

# PIONEERING QUEERS

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14 churches place a half-page ad in *The Oregonian* criticizing the mayor and stating they dispute the notion that homosexuality should be a source of community pride.

⊙ Roughly 400 people march in Portland's gay pride parade and rally at Terry Schunk Plaza across from City Hall. Meanwhile, 200 people gather at Laurelhurst Park to protest the mayor's proclamation.

⊙ Metropolitan Community Church of Portland moves to its current location at 2400 N.E. Broadway.

⊙ The Eugene City Council amends the city's human rights ordinance to prohibit discrimination against gay men and lesbians in employment, housing and public accommodations.

⊙ A group of lesbians decked out in politically incorrect butch-femme attire sing '50s-type music at the New Year's Eve party hosted by Every Woman's Company. What starts as a joke becomes a hit, and the Dyketones take their show on the road.

## 1978

⊙ Eugene voters repeal the city ordinance that protects gay men and lesbians from discrimination.



## 1979

⊙ Portland Community Bowling Association begins with 50 bowlers and 10 teams. By 1985 the association grows to 285 bowlers on 50 teams in three leagues.

⊙ The Town Council Foundation gains tax-exempt status. For years, the Internal Revenue Service denied such status to gay and lesbian groups, maintaining that all such groups were political.

The foundation offers counseling and assumes the apolitical activities of the Portland Town Council. Later, the foundation's name changes to Phoenix Rising.

## 1980

⊙ Portland real-estate agent Don Clarkson and a few associates hold a meeting to form a gay business alliance called Cascade Guild. Clarkson expects 50 people to attend the first meeting. He is pleasantly surprised when attendance climbs to more than 200. The alliance provides gay men and lesbians with a chance to network in the business world.

⊙ Ten incidents of gay bashing in Laurelhurst Park are reported during July and August. By Octo-



ber, more gay men are being attacked in downtown Portland near the bars. The police comment that it's impossible to know exactly how many attacks

have taken place because there's no box to check on police reports to indicate a victim's sexual orientation.

⊙ The Portland Gay Men's Chorus opens its first season with a concert at the Metropolitan Community Church. During its fourth season, the chorus performs at Secretary of State Barbara Roberts' inauguration.

## 1981

⊙ Portland Women's Counseling Collective organizes a lesbian support and therapy group that meets on Thursday nights.



Lucille Hart

## 1982

⊙ Jerry Weller, John Baker, Terry Bean, Keeston Lowery and Dana Weinstein form Right to Privacy Political Action Committee. During its first year, the organization raises

\$17,000 to support pro-gay candidates via the first Lucille Hart Dinner, attended by 342 people.

⊙ Portland's gay pride celebration adds the word *lesbian* to its official title.

⊙ The Bisexuality Exploration Group begins as an apolitical social and support group. In 1985 the group changes its name to Bisexual Community Forum.

## 1983

⊙ Black Lesbians and Gays United forms in Portland. The group holds social events and serves as a political catalyst in the African American lesbian and gay community.

⊙ The headline of *Willamette Week's* Aug. 2 cover story reads: "AIDS and Portland: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome—the most perplexing and fatal disease to surface in recent memory—has come to Portland."

⊙ The first issue of *Just Out* hits the streets on Oct. 28 with a cover story on the Dyketones.

⊙ Travel agencies in Portland recognize the power of the gay and lesbian dollar as Van Nuys Travel joins the International Gay Tour Association.

The association encourages airlines to grant gay travel agencies the same services they provide to other travel agencies.

## 1984

⊙ The Multnomah County Commission approves an ordinance prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation. Opponents immediately threaten to force a public vote. To avoid an election, the commission repeals the ordinance in March 1985 and replaces it with a resolution affirming the same concept. Resolutions are not subject to referendum petition.

## 1985

⊙ Northwest Gender Alliance reaches out for new members with an ad in *Just Out* encouraging transvestites and transsexuals to join the alliance for social activities and mutual support.

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# NOTABLE QUOTABLES

• "It's certainly safe to say that homosexuals are Oregon's biggest minority," remarks Dr. Joseph B. Trainer in an Aug. 31, 1972, article for *The Oregon Journal* about the number of gay people in Oregon.

• "Gay liberation is happening everywhere, not just in the big cities," says Ken Allison about the formation of the Klamath Gay Union in Klamath Falls, reports *The Fountain* in February 1973.

• In June 1977, the *Portland Scribe* does an issue on gay pride week. In the "Black Forum" column, Niobe Erebor writes: "Gay Pride Week is joyfully here again. There are homosexual Black people, women and men. That may be quite evident to some of you, but the fact is that society can, for its own perverse reasons, make gay people and Black people invisible. So a Black gay person is doubly invisible/visible—a Black gay woman triply so."

• In January 1978, *The Oregonian* runs a four-part series on gay men and lesbians. The first article shows that gay people are divided on whether to come out.

"I would say that about 90 percent of the gay people in Oregon are closet homosexuals. And we're not going to recom-

mend that they come out. It's too hard," Jerry Weller, director of the Portland Town Council, is quoted as saying.

• "It is our responsibility as a church to affirm our people in their wholeness and to work against anything that tells them they are less than God created them to be," comments the Rev. Gary L. Wilson in a July 1988 article for *The Oregonian* about Metropolitan Community Church of Portland.



Keeston Lowery

were very disconnected from each other and that the weight of the racism had divided us so that we didn't communicate with each other," comments Cliff Jones during an interview with Thomas Lauderdale for Right to Privacy's 10th anniversary booklet in 1992.

• In response to the passage of Measure 8 in 1988, Keeston Lowery tells *The Oregonian*: "I feel this terrible sense of sadness and sense of shame by what this state has done. I think there's a lot of people who feel that the state has said we're not part of the family."

• "When I came to Portland in 1981, it seemed to me that black men in this community



Cliff Jones

time," Jones continues. "We started a group called Black Lesbians and Gays United. We had huge potlucks for about two years. We were getting to where we had 50 to 60 people."

• "This decision today created a better employment nondiscrimination act than we've been trying to pass in the Legislature for 23 years," says a jubilant Jean Harris, executive director of Basic Rights Oregon, in response to the landmark *Tanner vs. Oregon Health Sciences University* decision, as reported in the Dec. 10, 1998, issue of *The Oregonian*.

Compiled by PAT YOUNG

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