

Office of Student Life

Coming Out in the 1970s

By Thomas F. Coleman

lgbtlegalhistory.com



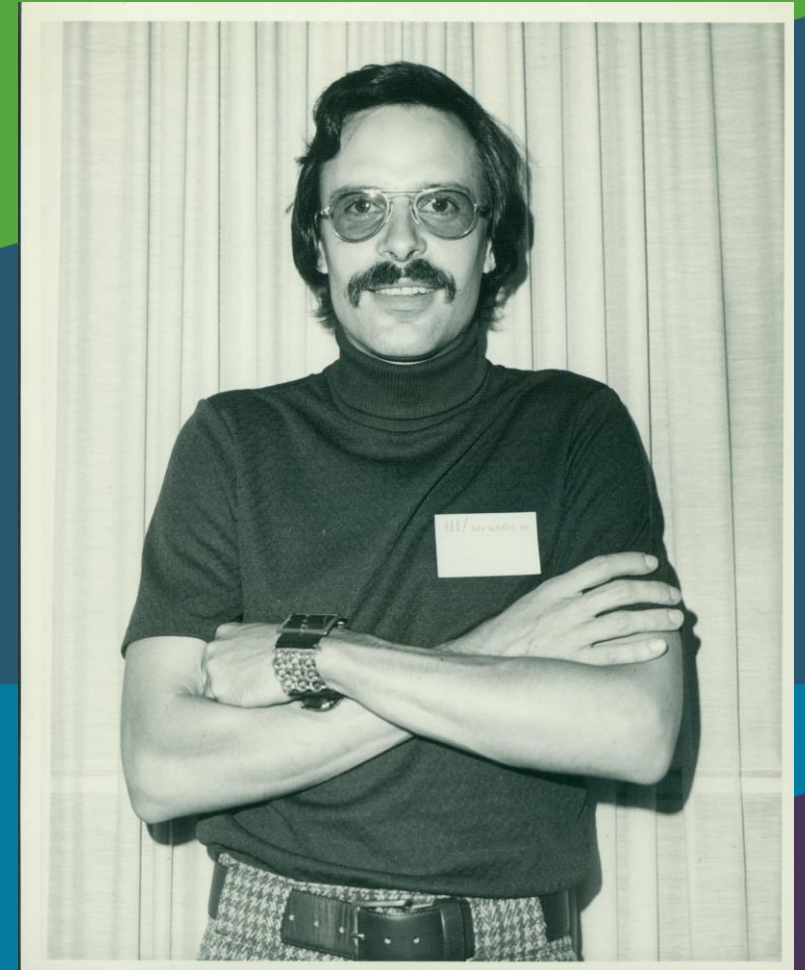
**GENDER AND
SEXUAL DIVERSITY
PRIDE CENTER**

**COLLEGE
of the DESERT**

a presentation for
LGBT History Month



50th Anniversary of my coming out





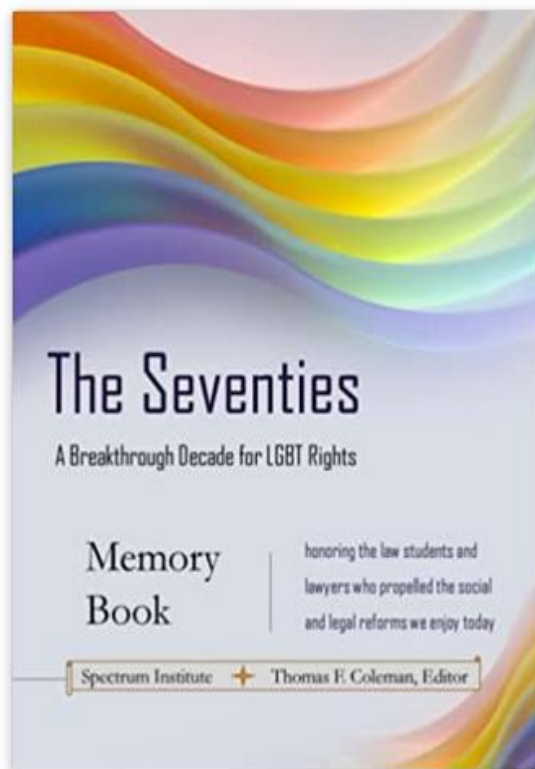
Birds of a Feather

LGBT Legal History Project

"The Seventies"

Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the first gay law student associations.

Honoring the law students and lawyers who were trailblazers for LGBT rights in the 1970s.



The Seventies: A Breakthrough Decade for LGBT Rights Paperback – September 17, 2022

by [Thomas F. Coleman](#) (Author)

[See all formats and editions](#)

Paperback

\$24.32 ✓prime

1 New from \$24.32

This memory book honors the LGBT law students and lawyers who advocated for justice and equal rights in the 1970s and whose accomplishments propelled many of the social and legal reforms we enjoy today. The book begins with a historical account of the oppressive and homophobic policies and practices that permeated American society in the decades preceding the 1970s. It then transitions to an explanation of the amazing legal and political breakthroughs that occurred during the 1970s, many of them resulting from the courageous actions of LGBT legal activists who chose to become visible in a culture that demanded conformity. The next segment of the book consists of biographies of more than 120 pioneering law students and lawyers who openly advocated for LGBT rights in the 1970s, many of whom continuing their activism in the 1980s, 1990s, and beyond. The book ensures that the names and accomplishments of these individuals will not be lost to history.

March
Webinar



A Breakthrough Year for LGBTQ Law Student Activism

A webinar produced by Spectrum Institute and hosted by OutLaw LLS - March 30, 2022

The Seventies

A Breakthrough Decade for LGBT Rights

Birds of a Feather Webinar by Spectrum Institute, The Williams Institute, and [Others](#)

Webinar ★ Noon (Pacific Time) ★ October 11, 2022



Brad Sears
Williams Institute



Tom Coleman
Spectrum Institute



David Reichard
Historian



Maria Reyes Olmedo
Loyola Law Student

Brad Sears opens and closes as host. As moderator, Tom Coleman introduces speakers and provides historical commentary. Professor David Reichard discusses gay student organizing in the 1960s and 1970s. Five LGBT law students and lawyers from the 1970s share their experiences of coming out and advocating in their own way for equal rights. Maria Reyes Olmedo speaks on the emergence of nonbinary, transgender, and law students of color as LGBTQ+ activists. Q & A session follows. Join us for this one-hour event and receive a free pdf copy of a 350-page *Memory Book* with chapters on the 1950s through 1970s as well as biographies of 125 individuals who were pioneering law students and lawyers in the 1970s.



Steve Lachs
Gay lawyer and judge



Mary Stevens
Bisexual law student



George Raya
Gay law student and lobbyist



Phyllis Frye
Transgender law student, lawyer, and judge

Barbara Kritchevsky
Lesbian law student and law professor



October
Webinar

Conversations with . . .

Videos released throughout October



**Steve
Lachs**

Gay lawyer
and judge



**Mary
Stevens**

Bisexual
law student



**George
Raya**

Gay law student
and lobbyist



**Phyllis
Frye**

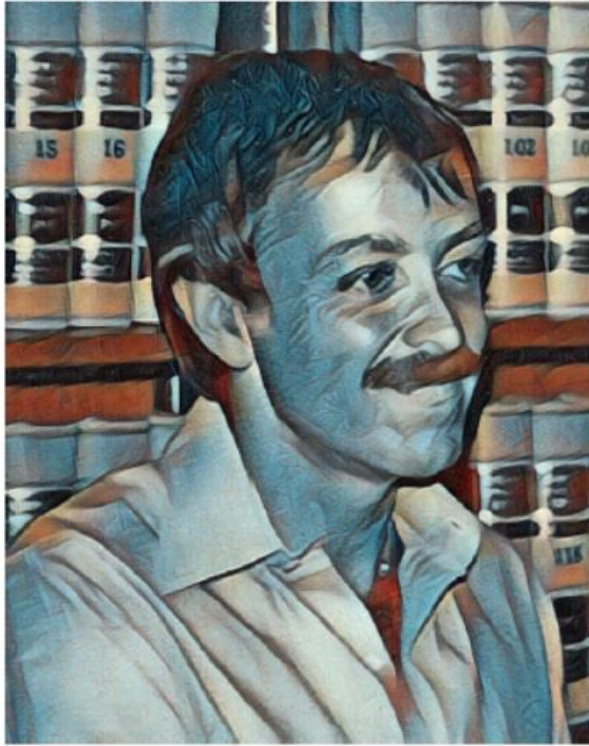
Transgender law student,
lawyer, and judge

**Barbara
Kritchevsky**

Lesbian law student
and law professor



Stephen Michael Lachs



Stephen Lachs was born in New York in 1939. His family moved to Los Angeles when he was 16. He went on to attend UCLA for both his undergraduate and juris doctorate, which he obtained in 1960 and 1963, respectively.

Following his graduation, Lachs worked at the California Department of Insurance, in general-practice law firms, and for the Los Angeles Public Defender's Office. In 1972, when he was a supervising public defender at the arraignment division of the Los Angeles Municipal Court, Lachs became a mentor to the students who had formed the first gay law students association in the nation.

Mary Stevens



Mary Stevens was very active in women's rights in general, and lesbian rights in particular, throughout the 1970s. Her advocacy and organizing in these realms built upon her hands-on experience in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Mary enrolled in the University of Massachusetts in 1960 where she graduated in 1963. After a year of working as a lab technician for a project that was developing open heart surgery techniques, Mary decided to take a leave so she could partake in the ever emerging civil rights movement. She traveled south in the fall of 1964 to work with "Freedom Summer"

Project where she was the contact person for about two dozen field offices. Sponsored by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, this voter registration project brought 700 students from around the country to join the struggle for civil rights in Mississippi.



George Raya



George Raya started his gay rights activism when he was a student at California State University in Sacramento. He and a handful of other undergraduate students formed a club known as the Society for Homosexual Freedom. They asked the university to grant it a charter. After the president refused, they sued the university and won.

George graduated from Cal State in 1972. He was the first in his family to receive a college degree. He then attended Boalt Hall Law School at the University of California in Berkeley.

After he dropped out of law school in late 1973, George moved to the Castro area of San Francisco where he became a full-time gay rights activist. He volunteered at the Whitman-Radcliffe Foundation which had a project known as the Committee for Sexual Law Reform. This group of attorneys drafted proposed state legislation to advance gay rights in an era where there were none. Providing assistance to the East Bay Gays, George was instrumental in convincing the City of Berkeley to adopt an ordinance in 1973 prohibiting city contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation.

Phyllis R. Frye



The transformation of Phyllis Frye from Phillip Frye was a long and difficult journey. Along the way, the person named Phillip was an Eagle Scout, served in the military, and twice married a woman. The process of getting society to accept what Phillip knew from an early age – that she was really Phyllis – was tumultuous to say the least.

Frye attended Texas A&M University, graduating with a B.S. degree in civil engineering and an M.S. in mechanical engineering. After graduating, Frye joined the Army and was stationed in West

Germany as a lieutenant. Frye told superiors she was struggling with her sexual identity. Their response was to send her back to the United States to be "cured" with drug therapy, hypnosis, and aversion therapy. All efforts failed. Frye was forced to resign in 1972, although she was honorably discharged. (1)

Barbara Kritchevsky



Barbara Kritchevsky did her undergraduate studies at Middlebury College where she graduated summa cum laude in 1977 with high honors in political science. She received her law degree, cum laude, from Harvard Law School in 1980.

Founded by fellow law student Jose Gomez, Barbara became one of the first members of the first gay law student group at Harvard Law School. It was known as the Committee on Gay Legal Issues. In October 1978, Jose and Barbara met with the head of the career placement office to insist that the law school refuse to offer placement services to employers unless they would promise not to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. Barbara was shocked when the placement officer responded: “I don’t think you can expect the firm to hire you if you show up for the interview wearing a dress.” She and Jose knew they had their work cut out for them.

Law Students of the 1970s



Robert Achtenberg (1975 - U of UT)	Barbara Kritchevsky (1980 - Harvard)
Ron Albers (1976 - U of WI)	Linda Krieger (1978 - NYU)
Paul Albert (1971 - Stanford)	Arthur Leonard (1977 - Harvard)
Rick Angel (1974 - Loyola, L.A.)	Robert Lynn (1972 - California Western)
Jack Baker (1971 - U. of MN)	Step May (1975 - Peoples College)
Robert Blaustein (1975 - Loyola, L.A.)	Jerel McCrary (1977 - Hastings)
Steven M. Block (1976 - Stanford)	Susan McGreivy (1977 - Western State)
Bob Brosius (1973 - SUNY Buffalo)	Mary Morgan (1972 - NYU)
Barbra Bryant (1980 - Golden Gate)	Bruce Nickerson (1979 - Golden Gate)
Patricia Cain (1973 - U of GA)	Terence O'Brien (1972 - Loyola, L.A.)
Andrew Chirls (1981 - Boalt Hall)	Jodie O'Connell (1975 - U of GA)
Thomas F. Coleman (1973 - Loyola, L.A.)	Adrian Okenberg (1975 - Rutgers)
Thomas J. Coleman Jr. (1980 - Tulane)	John O'Loughlin (1972 - UCLA)
Matt Coles (1977 - Hastings)	Craig Patton (1971 - Ohio State)
Barry Copilow (1973 - USC)	Daniel Pinello (1975 - NYU)
Thomas DePriest (1976 - U of VA)	David Piontkowsky (1981 - Wayne State)
Leonard Ebreo (1980 - NYU)	Nancy Polikoff (1975 - Georgetown)
Robert Eimers (1974 - Hastings)	Shepherd Raimi (1971 - Harvard)
Katharine English (1978 - Northwestern)	George Raya (1980 - Thomas Jefferson)
Rodney Eubanks (1971 - Case Western)	David A. J. Richards (1971 - Harvard)
Claudio Frias (1975 - Rutgers)	Rosalyn Richter (1979 - Brooklyn Law School)
Phyllis Frye (1981 - U of Houston)	Ruthann Robson (1979 - Stetson)
Georgia Garrett-Norris (1980 - Western State)	David Rosenbaum (1973 - Southwestern)
Don Gaudard (1977 - People's College)	Robert Roth (1975 - Fordham)
Richard Gayer (1975 - Hastings)	Richard Rouillard (1978 - South Texas)
Jose Gomez (1981 - Harvard)	Abby Rubinfeld (1979 - Boston U.)
Leonard Graff (1975 - Cooley)	Marjorie Rushforth (1978 - Western State)
Ron Grayson (1975 - Peoples College)	D. Nicholas Russo (1971 - Case Western)
Donna Groman (1979 - American U. WA)	John Sanchez (1977 - Boalt Hall)
Donald Hall (1978 - NYU)	Rand Schrader (1973 - UCLA)
Ray Hatler (1975 - Southwestern)	Donald Solomon (1975 - Harvard)
Marilyn Hedges-Hiller (1977 - Hastings)	Michael Sonberg (1971 - Harvard)
Fred Hertz (1981 - Boalt Hall)	Matt St. George (1979 - Loyola, L.A.)
Donna Hitchens (1977 - Boalt Hall)	Tim Stearns (1974 - Golden Gate)
Judith Holmes (1976 - Catholic U.)	Tom Steel (1975 - Hastings)
Tom Homann (1978 - Western State)	Mary Stevens (Rutgers - 1977)
Thomas E. Horn (1971 - UCLA)	Tom Stoddard (1977 - NYU)
Nan Hunter (1975 - Georgetown)	Katherine Triantafillou (1975 - Suffolk)
Marshall Jacobson (1972 - Loyola, L.A.)	John Ward (1976 - Boston U)
Margot Karle (1973 - Brooklyn Law)	Paul Freud Wotman (1976 - Boalt Hall)
Steven Kelber (1976 - UCLA)	Jim Yeadon (1975 - U of Wisconsin)
Jay Kohom (1974 - UCLA)	



125 Law Students And Lawyers Were Trailblazers for LGBT Rights In the 1970s

Lawyers of the 1970s




Sheldon Anderson (Los Angeles)	Donald Knutson (San Francisco)
Walter Barnett (New Mexico)	Jerold Krieger (Los Angeles)
B.J. Beckwith (San Francisco)	Stephen Lachs (Los Angeles)
Jerry Berg (San Francisco)	Michael Lavery (Pittsburgh)
E. Carrington Boggan (New York)	Larry Long (San Francisco)
David Clayton (San Francisco)	Henry J. McCluskey Jr. (Dallas)
Herb Donaldson (San Francisco)	Janet A. Metcalf (Portland)
Mary C. Dunlap (San Francisco)	Michael Miller (New York)
William H. Gardner (Buffalo)	Pauli Murray (New York)
Gerald Gerash (Denver)	William Reynard (Denver)
David Goodstein (San Mateo)	Rhonda Rivera (Ohio)
George Haverstick (San Diego)	Rick Stokes (San Francisco)
Renee C. Hanover (Chicago)	George Terzian (New York)
Pearl M. Hart (Chicago)	William Thom (New York)
Paul Hunter (Denver)	John Vaisey (San Francisco)
William B. Kelley (Chicago)	John Eshelman Wahl (San Francisco)
Harris Kimball (Orlando)	Leroy S. Walker (Los Angeles)
Barry Kohn (Pennsylvania)	Arthur C. Warner (Princeton)
Barry Kohn (Los Angeles)	R. Michael Wetherbee (Minneapolis)
	G. Keith Wisot (Los Angeles)

Law students of the 1970s are individuals who attended law school during that decade, many of whom were active as lawyers in the 1970s, 1980s, and beyond. Lawyers of the 1970s are individuals who practiced or taught law in the 1970s but who attended law school in the 1950s or 1960s.

Other Law Students and Lawyers

The Birds of a Feather Project did its best to identify the law students and lawyers who were openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender in the 1970s and who took action to advance LGBT rights during that decade. We are aware that we may have missed some of the trailblazing students and pioneering lawyers. It is our intent to honor all students and lawyers who took steps, however large or small, to secure justice and equal rights for the LGBT community in the 1970s.

As one of the honorees has appropriately noted: "The structure we now enjoy had many, many architects throughout the 70s (and beyond) and throughout the country (and beyond), some participating at a grand and public scale, and many more in a more modest and yet astute and influential way, balancing family, work, and community." Although they may be unnamed in this book, they too are honored and thanked for their service to this just cause.



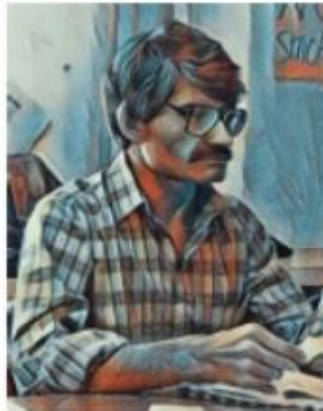


Ron Grayson (center)
Peoples College of Law



Claudio Frias
Rutgers Law School

BIPOC* STUDENTS OF THE 1970S



Jose Gomez
Harvard Law School



George Raya
Thomas Jefferson Law School



John Sanchez
Boalt Hall Law School

* Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

No lawyers
and few
law students
of color were
identified as
LGBT
activists
in the 1970s



National Lawyers Guild – Gay Rights Summer Project – 1975
(from left to right) Darryl Kitagawa, Marilyn Hedges, John Sanchez,
Albert Gordon, Claudio Frias, Tom Coleman

Pauli Murray



Pauli Murray was an author, lawyer, educator, poet, and even a priest. Murray was a black, gender-nonconforming scholar who challenged the status quo and altered the course of racial and gender equality in the United States. Some of Murray's advocacy was done in the 1970s.

Murray was born in Baltimore, Maryland on November 20, 1910, one of six children. At a young age, Murray was orphaned and sent to live with her aunt in North Carolina. After high school, Murray moved to New York City.

Murray graduated from Hunter College in 1933 and went to work for the Works Projects Administration and as a teacher.



THE EMERGENCE OF NON-BINARY, TRANSGENDER, AND STUDENTS OF COLOR AS LGBTQIA+ ACTIVISTS

Preface

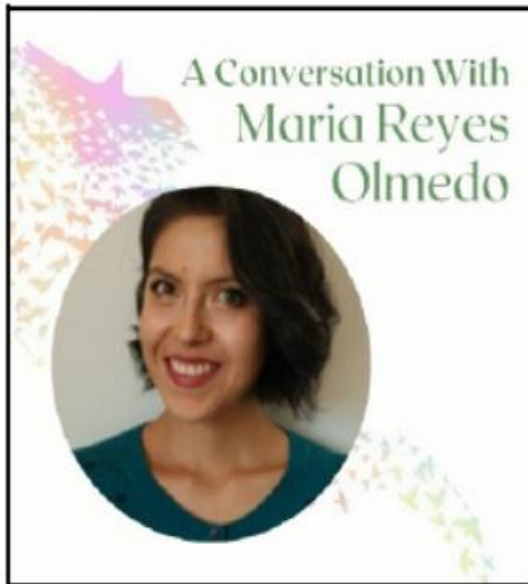
by Thomas F. Coleman

The 1970s did not witness LGBT rights advocacy by lawyers of color. With few exceptions, the same was true for law students. Those exceptions are noted in the biographies of Latinx law students George Raya, Jose Gomez, and John Sanchez and Black law students Ron Grayson and Claudio Frias.

My research was not able to identify any open nonbinary law students or lawyers who were involved in LGBT rights advocacy in the 1970s. Phyllis Frye was the only open transgender law student LGBT rights activist in the historical record for that decade. Attorney Pauli Murray was alive in the 1970s, but their activism was focused on Black civil rights. Although Murray was known after their death to have been a transgender lawyer, they were not open about their gender identity when they were alive.

Postscript

In the Memory Book, Maria Reyes Olmedo explains that some gender-nonconforming students are reluctant to come out even today.



A 3L student at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, María de los Ángeles Reyes Olmedo (they/them) is a Mexican immigrant and first-generation higher education student. Maria wrote a chapter for the Birds of a Feather memory book discussing the post-1970s emergence of open nonbinary, transgender, and students of color as LGBT activists. In this video, Maria discusses their research on this issue and comments on the challenges facing the current generation of LGBT law students.

Video Release Date: October 27, 2022 (21 min.)

**COD's own
Kelley Blair
and Lecture
guests
John DiPietro
& Richard Cox
participated in
this project**



Who is involved?

Staffing



**Allies such as
Paula Davis
helped advance
LGBT rights
over the decades**



Paula Davis (second from left) and Tom Coleman (center) and other volunteers staffed the Sexual Law Reporter (1975 – 1979)

Advocacy for Equal Rights Never Ends



Video Editing * **Media** * **Journalism** * **Political Science**

CAPACITY TO LOVE

A Campaign of Spectrum Institute



Capacity to Love is a campaign to protect the social and sexual rights of adults with mental or developmental disabilities regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. This includes adults living alone or with a roommate, spouse or family members; those living under an order of conservatorship or guardianship; and those living in licensed settings such as nursing homes or group residences.

Age of Consent

Redefining Criminality for Teenage Sex

California = 16 and 17 is a felony.

It is time to reevaluate California's laws.

CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD	CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD	CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD	CONSENT AT 15 YEARS OLD
SPAIN	USA (34 STATES)	UNITED KINGDOM	CZECH REPUBLIC
CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD	CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD	CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD	CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD
MALAYSIA	NETHERLAND	SINGAPORE	SOUTH AFRICA
CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD	CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD	CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD	CONSENT AT 16 YEARS OLD
FINLAND	CANADA	RUSSIA	INDONESIA

Political Action

Teen voters
could lead
the movement
to lower the
age of consent
in California



<https://spectruminstitute.org/>

tomcoleman@spectruminstitute.org