several months in the courts. I was forced to do a deposition and left the lawyer's office in tears. Nothing ever came of the lawsuit, but it was a drain on emotion, time and resources.

We worked out of Jeff and Bob's apartment on Melrose Street just west of Sheridan Road, a third-floor walk-up. There were images of naked guys in the bathroom—blatant sexual images I had to get used to at GayLife and at many subsequent gay newspaper offices. We originally did typesetting at a downtown firm, Tangible Type, owned by Chris Cothran and Sarah Craig. (Craig died in 1994; Cothran, in 1996.)

weeks after the paper launched, to take bar photos and work his accounts. But Bob could not deal with his diagnosis. His friends were dying, his partner was pressuring, and a newspaper was being run out of his home. We would be working late hours and hated to be in the way when Bob would shuffle out of his room to the kitchen—where we were pasting up the art boards.

In the spring of 1986 we moved to a separate office at 3225 North Sheffield Avenue, behind Gay Horizons (which now exists in another location as Center on Halsted), in the Rodde Center, the gay community center of that day. Our offices were next to the el train, so we paced our phone calls between those noisy neighbors. By the time Bob died in January 1987, the office dynamics had

Thanks to the *Windy City Times* for your contributions to print media and the LGBTQ+ community in Chicago.

**THRESHOLDS**

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## MAKING 35 from page 74

ploy to start Outlines were men. But just as with GayLife's demise, perception is reality. Outlines always struggled with the gender issue and advertising. If getting ads in a gay paper was hard in the 1980s and 1990s, getting ads in a paper stereotyped as lesbian was even harder. Our reader statistics always showed a balance of around 60 percent male and 40 percent female. A typical gay newspaper at the time was 90 percent male.

Windy City Times and Outlines went head-to-head as weeklies for a few months, but by February 1988 I knew we could not keep up with the bills or get more investment money, so we went to a monthly newspaper format for the next nine years. The Reader declared Jeff the victor.

Jeff was really motivated. Albert Williams, who had worked at GayLife, was interim editor after I left. The paper was very active in pushing for the city gay-rights bill, taking a strong advocacy approach to the battle.

Jeff soon hired a young gun, Mark Schoofs, as editor, and he took the paper to another level. Mark (who won a Pulitzer Prize for AIDS reporting for The Village Voice after he left WCT) had a great team of both experienced and newer journalists putting out an award-winning weekly newspaper. Subsequent managing editors kept that pace going. Several times, WCT won a Peter Lisagor Award, a prominent Chicago journalism honor. The competition helped both papers, but being a weekly with a stronger economic base had many advantages.

WCT became one of the top gay newspapers in the country. Jeff was especially brilliant at getting mainstream businesses to advertise, which is what helped his paper grow in size. He was very much about size, and proudest of his ever-growing Pride editions of WCT. But Jeff also alienated a lot of people and was just as erratic and substance-influenced as he had been when I worked for him. Eventually, those internal demons would catch up to him, but for more than a decade he thrived—on the competition, the journalism and the business.

Jeff also got very involved politically, and WCT endorsed candidates at almost every level of office. While I was criticized for working on sports (I was co-vice chair of the Gay Games when they came to Chicago) and business (I founded the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce), Jeff had his hands in politics and entertainment. He tried to influence elections and lobbying efforts, he produced plays, and he was briefly president of a theater company. Jeff also was part of the National Gay Newspaper Guild to increase the clout of regional gay media. Windy City Times also lobbied successfully along with 46th Ward Alderman Helen Shiller for increased AIDS funding under Mayor Richard M. Daley. Those moves had their own conflicts of interest, but often publishers (of papers large and small) can't avoid all connections to the community.

Jeff's Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame biography states: "While maintaining Windy City Times as an independent voice, he embraced advocacy journalism and supported activism aimed at winning mainstream respect and political victories for Chicago's LGBT communities. During the 1986–88 stages of a long campaign to pass a Chi-

cago human rights ordinance that would prohibit sexual-orientation discrimination, the newspaper's offices were known as 'Ordinance Central' because of McCourt's generosity in allowing activists to use space and equipment. The paper's editorials galvanized community and political support for the ordinance after initial defeats."

Mark Schoofs was quoted in Chicago magazine after Jeff died: "I wonder if Jeff was one of the last of the spectacularly self-destructive gay men. He was definitely a gay publishing visionary. The gay community was coming into its own in those years, and Jeff was one of the people who recognized that gays were part of mainstream America. He understood that gays were like Jews and [B] lacks and Puerto Ricans and Irish people—another tile in the mosaic of America. He was incredibly flawed to the extent that he himself could not be part of that mainstream. But he was one of the people who made it happen."

Chicago magazine also noted that WCT "benefited from the government deregulation of the telecommunications industry in the late 1980s, which, among other inadvertent side effects, spurred the development of the telephone sex industry—the ubiquitous 900 sex numbers of the era. The back pages of many lifestyle publications—including Windy City Times—were flooded with full-page come-hither ads for those services." Former WCT salesman Steve Alter told Chicago: "It was like money that dropped out of the sky. Suddenly what was a \$300,000- or \$400,000-a-year paper became an \$800,000-a-year paper." With the money came a high-flying lifestyle.

Jeff's WCT featured award-winning columnists, including Jon-Henri Damski and Achy Obejas, who provided in-depth analysis of politics and the community. (Obejas shared in a Pulitzer Prize after leaving WCT.) ACT UP's Danny Sotomayor had been fired by Gay Chicago, and soon his controversial editorial cartoons were in WCT. But Jeff fired both Jon-Henri and Danny, and both immediately migrated to Outlines/Nightlines before they passed away (Danny in 1992 and Jon-Henri in 1997). Jeff suffered many similar losses of talented people; he attracted some of the best but, after a few years, most moved on. This was not a problem WCT alone faced; most gay media have a high turnover because journalists are now finally welcomed more into mainstream careers that can offer higher wages and often more respect—thanks in large part to the work of what was originally called the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, now just NLGJA.

"If McCourt had no problem attracting top talent, however, retaining it was another story," Chicago magazine's 2007 story noted. "Four years seems to have been the limit for most people. Some left for better jobs, but most simply were burned out from dealing with a person who—for all of his intelligence and drive—seemed at times completely oblivious of the impact of his actions on people." And the abuse of drugs only got worse. Steve Alter related Jeff's arrest for cocaine possession, which included a brief stint in Cook County Jail, in a post on the Reader website after Jeff died.

Louis Weisberg was editor of Windy City Times for five years until he was among those who left to start another competing paper in 1999.



Windy City Times' first issue, September 26, 1985.

He told Chicago magazine: "We'd have editorial meetings where Jeff would be sitting there with white powder around his nose, drinking booze out of a bottle with Ryan Idol asleep on the couch. At some point we just knew this wasn't going to work—that this was no way to run a business." Jeff had a relationship with the porn star that was complicated and at times disturbing to Jeff's friends and employees.

Meanwhile, I was always trying something new to keep Outlines alive. I never did drugs or drank alcohol, but I was certainly a workaholic. We had started a weekly bar rag called Nightlines in 1990, which kept us covering news alongside bar photos (it became Nightspots in the early 2000s). Rex Wockner was our full-time reporter for several years; he helped to keep Outlines and Nightlines on the local journalism map—and he eventually became the most widely syndicated gay media reporter in the world. Trudy Ring was also a critical early news reporter on our team. We had an amazing group of dedicated employees and freelancers, and we, too, won awards for our journalism and work in the community.

We also started BLACKlines and En La Vida, monthly newspapers for the African-American and Latino/a LGBTQI communities; both began in 1995, and they ran about 10 years each (eventually merging into Identity before closing). Our website for Outlines started in 1996. (Jeff never owned the domain name WindyCityTimes.com, and later we had to fight in an international tribunal to get it back from one of Jeff's former employees.) We were trying to fill different media

needs and niches, staying afloat with the generous support of community investors including Nan Schaffer, Scott McCausland, Pete Thelen and many more. Nan was with me from the very beginning, providing amazing, consistent financial and moral support. They were our angels in those early years, and so many remained supportive, even as we added Windy City Radio after buying the old LesBiGay Radio in 2000 (the best thing to come of that was our longtime sales rep Amy Matheny, a critical employee for more than 15 years).

Windy City Times was a formidable opponent, and the staff kept it going despite both internal and external obstacles. This is why it was a truly unique set of circumstances that led Outlines, the much smaller company, to purchase Windy City Times in 2000—a David and Goliath story.

### Newspaper War, Part 2

By 1997, Outlines seemed strong enough to make the change back to a weekly newspaper, so we took the plunge, something which, in retrospect, probably strengthened us for the battles ahead.

In the summer of 1999, Jeff McCourt suffered another walkout, but this time the way it happened (with no notice) somehow hit him so hard that he rebounded all the way back to me—he called me for the first time in 13 years, and we commiserated about the way they left him. I sympathized with him, but never underestimated



The Chicago Community Trust would like to thank *Windy City Times* for 35 years of service to the Chicago region's LGBTQ community. Your dedication to representation and diverse voices in media is critical to a thriving, equitable and connected region.



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**With deep love and gratitude, we give thanks to:**

**TRACY BAIM and the entire team  
over the last 35 years of WINDY CITY TIMES**

**for reflecting our joys, heartbreaks, celebrations, aspirations, questions, differences, imaginations, curiosities, beauty, losses, bruises, participation, wounds, passions, strength, weaknesses, growth, pleasures, battles, victories, dreams and  
our QUEER FABULOUSNESS**

*With love and respect  
ONWARD,  
jane & emma & esmé xxx*

**Jane M Saks, Emma Ruby-Sachs, & Esmé Alan Geoffrey Bayard Ruby Saks**

## MAKING 35 from page 76

the road ahead. Jeff was not giving up yet.

The exodus had been planned for a long time. Before they started their Chicago Free Press, some of the new venture's investors even met with me at Outlines—I, of course, didn't know they were starting a paper, and that they had just been fishing for business information from me, claiming to be interested in buying ads. The WCT staff took their last paychecks and left right before finishing the second-most-important edition of the paper (coinciding with Northalsted Market Days). Some staff remained, but the company was in deep trouble.

Jeff was left far more vulnerable after this staff defection than when I left, for a few reasons. First, when I had started Outlines, I did not have the type of deep pockets supporting us as the new CFP had. I was able to get friends and community members to buy shares in my company, and they trusted me to run it. (Some people believe I am an heiress to a nonexistent Clarence Darrow fortune, which is not true; my mom was a distant relative to Darrow, and my parents were very middle-class. All I received from them in starting Outlines was a \$1,000 check from my stepdad, Steve Pratt, and my mother's help in typing articles—plus their fantastic emotional and moral support, which I believe is priceless and the most valuable thing they could have given me.)

Second, our original goal had been to buy Windy City Times, so starting a new paper was not ideal in 1987. By 1999, when CFP started, the gay market was larger and more appealing to mainstream investors and advertisers, which helped CFP. Third, Jeff himself was not nearly as strong as he had been in 1987, so he had a difficult time battling the new opponent. Fourth, it couldn't have been easy for him to have suffered a second and more debilitating staff walkout.

Fifth, the employees left Jeff right in the middle of a deadline, which meant Jeff could not recover quickly; when we left for Outlines, we gave Jeff two weeks' notice and did not put out two more issues. Sixth, the top people leaving WCT for CFP were mostly male, and I have to say that this was an advantage in the marketplace. When I left, it was also mostly male staff who came with me (because the staff was mostly male), which meant, of course, that it was mostly men who founded Outlines. But with me "on top" and a few other strong women in positions of authority, we were stereotyped from the start by Jeff. CFP did not have that strike against them. Seventh, I was only 24 when I left to start Outlines and did not have as much experience; most of those who left to start CFP were much older and had been around the business far longer.

And finally, while Jeff did continue to publish for another year, he spent huge financial and emotional capital fighting the former staff that had gone to CFP. Jeff never sued me or Outlines, so his energy and money were not diverted into to such a fight.

Dan Page, former production manager and art director of Windy City Times, wrote a scathing rebuke of those who walked out to form CFP, in a posting on the Reader's blog after Jeff died in 2007. Dan had worked during the buildup to the

walkout and had been privy to some of the plans, but he was not among the defectors. "The timing of the mutiny was planned to CRIPPLE Jeff (in every sense)," Page wrote. "They had hoped to buy the publication at firesale prices, and, if not, to destroy it. ... Jeff was out of town the weekend of the mutiny because two staffers, a couple, who were among the Free Press founders, had encouraged him to go to his Michigan summer house. ..."

In fact, Jeff learned about the defection from a reporter: Mike Miner at the Reader called him to ask about the mass resignations. "The reason I found myself breaking the bad news to McCourt is that he wasn't supposed to know it yet," Miner wrote in the Reader of August 5, 1999.

So, departing staff and freelancers started Chicago Free Press and battled McCourt's Windy City Times for a year—both in the courts and for advertisers. Outlines just chugged along for that year, trying to dodge the bullets and stay away from a circulation and advertising-rate war. But because Outlines had gone back to a weekly schedule, it really helped us compete. It also positioned us well for what happened next.

While WCT staffers—including Dan Page, Karen Hawkins, Neda Ulaby, Aaron Anderson, Mark Bazant, Tony Peregrin, Gary Barlow and others—worked hard to keep the paper going, the fight drained Jeff so that even when the court case ended, and even though he reportedly won, he had lost the final battle. He was forced to close the paper in August 2000 (the last issue was in July), and I called him immediately to buy it. He agreed, and after a few weeks of negotiations, Outlines' parent company, Lambda Publications, purchased just the name of the paper and changed the corporation name to Windy City Media Group. There were no other assets, not even any archives, just a lot of bad will among advertisers, some staff and parts of the community.

We purchased it for around \$400,000—the value of the paper's one year of national advertising, the only number that could be proved. He almost changed his mind about the sale—but his lawyers knew better (no one else expressed serious interest, and certainly not for that price), and they walked him through the sale until the final signature was completed. I was able to get new investors, but the rest of the money came from putting my home on the line for a loan from the bank.

Many people said I was crazy, but I do believe had we not purchased the brand of Windy City Times, Outlines was going to be killed by the competition, which had deep pockets and a laser focus on market dominance. As part of the purchase, we also eventually got WCT's seat on the National Gay Newspaper Guild, something that was highly coveted since only one paper per market was allowed membership.

Jeff and I met at my bank on the sale day. My lawyer was Mary York, and she kept me calm and really helped nail the deal down. Jeff and I sat outside of South Shore Bank, reminiscing about the old days. How hard it was—how it actually never got much easier. About people we had lost, about Bob, about their old three-story walkup apartment on Melrose. It was surreal, acting like old friends, when we had fought tooth-and-nail for 13 years. But sometimes that phrase "the en-

emy of my enemy is my friend" comes true—Jeff had been so wounded that he actually turned back to me as an ally. Jeff was chain-smoking and looked very frail. He had the shakes and looked far older than he should have. I honestly don't know how he survived another seven years after that day, dying in 2007 at age 51.

The buyout of the Windy City Times name was important for Outlines, because it gave us a mainstream recognition to face the continual media wars in Chicago. Some in the community did not support us buying WCT, because they viewed it as helping Jeff get out of debt. But I tried to see the value to the community, and to our business, and in the end it was the right decision. Even though 20 years later I am still paying off the loan.

We merged the two weeklies into one Windy City Times in September 2000, and I felt as if I had got my baby back after it had been in foster care.

As for Jeff, his last years were lonely and painful. Mike Miner, in his Reader obituary May 7, 2007, wrote: "McCourt had one friend at the end, possibly the only one who knew about his death when it happened. Gregory Munson says he was hired seven years ago by McCourt's sister, Diane, his legal guardian, to be his 'chaperone.' At the time Munson was working for an agency, Always Caring. 'He had gotten mugged when he was staying in the Talbot Hotel,' Munson told me. 'To my understanding, they found him in an alley unconscious and he went into Northwestern Hospital in a coma.' When McCourt was transferred to a nursing home, Munson went to work for him. 'I was originally with him five days a week,' he says. 'As time went by, it dwindled down to two hours once a month. [His sister] said he was broke. He disputed that but he was afraid to go to court to fight. He just hated that he couldn't have more control over his own life.'"

Jeff's brother Dan McCourt said that at the end Jeff had nothing left; and it's true that Jeff got very little from the sale of his paper. He had almost \$400,000 in debts (the IRS, his printer and his lawyers), so the sale cleared his name but left him little remaining.

Of course, the battles were not over. CFP continued to go after the new WCT, and a new rivalry was begun. CFP did change ownership in the mid-2000s, and eventually it was closed in May 2010. Meanwhile, Gay Chicago, which had been Chicago's oldest surviving gay publication, itself went through internal struggles and closed in September 2011.

One very ironic twist of fate, one that would have made a good ending for a book, was that the same week CFP closed, I went into the hospital. I had been having a lot of issues, but nothing specific I could feel was wrong. It turned out I had multiple organ problems and ultimately needed around eight surgeries, some of them emergency life-saving procedures, over the course of five weeks in the hospital. The combination of problems was what caused the near-death experience, and after months of painful recovery, and more surgeries, about a year and a half later I was finally out of the woods with one final surgery. I am pretty glad I lived to see more days, and it motivated me to start working on more book projects. I had done Out and Proud in Chicago in

2008, but by 2020 I have so far done 12 books, three films, one game, and the [chicagogayhistory.org](http://chicagogayhistory.org) website is still operating. I am working like a maniac to get this history down before I go for good.

## The Next Generation

Once the two papers merged, Windy City Times continued covering LGBTQI news, politics, entertainment and more. Outlines had a strong team to move to WCT and retained some of the WCT staffers who had remained, in particular Karen Hawkins as news reporter, Marco Fernandez as sales representative, and Tony Peregrin, Jonathan Abarbanel, Mary Shen Barnidge and other well-known freelancers. Jonathan even joined on as a new shareholder.

Politics continued to be a strong coverage area, with so many local, county, state and national elections happening almost every year. Outlines had had a policy of not endorsing candidates, so now the new Windy City Times also stayed away from such endorsements (except in key presidential races). Instead, the paper gave surveys to candidates in all races and rated them based on their responses. In the 2008 race for president, this proved important, because a 1996 Outlines survey for the state senate, completed at that time by candidate Barack Obama, had shown he was fully supportive of same-sex marriage well before his later races for federal office.

AIDS also continued to be an important story for WCT and the community. In 2011, which marked the 30th anniversary of the epidemic's first diagnosed cases, WCT started a 13-month series on its impact. The series won a Peter Lisagor Award. It was also a finalist for a national Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation award, losing to The Boston Globe.

Other stories important during that time included the growth in the transgender-rights movement, the alarming increase in reported murders of transgender women of color (especially African American), the rise in LGBTQI youth suicides, the fight to repeal the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell gay ban, and the ongoing battle for the equal right to marriage.

But sometimes even simple business profiles can have a profound impact. In 2007, when Chicago's Women & Children First bookstore was struggling, its owners allowed Windy City Times to tell their story in a front-page article. The store has been a key player in the Chicago LGBTQI community since their founding in 1979, and we knew our readers would want to know if it was at risk of closing. As soon as the article came out, thousands of dollars in donations poured in, and numerous other media picked up the story. The store is still in business in 2020, and did a successful ownership transition several years ago. WCT has also done stories about family members and partners looking for donations to help cover funeral costs for loved ones, and the community steps up each time to help out.

With a team of staff and freelancers, WCT has covered local, national and international stories that affect the community. Sometimes this is the coming out of the latest celebrity; other times, a violent anti-gay attack. What's important is to



# Thank you, WCT!

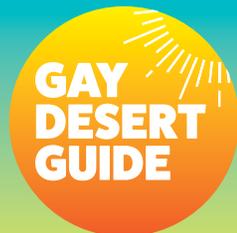
for 35 years of dedication to Chicago's LGBTQ+ community



On behalf of everyone in CMSA, thank you to Tracy Baim and the Windy City Times for 35 great years. We appreciate your support and look forward to being a part of your future journey.

[chicagomsa.org](http://chicagomsa.org)

## #1 for What's Happening In Greater Palm Springs



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AgeOptions is the Area Agency on Aging of suburban Cook County. We are now proud recipients of the SAGECare platinum credential, signifying our commitment to LGBT+ inclusivity.



AgeOptions and our partner agencies salute **Windy City Times** for serving as the voice of Chicago's LGBT+ community since 1985.

Our programming for LGBT+ older adults has gone virtual, too! Check out our Thrive with Pride project at

<http://www.ageoptions.org/gallery/thrivewithpride/>



Tracy, we thank you for 35 years of WCT! You were the inspiration for GayDesertGuide! *Brad Fuhr*

## MAKING 35 from page 78

keep a balance of news, entertainment and features, representing the full lives of WCT's readership.

### Looking Back, Looking Forward

Jeff McCourt died of AIDS complications at age 51 in 2007. Soon after, I nominated him for the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame—he was inducted later that year. As we close down Windy City Times' print edition in 2020, we are also being inducted into that Hall of Fame, now called the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame.

Few people are neutral on Jeff's legacy. Even those who left his employ have mixed feelings, about his mood swings, his drug use, his highs and his lows, his manic behavior and passionate loyalty—and his fierce competitiveness. I imagine that once I die, the reviews will also be mixed, though perhaps not with such "high" drama.

The bitterness caused by these wrenching gay newspaper schisms still has fallout today, but most of it is very much insider baseball, only relevant to a few folks who care about the why and how of the gay newspaper world.

Of course, if I were to do it over again, I would change many things. I am glad I helped start Windy City Times, but I would have gotten more of the deal in writing. Mostly, I would have tried to be a better boss. When I would go sometimes three or four days with no sleep, never going home, I had difficulty trying to run a business and be an editor and reporter all at the same time. Co-founding WCT at age 22, and then Outlines at 24, was a bit crazy if I do say so myself. Taking photos at a sports league in the morning, at a leather bar at midnight, going back to the office to write an editorial, and then trying

to balance the books for payroll—that was just plain difficult. But in truth, I had much help in keeping it all afloat. And I got to do what I had always wanted to do since I was 10 years old and producing my family newsletter.

There have been many key players at Windy City Times and Outlines over the years. I hesitate to even start listing them all. And because I separated from WCT for 13 years, I did not work closely with many of the key middle-years employees. There were hundreds of people, including delivery drivers, photographers, salespeople, reporters, business staff, editors, interns, and the supportive investors and advisers.

There have also been some key people present from the very first issue of WCT. I list some of the current staff in my other essay. But some of the original people include Toni Armstrong Jr., Jorjet Harper and Yvonne Zipter. Many started in the late 1980s and lasted for years, including Rex Wockner, Jonathan Abarbanel and longtime writer Marie J. Kuda. And there were hundreds more, including staff and freelancers Mona Noriega, Amy Matheny, Trudy Ring, Pat Bechdolt, Scott Duff, Kate Sosin, Kathleen Ulm, Danica Milich, Sukie de la Croix, Alison Bechdel, Owen Keehnen, Sari Staver, Suzanne Kraus, Robert Schultz, Janice Layne, Cathy Seabaugh, Amy Wooten, Richard Knight Jr., Robert Castillo, William Burks, Jill Burgin, Lynn Hull, LaJaunesse Jordan, Amparo Jimenez, Mary Shen Barnidge, Scott Morgan, Mary Morten, Jim Bennett, Ross Forman, Liz Baudler, Tony Peregrin, Miranda Stevens-Miller, Salem Collo-Julian, Otis Richardson, Carrie Maxwell, Scott Galicher, Larry Alter, Richard Small, Rhonda Craven, Janet Provo, Jerry Nunn, Gretchen Rachel Hammond, Midge Stocker, Victor Salvo, Mel Ferrand, Lori Weiner, Kathie Bergquist, Jane Lowers, Achy Obejas, Lynnell Stephani Long, C.C. Carter, Michèle Bonnarens, Stephanie Bacon, Genny Goo-

drum, Sarah Hoagland, Cynthia Marquard, Sanford Gaylord, Norton Knopf, Mel Wilson, Shani, Vivian Larsen, DJ Harry T, Mike Spitz, Rachel Pepper, Johanna Stoyva, Raven Rodriguez, Ann Hageman, Judy Lansky, Marcia Wilkie, Karen Topham, Charlsie Dewey, Rev. Irene Monroe, Angelique Smith, Sarah Toce, Melissa Wasserman, Sheri Flanders, Veronica Harrison, Ariel Parrella-Aureli, Kerry Reid, Regina Victor, Steve Warren, Rick Karlin, Gregg Shapiro, Lisa Neff, Jason Smith, Louis Weisberg, Dave Ouano, Neda Ulaby, Mark Schoofs, Albert Williams, David Olson, Jon Barrett, Bruno Mondello, Marc Moder, David Magdziarz, Jennifer Parello, Chris Hamm, George Grayson and truly so many, many more.

Many of those above also took photos, but we also had some stand-out people who were professional photographers, including Lisa Howe-Ebright, Genyphyr Novak, Kat Fitzgerald, David Miller, Susan Swingle, Israel Wright Jr., Barb Kay, Hal Baim, Anthony Meade, Ed Negron, Joseph Stevens and M.J. Murphy.

Our appreciation for years of behind-the-scenes heroics goes out to drivers Allan Zlatarich, John Collins, Vee Sonnets, Sue Landon, Dan Noone and Ashina Hamilton. Plus so many others who delivered off and on over past 35 years. They dealt with rain, sleet, snow, wind and really obnoxious people putting horrible stuff in these boxes.

Again, I did not run WCT for a period of time from mid-1987 through the end of 1990s, and there were many more who were part of those teams.

Our final team of Terri Klinsky, Andrew Davis, Matt Simonette, Kirk Williamson, Jean Albright and Ripley Caine really held it all together, with our drivers and freelancers, after I left for the Reader in 2018.

There is one iconic picture from the early Windy City Times era that features some of the first players at WCT, some who soon left to start Outlines, and some who stayed on for many years with Jeff. Pictured in that photo, with Jeff and me, were Larry Shell, Ben Dreyer, William Burks, M.J. Murphy, Chris Stryker, Hugh Johnson, Steve Alter, Shani, Jorjet Harper, Larry Bommer, Yvonne Zipter, Albert Williams, Chris Cothran, Jill Burgin, Jon-Henri Damski and Mel Wilson. It captures a brief moment in time, and brings back all the good and bad memories that were the glue holding WCT together in those formative 1980s.

We have also had to say goodbye to far too many young colleagues, most because of AIDS, some because of cancer and other tragedies: Jeff McCourt, Bob Bearden, Marie J. Kuda, Veranita Gray, William B. Kelley, Richard Cash, Paula Walowitz, Gabor, Bob Kraus, Mel Wilson, Mike Simanowicz, John Schmid, Jon-Henri Damski, Danny Sotomayor, John Pennycuff, Eli Burick, Paul Adams, Joseph Beam, Tony Hassan, Marvin Patterson, Alfredo Gonzalez, Fernando Flores, Sarah Craig, GayBoy Ric, Chris Cothran, Chris Clason, Earnest Hite, Kathleen Rose Winter, Kathleen O'Malley, Paul Varnell and our attorney Mary York.

The advertisers in Windy City Times and our other media have really made most all of this possible. Our national ads have come through Rivendell in New Jersey for decades, and our sales team sells locally, headed by Terri Klinsky. Some longtime advertisers were with us almost every issue of our various media. Thank you to them.

Thanks also to our various vendors over the years, including Newsweb printing company, now called Topweb, for all the newspaper printing of gay media since the 1970s, plus Graphic Image Corp. for special projects printing (Nightspots, OUT! Guide, Clout!, etc.). Plus thank you to David Strzepek and Total Promotions. Martie Marro and her LoveYourWebsite company has been the backbone of our web presence since the 1990s. I can never thank her enough for holding our digital presence together despite attacks foreign and domestic. And to David Schaefer, who helped us as a teenage Apple expert when we were robbed of all of our equipment three decades ago. He stepped up to help, and has been our Apple/Mac guy ever since. Steve Macintosh also helped us so much with early tech issues.

### Next Up

There is a delicate tightrope we continue to walk, as a community-based paper that covers the good, the bad and the mixed of the LGBTQI movement. That means scandals at health clinics, drug arrests of leaders, domestic violence and financial mismanagement—at the same time promoting benefits and events, activists and organizations.

Windy City Times is also going through transitions similar to those of other gay and mainstream media companies. With more than 100,000 articles and hundreds of thousands of photos archived online, the website is a key part of the company. And, of course, we participate in social media, content sharing and other opportunities to build audience.

We were never intimidated by "giving it away" for free online, since our papers were always free. The dilemma is on the revenue side—who pays for all that free content. As part of an effort to streamline costs, the company went to a "virtual" office in 2008, just two months before the U.S. economy collapsed. Given the closing of so many gay print publications over the past decade, Windy City Times has been fortunate to stay in print 35 years serving the Chicago-area LGBTQI community. We benefited from an odd mix of luck, good timing, amazing support and wonderful staff. It was a unique blend, but it worked. For a long time.

The next phase has been sad to face. The decision to close print was something we saw as inevitable, and doing so on the 35th anniversary made sense. Having a curated weekly or biweekly print issue does matter for archivists and historians. But from this point, our work will live on in the digital universe.

Thanks for putting up with all the ink stains and paper cuts these past 35 years. Now, we wish you a bright digital future.

**Windy City Times is trying to cover its bills to also pay its staff and drivers severance. If you can donate, for all the years we have been free in print and online, please see <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/donate.php>. You can also buy extra copies of this last issue at that link, and soon, copies of a new book of WCT and other local gay media covers.**

**This essay is adapted and updated from an essay in the 2012 book *Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America*, by Tracy Baim.**

Thank you to  
Tracy Baim  
and Jean Albright  
and Windy City Times

from Betty Bayer and  
Susan Henking

Keeping the L in LGBTQ



## TRUDY RING

Outlines/Nightlines  
1992-1996

I wonder if Tracy Baim knows what a difference she's made in my life.

Tracy gave me opportunities at the time I needed them, and those opportunities have had great significance for my journalism career.

I started working for Outlines (later to acquire Windy City Times and take over the name) and Nightlines as a freelancer in 1992. I was between jobs and looking to increase and diversify my clip file. I had been a reporter and editor for a couple of daily newspapers in downstate Illinois, and in Chicago I had worked for a specialized financial trade publication and for a reference book publisher. For the dailies, I had covered a little bit of everything—politics, business, entertainment—but when I went job-hunting, it seemed like prospective employers just looked at the financial publication and rejected me out of hand for anything else. A career counselor even said she wished I could get it off my résumé—like, duh, no, I worked there seven years; that's an idiotic suggestion.

So I had to prove I could write about other things, even though I felt I shouldn't have to, because I already had extensive and diverse ex-

perience. But I knew people who'd had good experiences with Tracy, and as a regular reader of Outlines and Nightlines, I knew they were high-quality publications. And I was committed to LG-BTQ+ equality and LGBTQ+ culture. So in the summer of 1992, Tracy took me on as a freelancer. I wrote mainly about film and theater, doing both reviews and interviews. One of my first interviews was with Gregg Araki, who was promoting *The Living End*. I didn't realize then he would become a lion of the New Queer Cinema.

In 1993 I got a job doing public relations and fundraising for Chicago House, an AIDS service organization where I had volunteered for several years. That kept me too busy to work much for Tracy. I had loved being a Chicago House volunteer and cherish memories of that experience to this day, but being a staff member there was a far different situation and extremely stressful, so when I had a chance to go back into publishing at the start of 1994 I jumped at it. The guy who had run the reference book company I'd worked for was starting a new one; would I like to join him as an editor? I would and did.

That worked out well for a while, and it left me some time to freelance, including an article for the first issue of *Clout*, Tracy's new business publication, in the spring of 1995. Then that summer, things blew up at the reference book company; the boss wasn't satisfied with my performance, even though I worked extremely hard, and frankly, there was no way to produce the books on schedule and maintain quality with the meager resources we had. Plus I was trying to wrangle dozens of freelancers who often missed deadlines or didn't turn in their assignments at all. But at the time I got fired, I felt like a total screw-up and that no one else would ever hire me.

Tracy came to my rescue. Shortly before everything went bad at the book publisher, she had asked if I wanted to come on as a full-time reporter for Outlines, Nightlines, *Clout*, and whatever other publications she might start (*Blacklines* was in the future). I said no then, but after

Turn to page 89



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FOR BEING A PART OF OUR  
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AND WINDY CITY TIMES  
FOR 35 YEARS OF THOUGHTFUL  
WRITING, HONEST REPORTING,  
AND A LIFETIME OF PHOTOS  
CHRONICLING THE HISTORY  
AND PROGRESS OF OUR  
LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

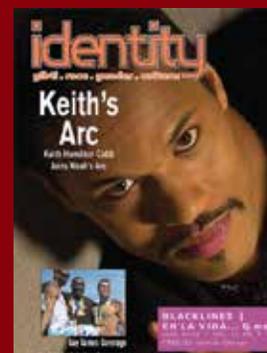
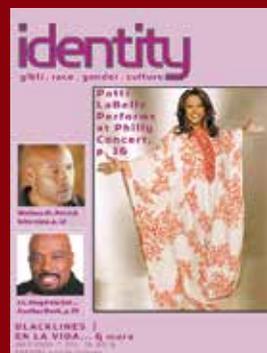
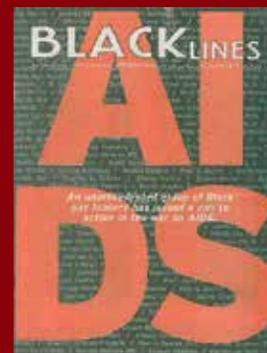
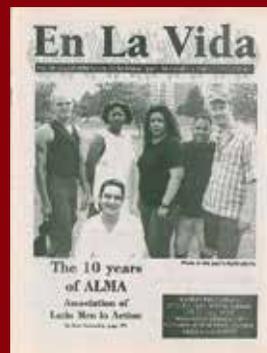
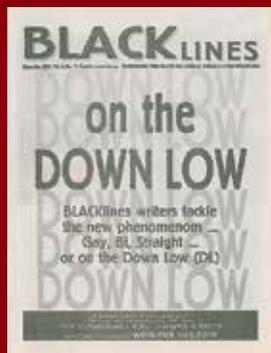
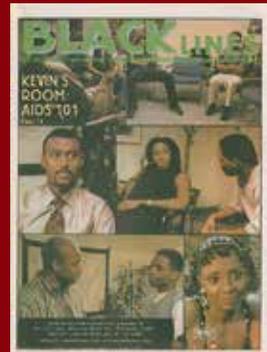
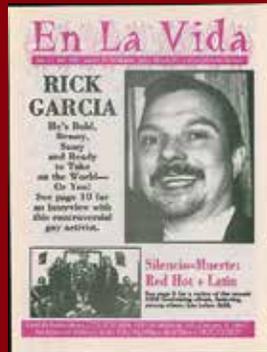
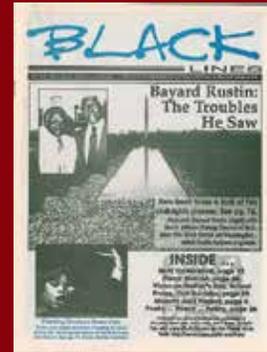


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# BLACKLINES/EN LA VIDA/IDENTITY

BLACKlines: 1996-2004 / En la Vida 1996-2004 / Identity 2004-2006

BLACKlines newspaper started in February 1996, and remained a monthly newspaper produced by Outlines for many years. It started after Robert Ford of Thing 'zine died. A Black gay man, Ford had created a wonderful queer 'zine for Chicago and the U.S., and his death left a void for the local Black LGBTQ community. So Outlines asked the community if it wanted us to run a Black newspaper, and in a unanimous vote at the Generator nightclub, the plan was agreed to. It would be run by and for Black LGBTQs. A few months later, the Latinx community asked for the same, and En La Vida was born in July 1996. In the early 2000s, the papers were merged into a glossy monthly, Identity, but eventually it too had to fold. There was not a sustainable advertising model to keep them going.





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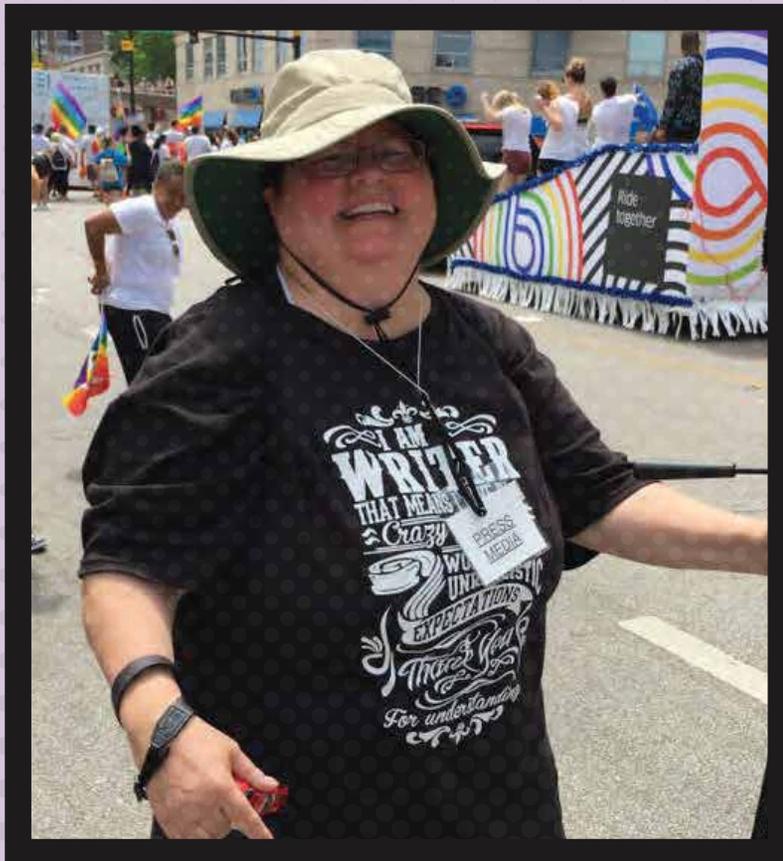
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# A LEGACY IN PRINT

Celebrating 35 years of the LGBTQ Community's Beloved Newspaper



Howard Brown Health would like to thank **Tracy Baim** and the entire Windy City Times staff for their untiring dedication to the LGBTQ community.

## HARPER from page 64

offshoot of Outlines called Nightlines (that later became Nightspots). Most of my humor writing was designed to show the irrationality and illogic of homophobia—an easy target, really, but it gave me great satisfaction to ridicule anti-gay bigots and pundits. I did gay spoofs and parodies of television shows and movies, too, and I also poked fun at some of the crazy things that went on inside the lesbian community. My guiding light was the principle, still valid today, that gays and lesbians have put up with enough homophobic shit, and now we deserve to have a good laugh. Among my shenanigans, I examined the “scientific evidence” that lesbonauts from outer space visited the Earth in prehistoric times. I “reported” on the “War Between the Butches and the Femmes.” I revealed the secret lesbian codes embedded in great Renaissance art works. I outed (quite convincingly, I think) Santa Claus, Godzilla, the Abominable Snowman, and the Loch Ness Monster as lesbians, and wrote gay and lesbian versions of The X-Files, West Side

Story, Star Trek, Hansel and Gretel, Cinderella and more. The column was syndicated in a number of LGBTQI papers around the country, and in 1994 and 1996 many of the pieces were gathered into two book collections, Lesbomania and Tales From the Dyke Side. I did theatrical readings from the books—with visual enhancement in the form of cartoons—at the Bailiwick theater in Chicago during Pride Week, at the Center in New York, and in a number of bookstores and other venues in the U.S. and Europe. I had a blast—and a good laugh, I hope, was had by all.

### The Antithesis of Secrecy

As late as the mid-1980s, I could still encounter well-meaning straight people who, when I told them that I wrote for the gay and lesbian press, would react with perplexity and respond by asking me some variation of the question, “But what do gay people need a newspaper for?”

Despite the valiant activism of previous decades, and the Stonewall riots, and the Pride parades, the phrase “gay community” was an oxymoron to these people. The idea of a serious

movement for gay rights that would combat our status as an oppressed—and still at that time often reviled—minority, one that would benefit by sharing resources and information, had not yet occurred to them. I don’t think they were being disingenuous in asking such a question, or homophobic in the modern sense; they just had never even thought about gay anything before, or perhaps thought all talk of sexuality was embarrassing.

But I think their question was based on a then still-lingering general assumption that gay sexuality was intrinsically clandestine. That the only thing gay men or lesbians would find of interest in their own publications was a classified section to find sexual partners, with perhaps a smattering of information about which bars in town catered to homosexuals—but then why would anyone want to print that, when it would only make it easier for the cops to find these places and raid them?

The idea that gay people would naturally and rightly prefer to be closeted, and moreover that the whole infrastructure of their social lives

would be best kept secret, still had a certain currency among a few older gay men I knew, as well as among clueless straight people. In 1985, you could still smell that whiff of shame—and secrecy, so long providing a layer of protective invisibility for the gay “demimonde,” can also generate a seductive sense of power.

LGBTQI newspapers, by documenting our lives and announcing our concerns—especially once the AIDS epidemic hit—forever obliterated the notion that secrecy is a preferred, sensible or even prudent strategy for gay people in this country, and at the same time, the visibility of gay media kayoed straight people who just didn’t want to ever have to hear about or deal with the subject.

The emergence of matter-of-fact, widely circulated gay newspapers was in itself a form of coming out. (The first time someone got up the nerve to read a gay paper on a bus or train was a common, memorable, coming-out toe-in-the-water experience for a lot of people. The first time the person’s face at a social event appeared in the gay newspaper was another—after all, not everyone in the photo was necessarily gay ... ) And by supporting and encouraging individuals to come out, gay newspapers created the momentum for the paradigm shift that we see everywhere today.

Working for the LGBTQI press in Chicago was a rare opportunity to combine activism and culture, and to feel that I was contributing something tangible to the movement for LGBT rights. Plus, I was constantly learning new things and meeting fantastic, admirable people. I look back almost in awe on the hope and the triumphs of those times amid the poignancy of our tragic losses.

Decades ago, a friend of mine told me that her fundamentalist Christian sister had remonstrated with her about being a lesbian, saying, “Why can’t you at least have the sense to lie about it?” Her immediate answer was, “Because that would make me a liar.” Ironically, homophobes who persist in vilifying our sexuality as something “indecent” will never understand or acknowledge the basic sense of decency that has propelled much of the LGBTQI movement. I saw many instances of actual heroism in those days, of otherwise ordinary people who realized that coming out, however difficult for them, was an act of dignity, of personal integrity, of openness, of risking personal safety for the sake of honesty. And I saw many instances of bravery in the face of bureaucratic nonsense, ignorance, violence and hatred—and the struggle continues in many places today. The LGBTQI media solidified and amplified our collective courage.

I feel lucky to have been among the people who documented those exciting, historic times of struggle as they unfolded. And I feel very privileged indeed—as the era of Windy City Times as a print newspaper comes to a close—to have worked there in “The Old Days” with the dedicated colleagues who shared my abiding commitment to our gay and lesbian movement for equality.

This article is a slightly revised version of the chapter “The Passing Parade: Cultural Reporting in an Age of Heroes,” by Jorjet Harper, published in *Gay Press, Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America*, edited by Tracy Baim (2012).



**Thank you Windy City Times  
for 35 years of amazing dedication  
to the LGBTQ+ community.  
You make Chicago a better place.**



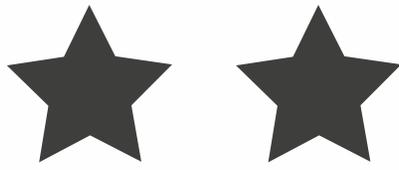
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& PATRONS.  
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YOU SOON!**



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*Kirk Williamson*

## KIRK WILLIAMSON

Windy City Times  
Art Director  
Started in 2001

Headshot by Peter Serocki Visuals

Many of you might know me only through my byline on the masthead or, if you're a bit older (and drunker), by my time in the bars as editor of Nightspots. Hey, I WAS that guy from the magazine. But if you have never really met me, I'm about to tell you something which may shock and appall you: I, Kirk Williamson, am a huge nerd. Okay, so no shocked faces out there? I suspected as much.

But so many people say they're a nerd without the track record to back it up. I can prove it, because in terms of specific nerd taxonomy, I am what is called an obsessive nerd. Try to make small talk with me a party and I'll plod along, half-interested and anxiety-ridden, until you bring up one of a few topics I am obsessed with and then say goodbye to your friends, because you are mine. I hope you poured yourself a big drink; you're gonna need it.

Within the last decade, one of the primary nerd-out topics that has constantly been on my mind is genealogy. I was raised by my mother and my grandmother, an imposing Sicilian-American woman whose parents (and their parents and their parents and ... well, you see where I'm going) all came from the same village about 35 miles outside of Palermo. My grandma shared this passion for genealogy and was the keeper of all the family history. After she passed away in 2007—and I realized that almost everyone from that generation was gone or on their way out—I logged onto ancestry.com and that kicked off a deep fascination with my family's past. I was able to trace that side of my family back at least eight generations on many branches. Last year, I even took a bucket-list trip to Sicily to visit the very town that my ancestors came from. Looking out every morning to the peak of Mt. Calogero, as my people had done before me for hundreds of years, was a grounding and eye-opening experience.

My people had always been simple folk. Farmers, fishermen, dutiful Catholic wives. The type of people not typically written of in any great detail in history books or newspapers. When they came to America, they sold produce from horse-drawn carts and got thankless jobs in filthy factories, all to fulfill the American promise. Even down to my generation, most in my immediate family work to live. No CEOs or inventors or really any profession that brings joy or fulfillment.

In the past year, my attention was brought to the stories—or rather, the lack thereof—of two of my great-great-grandfathers, Salvatore Quattrocchi and Salvatore D'Angelo. Within two weeks, I had discovered that each of these men were put into unmarked graves here in the Chicago area, their families having been too poor to afford a more honorable burial.

Mr. D'Angelo lived with his family on the defunct Purple St., in what is now the campus of UIC. The neighborhood was blighted with crime-filled saloons and barrels of toxic

waste, which I imagine contributed to his death in 1906, leaving my then 13-year-old great-grandmother fatherless.

Mr. Quattrocchi had come to America ahead of his two very young sons and wife, who was already widowed. He died here, alone, in 1892, and for all I know, none of his many decedents here in Chicago ever knew where he was buried, much less that he died here. It turns out, he's a mile away from my apartment at Calvary Cemetery in Evanston.

After a vigorous fundraising effort, I was able to afford a proper grave marker for Mr. Quattrocchi. I was not able to raise enough for Mr. D'Angelo's, but he's only been dead for 114 years, not 128 years like Mr. Quattrocchi. His day will come.

Their lives were not so remarkable as to merit documentation. They lived, loved, probably yelled a lot (because Sicilian) and their memories were left to disperse into dust, leaving no trace. I've tried to rectify that and to tell their stories.

Since the announcement of the final issue of Windy City Times, I've been forced to assess what exactly it is I have been up to in the past two decades at the paper. I can list individual memories and try to extract lessons like some mad fabulist, but I am too awestruck by the general lessons I've learned.

What can seem like a day-to-day grind reveals much deeper truths when you get a chance to step back and view it as a continuum. For as much as I grumble about deadlines and incorrect margins and develop neck pains from stress, I've come to the realization that this job has been everything to me. It's not only given me a chance to tell the stories of Chicago's LGBTQ community—in many cases, stories that may not have been told, lived by people who may not have thought themselves worthy of documentation—but in so doing, I have found real fulfillment and connection to truth. It is the fruition of the unsung efforts of my ancestors, who perished in anonymity so that I could write this essay today.

Okay, so maybe they may not have foreseen the whole gay newspaper part, but I'd like to think they would have found some slice of pride in it all.

You may have noticed that earlier in this essay, I referred to my ancestors as "my people." When I think back on all of the wonderful souls I have worked with and for and in the service of during my time at Windy City Times, I can only regard you all as my people, as well. And as much as I've nerded out about telling the stories of those who came before me and shared my DNA, it pales in comparison to the stories I have been even a small part in telling about you. My people.

And that's my story.



# Rene VanHulle, Jr.



# Empress Fabiola

The Great Buckingham-Fontaine

# Heidi Snoop

Gossip Columnist for Gay Chicago Magazine

Did you know them?  
Do you have a story?  
A photo?

I'm working on a celebration of life and seeking interviews and artifacts.

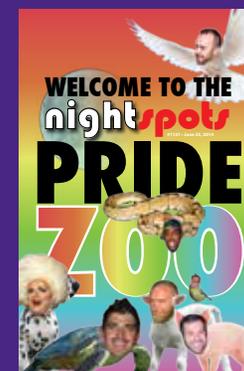
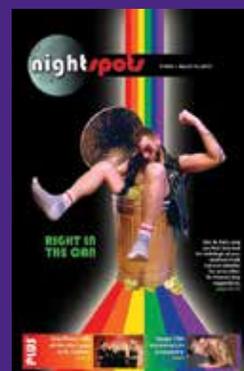
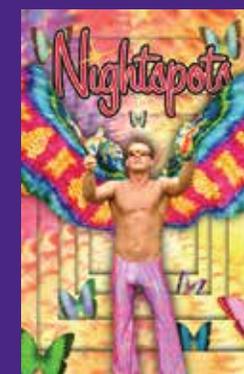
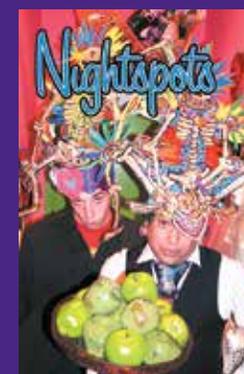
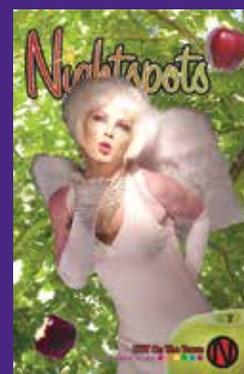
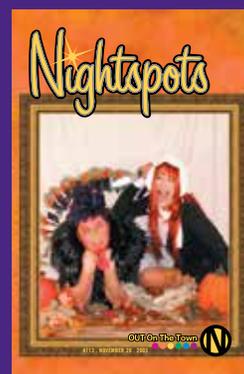
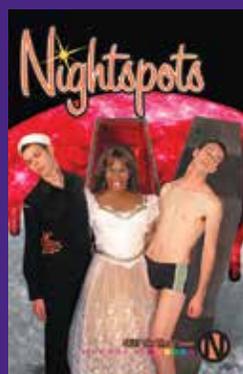
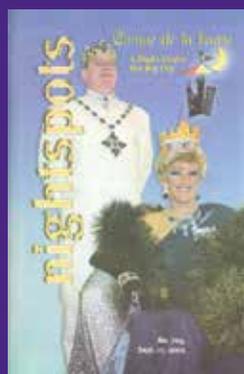
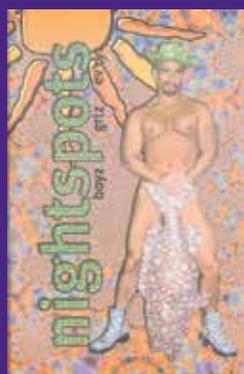
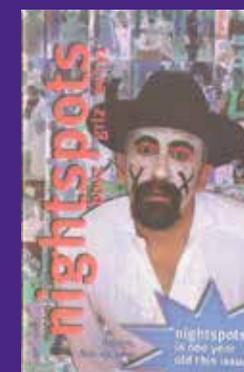
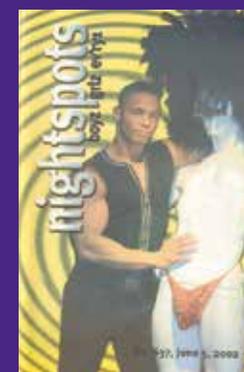
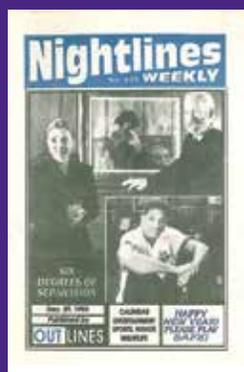
Email: [FabiolaBiography@gmail.com](mailto:FabiolaBiography@gmail.com)

Photos Courtesy of Windy City Times

# NIGHTLINES/NIGHTSPOTS

Nightlines: 1990-2001 / Nightspots 2001-2015

Throughout the 1990s, Nightlines focused on the LGBTQ entertainment scene, from the bars to the stage and everything in between. With the new millennium came a significant format change as Nightspots focused in on the bar scene, covering special events and just plain ol' drinking nights in every gay bar in the greater Chicago area. Among the many pictured below are the first issue of Nightlines from March 28, 1990; the first issue of Nightspots from November 14, 2001; the first glossy issue from October 29, 2003; the final issue from June 25, 2015; and the only issue ever of Nightspots to feature a national star rather than a local luminary on the cover. See if you can pick that one out for yourselves!



## TRUDY from page 81

my firing I called her back and said yes.

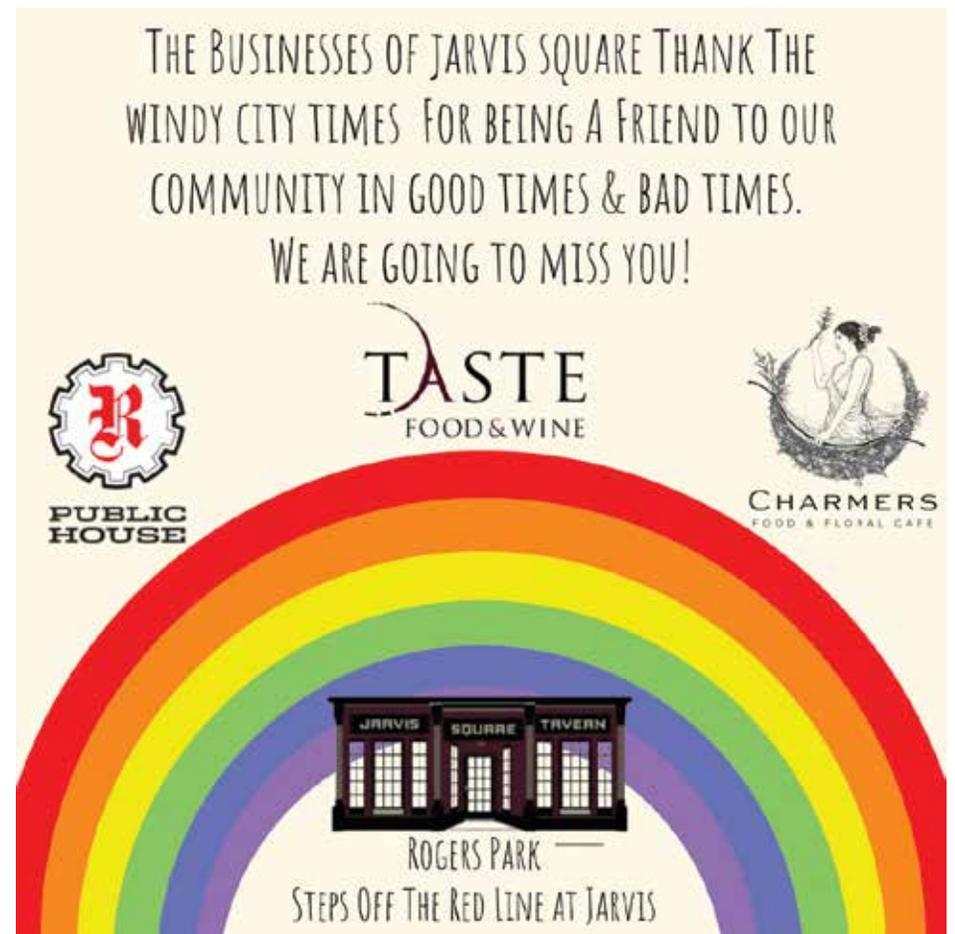
The job was a wonderful experience, even though there were some tense times worrying about finances or whether I would get in the middle of a fight between factions in the Chicago LGBTQ+ activist community. I got to interview fantastic people such as the great actor Sir Ian McKellen, film directors Marleen Gorris and Patricia Rozema, Frasier star Dan Butler, playwright Paul Rudnick, theater director Frank Galati, choreographer Bill T. Jones, and more. I covered local politicians such as Larry McKeon, the first out gay state legislator in Illinois, and activists including Pat Logue, Rick Garcia, Vernita Gray, and Renee Hanover. And I got to report on the 1996 Democratic National Convention, a highlight of my life.

My coworkers were super. Tracy was a dynamo, and a fair and supportive boss. Terri Klinsky, sales rep and now publisher, was funny and delightful. Cathy Seabaugh, who split her time between editorial and advertising, was a sweetheart. So was Jean Albright, Tracy's life partner, who handled circulation and many other tasks. And late in my tenure, Andrew Davis, a smart and extremely nice guy with whom I'd volunteered at Chicago House, started writing for our publications. He ended up rising to executive editor.

I left at the end of 1996, mostly due to finan-

cial worries (although I should have known Tracy would persevere), so I started 1997 at another trade publication, this one on the credit card industry. I regretted the move but once—continuously. But later in the year, my sister, who still lived in our hometown of Galesburg, Ill., and was considering moving to Chicago, suggested the alternative plan that we move together to Los Angeles, as her twin daughters had been recruited for jobs near there and she had an empty nest (she was widowed, and one other daughter was living in Europe at the time). So I applied to The Advocate, based in L.A., got an offer, and off we went.

I have now been at The Advocate for 23 years, doing copy editing, fact checking, and, for the past decade or so, a lot of writing, and this year I got the title of senior politics editor in addition to copy chief. I've also worked on whatever else our parent company owned at the time—Out, Alyson Books, erotic mags, etc. I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have gotten hired at The Advocate if not for my experience with Outlines and Tracy's other publications. So I am ever grateful for the opportunities I had there, and I am glad to have stayed friends with my colleagues from those times. As Windy City Times goes to digital-only, which is the wave of the future, I wish everyone well. I think WCT will be an important voice for years to come.



A man with a mustache and a black baseball cap is smiling and looking to the right. He is wearing a black athletic t-shirt with a prominent red horizontal stripe across the chest and white accents on the sleeves. He is standing in front of a chain-link fence, with a clear blue sky and green foliage visible in the background.

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# the DISH

Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

## SAVOR

### The Outpost Mexican Eatery; Mercadito

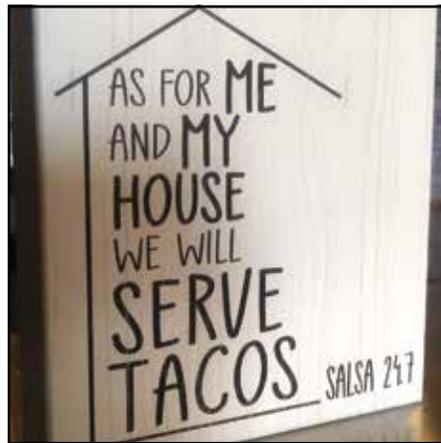
BY ANDREW DAVIS

#### The Outpost Mexican Eatery

The Outpost Mexican Eatery (520 W. Harrison St.; TheOutpostMexicanEatery.com) is seemingly not accurately named. An outpost is a remote spot, and this quaint eatery is a two-minute walk from the Clinton Blue Line stop.

However, that's just a quibble about this spot that specializes in authentic Mexican cuisine.

Owner/operator Anna Kamilis and chef/business partner Jesus Martinez were strategic in opening this restaurant, as it's near the Old Post Office (a nine-story structure that was recently in the news for its 3.5-acre rooftop park that has tennis and basketball courts). However, the timing was unfortunate, to put things mildly. "We opened March 1," said Kamilis, who is



"My house" sign at The Outpost.

Photo by Andrew Davis

straightforward but very amiable. "Unfortunately, the pandemic hit and the shutdown happened. Then we reopened only curbside and delivery in April and half of May. On June 3, we opened [the interior]."

When asked about opening during a pandemic, Kamilis replied: "We're here anyway. What am I going to do—stay closed and not make any money?" She added that some nearby residents and construction workers "have been wonderful." However, she said that the place "is missing

about 300,000 people from other [adjacent] buildings," such as the Old Post Office and the FBI building."

However, Kamilis said that the pandemic is only part of the problem. "It wasn't just the COVID; it was also the rioting and looting. The pandemic was the cake and the rioting and looting were the icing. I live in the suburbs and people looked at me like I was crazy when I said I was going into the city—because of how Chicago was being portrayed."

The menu is as straightforward as Kamilis. When there are only a few items on the menu, they better be done well—and they certainly are. "I like making what people like the most," Martinez told Windy City Times, "but I like putting a traditional twist to it. So, like instead of the regular ground beef, I have a picadillo—which is Mexican-style—that's like a stew." And the chorizo doesn't get more authentic: It's Martinez's dad's recipe.

Authentic tacos, burritos, sides and snacks are all made with premium ingredients, including steakhouse-cut USDA Prime Angus beef, fine local produce, housemade tortilla chips and hand-crafted salsas. The steak burrito bowl I had was sublime, as well as the kicky chorizo/eggs combo. (Breakfast is served all day.) The horchata was pretty good, although I detected a little grit.

Hopefully, when the dust has settled and a

COVID-19 vaccine is found, I've no doubt The Outpost will still be here. It should, for at least two reasons: the will of Kamilis and the cuisine from Martinez.

#### Mercadito

If The Outpost is blue-collar, then Mercadito (108 W. Kinzie St.; MercaditoRiverNorth.com) may be its white-collar equivalent. Mercadito specializes in Mexican dishes, but it also has that River North vibe (which doesn't work for everyone).

Starting with a cocktail is seldom wrong—and it's a wonderful thing to do here. My friend loved her sangria while I went with the delightful Misty's Sleeve (which includes Don Julio Blanco, ginger, hibiscus, orange, lime, green yucateco and hibiscus salt).

That drink set the scene for quite the experience. For an appetizer, I opted for the divine street quesadillas (with Mexican cheese, corn, poblano, zucchini, tomatillo salsa and crema fresca) while my dining companion couldn't stop raving about her crispy chipotle shrimp, falling in love (or at least heavy like) with the jicama that's part of the dish. Entrees then went in different directions for us; I loved my steak tacos (with avocado salsa), but my friend only liked her shrimp tacos, much preferring the beer-battered crustaceans in her

Turn to page 94



"It's terrifying. It's scary. We have to get out and vote."—Lil Nas X's response to the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Michael Bloomberg has found a way to help Joe Biden get more votes in Florida: He's paying convicted felons. Well, he isn't paying them directly. Bloomberg has raised \$16 million to pay the fines of 32K felons in Florida so that they can vote. I'm not sure if he's only doing this for Democratic felons, or just felons in general. But it's been my experience that whenever money changes hands with a Florida felon, the payer pretty much calls the shots.

The gay hook-up app Hornet (you know—the one nobody uses) had a poll about the upcoming election. Biden won with 51 percent. When El Presidente was told that 45 percent of gay men polled would vote for him, he said "Great!" He probably doesn't realize that most of those men were actually looking to get "poled"—or that being on the bottom was the more popular position!

After all these months of doing "Billy Masters LIVE" every Tuesday and Thursday (at 3 p.m. ET/noon PT), I thought I'd heard it all. Until this Tuesday (Sept. 29), when I welcome Loni Anderson! I've got TONS of things to ask her about—starting with playing Mariska Hargitay's mother, Pamela Anderson's mother and Tori Spelling's mother! She's played a lot of mothers—including the mother of a gay son in My Sister Is So Gay.



Lil Nas X has something to say, according to Billy.

Photo by Kayla Reefer

This'll be a REALLY dishy show. Tune into Billy Masters TV on YouTube or Facebook, or just go to BillyMasters.com/TV.

We've often discussed the assertion that gay roles should only be played by gay actors. But what if they want to play straight roles? After all, there are more of those than gay roles. But if gay roles should be played by gay actors, doesn't it stand to reason that straight roles should be played by straight actors? That's not how sexy Charlie Carver sees it: "I don't want to be limited as a gay man or a gay actor. I don't want to be limited to only playing gay roles." So gay roles should only be played by gay actors, but straight roles can be played by anyone?

Weeks ago I wondered whether I should watch Love Island. I didn't bother, but turns out that one of the guys on the show actually appeared in gay porn. Apparently, Noah Purvis (I slept with a Walter Purvis—I wonder if they're related) previously worked for Corbin Fisher under the name "Ethan." Someone figured out "Ethan" and Noah

were one and the same, and, poof, Purvis disappeared from the island.

CBS issued the following statement: "It has been brought to our attention that cast member Noah Purvis provided false information on his application to 'Love Island', which violates his contestant agreement. He has been removed from the show." Noah hasn't addressed the situation directly, but he did post the following on Instagram: "OHANA means family. FAMILY means no one gets left behind or forgotten. All of you out here have made me feel this and I can't express how loved I feel for the first time in my life." If you'd like to see how he made love with other men, check out BillyMasters.com.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Jasper in Maine: "Someone sent me these nude photos of a guy who has been on Broadway. Do you know who he is?"

Fans around the globe constantly ask me to identify nude photos. Jasper sent me several pics which I easily IDed as Taylor Collins. But, let me correct him: Taylor isn't technically a Broadway performer. To date, he has not appeared on the Great White Way. He and his fantastic physique have, however, turned up in Chicago—the musical, not the city (although it was a national tour, so perhaps both).

Thus far, Broadway has eluded him. Taylor has, however, made up for this large gaping hole in his resume by filling other gaping holes—and having some filled. He and his beau, Alessio Vega, have appeared in ... well, to call them "art films" isn't exactly correct. Let's just say there's a plethora of footage—some of the couple alone, one with Max Konnor and one where the couple is joined by another twosome. These bits of celluloid and a variety of photos await you on BillyMasters.com.

When I'm identifying stray penii, it's time to end yet another column. I'm kinda like that old show, Finder of Lost Loves—with Simon MacCorkindale or Tony Franciosa or someone else who is either deceased or much older than moi. Anyway, that's what I do. That and update BillyMasters.com—the site that's filled many a gaping hole. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Bloomberg buys my vote. Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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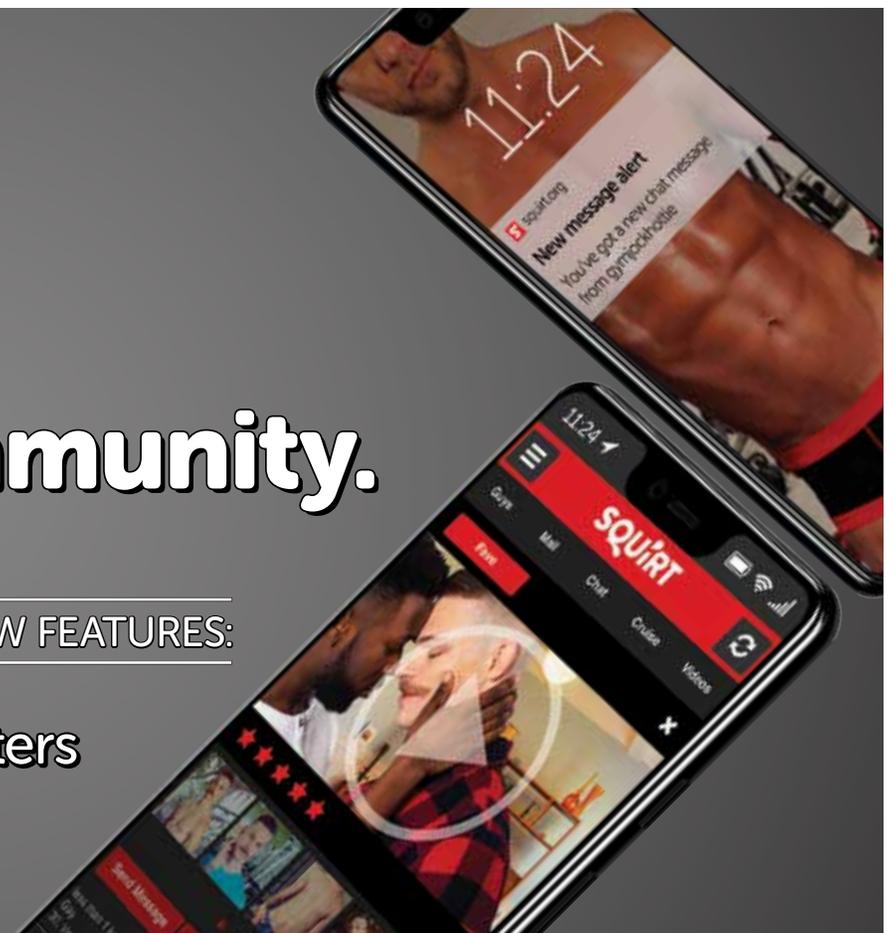
  
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## SOSIN from page 72

no one else did. So, I went to work.

I was in Millennium Park the morning that the first LGBTQ couples in Chicago got civil unions. I sat in the dark at Center on Halsted at a memorial for transgender trailblazer Lois Bates days after she died. The night that the Defense of Marriage Act was overturned and people flooded the streets of Lakeview to celebrate, I was there to cover it. I was there on the day in 2013 when families filled the state capitol to watch marriage equality pass, and when Rep. Greg Harris stood up and tearfully told those families he didn't have enough votes to pass the measure.

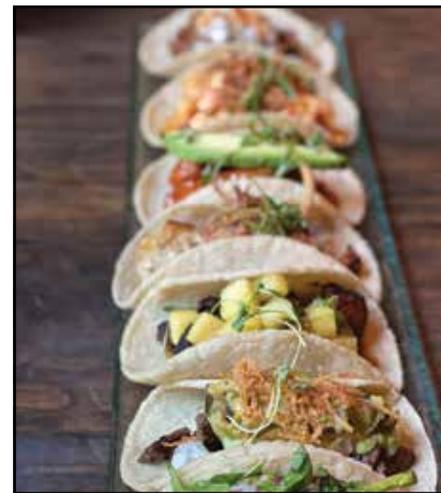
Somewhere in that time, I stopped wanting another job. I realized that being a trans person reporting on trans stories was powerful, rare even. Ten years later, it's still powerful and rare. Windy City Times didn't just give me a chance at a career. In humanizing the queer people whose

stories I told, I learned to celebrate myself. I found a calling.

I sometimes wonder if anyone will remember the state-by-state battles that were waged for LGBTQ rights and the people who waged them. For years, I wondered why Tracy felt a need to cram so many names into every article, to tack on mentions of every last organization in attendance at every event. I knew she was keeping a historical record, but it didn't occur to me why.

Now I know. It wasn't just about who was there. It was about demonstrating for a future generation that the one before it had shown up, had fought for them. It was about being able to look back and see just how big that movement was, even in the moments it felt mundane.

This, to me, is the real legacy of Windy City Times. I can flip through pages of old papers and see thousands of names that pushed the needle toward equality. I have lived through times that people wrote about.



Mercadito tacos.  
Pr photo

## DISH from page 92

appetizer. If you have room after trying the apps and entrees, try the tres leches cake, which was delicious and more than moist. (Can a cake be wet?)

In addition, there are vegetable sides, including esquites/elotes, Brussels sprouts with chorizo (absolutely wonderful), and mac and cheese with poblano and Chihuahua cheese. And of course, there are various salsa and guacamoles, of differing heat levels.

Guests may pre-order meals and cocktail kits to go directly online, or with Uber Eats or Grubhub. However, if you choose to dine at the venue, be aware that conditions were extremely safe (including coded menus that you download to your phone), adhering to the city's guidelines.

**One note:** I want to thank the people who have read Dish in the print issues of Windy City Times. Your feedback has meant so much.

## CLASSIFIEDS

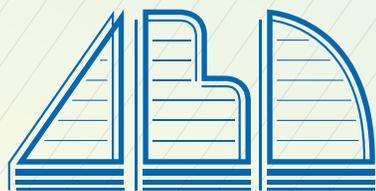
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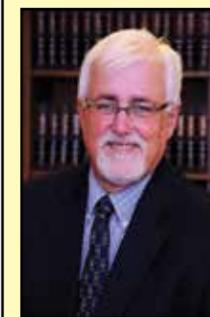
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