



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

A Smithsonian Institution Affiliate

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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY CELEBRATES
A HALF CENTURY OF LGBT CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRESS

The National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH) is joining institutions across the Philadelphia region to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first Annual Reminder demonstration on July 4, 1965 at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. “The courageous story of the LGBT civil rights movement is a vital part of America’s ongoing search for freedom and NMAJH is proud to celebrate and share this history—with the public’s active participation,” says Ivy Barsky, the Museum’s Chief Executive Officer and Gwen Goodman Director. NMAJH will feature an exciting array of programming—including an artifact installation, films and panels, an online story collecting project, and new additions to the core exhibition—focusing on the role of Jewish Americans in the barrier-breaking movement for



Annual Reminder, 1965
Philadelphia Inquirer, July 4, 1965
Special Collections Research Center
Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA

gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights.

Artifact Installation: *The Pursuit of Happiness: Jewish Voices for LGBT Rights*

On June 23, NMAJH will open an artifact installation entitled *The Pursuit of Happiness: Jewish Voices for LGBT Rights*. The installation will celebrate and explore broader stories of activism of Jewish marchers who participated in the Annual Reminders from 1965-1969. The installation will be on view through October 11, 2015 on the Museum's first floor, which is always open to visitors free of charge during Museum hours.

Between 1965 and 1969, gay activists and allies participated in Annual Reminder demonstrations each July 4th, "reminding" their fellow citizens that gay and lesbian Americans did not enjoy all of the rights enshrined in the nation's founding documents. Few could have known then that their appeal for basic personal freedoms would pave the way for advances in marriage equality and a more egalitarian future.

Installation highlights include a campaign poster for Frank Kameny, who organized Philadelphia's Annual Reminder demonstrations and became the first openly gay candidate for Congress when he ran in 1971. An astronomer and WWII veteran, Kameny lost his civil service job in 1957 because of his sexual orientation, and appealed his firing to the Supreme Court in the first case ever to argue for sexual orientation as a civil rights issue. The poster is on loan to the Museum from veteran gay rights activist Kay Lahusen. Also on display, courtesy of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, is a "Lavender Menace" t-shirt worn by Martha Shelley to protest the National Organization for Women's exclusion of lesbian voices and call attention to the need to include diverse voices within the women's movement.

Public Programs

NMAJH is hosting several public programs that celebrate and provide context for the 50th anniversary, with more events slated to be announced later this summer:

***Milk* (USA, 2008, 128 min.)**

Wednesday, July 1 at 7pm

\$8/\$5 for members

Includes post-show discussion with former *Philadelphia Inquirer* film critic Carrie Rickey

From Gus Van Sant, the director of *Good Will Hunting* (1997), *Elephant* (2003), and *Promised Land* (2012), comes the story of Harvey Milk, a visionary civil and human rights leader, listed by *Time* magazine as one of the “100 most important people of the 20th century.” Milk became one of the first openly gay elected officials in the United States when he won a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. Van Sant’s award-winning film is “an astute chronicle of big-city politics and the portrait of a warrior whose passion was equaled by his generosity and good humor” (*The New York Times*). Starring Sean Penn, Josh Brolin, and James Franco.

Milk is part of the Museum’s ‘70s Summer Cinema Series, which was developed in conjunction with the temporary exhibition *Richard Avedon: Family Affairs* and explores American social and political life in the 1970s on Wednesdays during July.

National LGBT 50th Anniversary Celebration: National Legal Panel

Thursday, July 2 at 6:30 pm

Free

With the U.S. Supreme Court’s highly anticipated marriage equality decision expected in late June, Equality Forum and the Museum will co-present a panel of leading legal activists and scholars to discuss the legal history of the LGBT Civil Rights Movement. The panel features Brad Sears, Executive Director of the Williams Institute, in conversation with James Esseks, Director of the American Civil Liberties Union LGBT & AIDS project; Kenji Yoshino, Chief Justice Earl Warren Professor of Constitutional Law, New York University School of Law; Douglas Hallward-Driemeier, Esq., Partner, Ropes & Gray, Lead Counsel in the Supreme Court Marriage Equality Case; and Daniel Vail, Attorney, United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

In collaboration with and organized by Equality Forum. Full schedule at lgbt50.org

LGBT Stories: A Collecting Project

NMAJH has also been collecting and sharing Jewish LGBT stories through a dedicated Tumblr site called *LGBT Stories: A Collecting Project*. The site invites LGBT Jews, their families, and friends to share their own stories about LGBT advocacy and activism, and has become an active platform for the Museum and the public to work together to share personal stories and to document and share history in a new, exciting way. With the help of Tumblr users, the site spans the early days of the “homophile” movement

in the 1950s and 60s, through the post-Stonewall era in the 1970s, the 1980s and the AIDS pandemic, to the current progress towards marriage equality and transgender rights.

Submissions represent the wide range of Jewish LGBT experience and influence in America. One contribution, "[The Watch Chain](#)," is a young man's meditation on moving towards transgender self-acceptance by connecting with an object from his grandfather and dissecting the similarities between life as a Jew in the early 1900s and life as a transgendered person today. [Another](#) is from the Executive Director of the African Human Rights Coalition, who cites the persecution of the Jewish people as an impetus for the work she does now with African LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees. Among NMAJH's curated posts are short biographies of gay activists and allies, including [this one](#) of Frank Kameny. To connect with the Museum and join the conversation, [please click here](#).

Project Partners

NMAJH's Annual Reminder project has been generously supported by the Allen A. Stein Family Foundation, Inc. Public programs presented in conjunction with the installation were generously supported by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

The Museum is grateful for the creativity and enthusiasm of many community partners, led by the 50th Anniversary Planning Committee under the leadership of Equality Forum and the William Way LGBT Community Center and its John J. Wilcox Archives and Library, as well as our planning committee chaired by Tom Wilson Weinberg and including Bob Skiba, Jocelyn Block, John Cunningham, Jerry Silverman, Judith Tannenbaum, and Rich Wilson.

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The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the more than 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all heritages to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. NMAJH is closed most Mondays, including federal holidays and some Jewish holidays. Museum admission is \$12.00 for adults, \$11.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID. On Wednesdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day, the Museum will stay open until 8:00 pm. Admission after 5:00 PM is pay-what-you-wish. For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.

