

Pennsylvania Lesbian and Gay Task Force Retrospective: 1978-2000

Pennsylvania Lesbian and Gay Task Force A Retrospective Selected Results: 1978-2000

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Pennsylvania Lesbian and Gay Task Force Retrospective: 1978-2000

The Early Years

1978-1979 Formation

In response to assaults against civil rights victories across the country, a small group forms the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force (PLGTF) to advance **civil, human, and constitutional rights** for lesbian and gay people, a mission later *expanded* to include bisexual and transgendered people. The Christian Association at the University of Pennsylvania offers a \$5,000 seed grant and a small office. The founding Board of Directors' vision is sustained and expanded throughout two decades in cooperation with dedicated staff, volunteers, members, and several hundred community partners. *Rev. Jim Littrell* serves as first executive director; *Ann Butchart*, interim director; and, post-December 1979, *Rita Addressa*.

1980-1981

Visibility

In preparation for the introduction of a Philadelphia civil rights bill, PLGTF expands its gay and non-gay ally base, and launches a mass media project to educate media elites and general audiences. It obtains **commercial broadcast** for gay-affirmative television and radio public service announcements, a first nationwide. Over two decades, in cooperation with local media managers and anonymous friends, **12 of 14** television Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are produced and broadcast reaching millions of viewers.² (TV CEOs censor *two* of the 14 PSAs.) Over the decade, the Task Force organizes community briefings with **key** broadcast and print media managers serving the Philadelphia SMSA, **annually** or biennially.

1982

Victory The Law

With strong *board and community support*, PLGTF with the Philadelphia Black Gays, led by *Doug Bowman*, spearhead a successful Philadelphia campaign to secure **civil rights protections** inclusive of employment, housing, and public accommodations, with **no** weakening amendments or caveats. With the leadership of Council members *Lucien Blackwell* and *David Cohen*, Esq., the **Philadelphia Fair Practices Act** ("Bill 1358") is amended by City Council in a 13-2 vote against 11th hour Catholic Archdiocese opposition. The legislation extends protections to all citizens and most particularly an estimated **200,000** gay and lesbian people.³

1983

History and Herstory

Funded in part by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council (PHC), PLGTF produces "**Discovery**," a series of eleven history vignettes together with an unfunded 5-part series to celebrate Women's History Week for **commercial radio broadcast**.² Efforts to assure civil rights law enforcement move forward. PLGTF offices relocate to the Friends Center and a decade later to a Temple University Center City (TUCC) site in Philadelphia.

1984

First City Wide Study Initiated

PRIDE

PFT Supports Diversity

Board Co-Chair *Larry Gross*, Ph.D., with board member and noted criminologist *Steven Aurand*, undertake PLGTF's first citywide **Study of Discrimination and Violence** and four *subsequent* Pennsylvania-wide studies (1988-2000).⁴ In 1984 and through 1989, PLGTF organizes a range of **Pride** cultural events to build solidarity and to promote visibility, *e.g* Artists for Pride, A Concert of Chamber Works, Fairy Tales, and several Pride rallies featuring nationally recognized speakers with local leaders.²

The Task Force begins formal on-going negotiations with the Philadelphia School District leadership to support system-wide **education equity**. The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers bolsters the effort and designates Advisor *Paul Thomas*, Ed.D. to represent the union. Member *Susan Vashbinder*, M. Ed. develops and leads a four-day model diversity training, annually, for school district staff.⁶

1985

A second PHC grant supports production of *Words*, a gay history docu-drama (written by

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Jonathan Katz), for **public radio broadcast nationwide**, excepting local WHYY, which refuses to air it and which maintains a *minimal* commitment to the broadcast of public interest issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people.^{2, 14}

The Hotline

Discrimination and Violence Reports

PLGTF establishes and staffs a **Discrimination and Violence Hotline Project** to support and to provide resources for individuals. Callers share heart-wrenching stories of cruel and biased treatment by employers and landowners as well as reports of serious physical assaults by strangers, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, and sometimes family members. Over the last decade, reports of police brutality and abuse, of false arrest and imprisonment seem to decline. In contrast, the harassment of sex workers seems consistent, so too solicitation and entrapment by state police. Over time, project leaders include *Christine Bush*, *Chloe Georas*, and *Kathryn Furano*, who a near-decade later will serve PLGTF, with distinction, as Board Co-Chair.

1986

First Citywide Study Released

Our first citywide **Study of Discrimination and Violence Against Lesbian and Gay People in the City of Philadelphia** is published (1986). Subsequent to the study's release and a well-publicized police brutality incident, formal negotiations begin and continue over the decade with Philadelphia Police Commissioners *Kevin Tucker*, *Willie Williams*, *Richard Neal*, and *John Timoney*.^{2, 13} While Diversity training courses expand to reach **all** levels of Police, training time remains constant at 1986 levels, *i.e.*, four to six hour modules.

First Police Negotiations

...The crime more heinous than rape...

The U.S. Supreme Court's infamous decision in **Bowers v. Hardwick** and the nation's **Bicentennial** celebration in Philadelphia prompt two PLGTF mass mobilizations to protest the Burger Court's imprimatur of state sodomy laws, selectively enforced against gay men and against lesbian women.⁵ Advisor *Rev. Paul Washington* stands, publicly, with us against this injustice.

Educating the Educators

PLGTF organizes an exhaustive series, oft repeated, of **public testimony** before the **Philadelphia Board of Education** to reach education reform goals, joined consistently throughout the next decade by Board Chairs and Advisors Rabbi *Richard Address*, *Frank Furstenberg* Ph.D., Rabbi *Mordechai Liebling Mark Ratkus*, Ph.D., *Carroll Smith Rosenberg* Ph.D., *Paul Thomas*, Ed.D., *Bertha Waters*, MSW, *Rev. Paul Washington*, with a diverse range of gay community organization leaders, strengthened by the tireless support of PFLAG.⁶

Educating the Community

In an effort to empower community activists and members, the Task Force organizes the first of four *Conferences on the Law* led by nationally recognized scholars and practitioners. The *Philadelphia Bar Association* generously sponsors one of the four seminars as part of its continuing legal education program and, later, a forum to discuss statewide civil rights. Professor *Hank Perritt* and *Kristine Holt*, Esq., respectively, are featured panelists.²

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1987-1988

First Statewide Study Gets National Hearing

As the Task Force nears publication of its first **Study of Discrimination and Violence Against Lesbian and Gay People in the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania** (437), it prepares first-time briefings with U.S. Representative *Thomas Foglietta* [D-PA] and invited colleagues; with U.S. Senator *Arlen Specter* [R-PA]; with Senator *Vincent Fumo* and colleagues [D-PA]; and with the Governor's *Cabinet* and education officials to reach justice goals.

Governor Reissues Executive Order

While *Governor Casey* fails to support legislative remedies, he re-issues an **Executive Order** (1988), inclusive of *contract compliance*, and sets the stage for education reform statewide. *Thomas Gilhool*, Esq., then Department of Education Secretary issues a policy prohibiting sexual orientation employment discrimination.¹⁰

We the People Bicentennial

As Philadelphia prepares its Bicentennial Celebration, PLGTF organizes 1,500 protestors to greet and to present the **Lesbian and Gay Bill of Rights** petition to the U.S. Congress. We surmount significant local, capitol, and federal police efforts to constrain constitutionally protected rights of free speech and assembly.^{5, 8}

Protest and Resistance

PLGTF mobilizes community organizations to strategize and to challenge the Philadelphia Board of Education's **failure** to adopt substantive education recommendations and to reference *explicitly* lesbian and gay people in various policies, textbook criteria, and guidelines.⁶

Murder

The brutal murders of *Anthony Milano* (Bucks County), *Rebecca Wight* (Adams County), and the near murder of Rebecca's lover, *Claudia Brenner*, galvanize the community. So too, the 1989 murders of seven to nine predominantly *African American gay men* as well as the 1999 murders of *John Keely* and *Anthony McCullough*, and the suspicious deaths of *Louis Foggy* and *Jacob Moses* (Philadelphia), murders that remain unsolved.²

1989, 1991 & 1994

Community mounts first legal challenge, under deregulation, to media giants.

After a near-decade of briefings and negotiations with **mass media CEOs**, PLGTF prepares the nation's *first-time* marketplace **Petition to Deny** television and then radio broadcasters' re-licensure for their *continuing individual and collective failure* to meet public interest programming obligations and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) standards. Comprehensive **studies** of *non-entertainment* programming and employment data form the basis for each Federal Communications Commission (FCC) petition, strengthened by 15 minority and feminist organizations' *affidavits* and *negotiation partnerships*.

The *United Church of Christ Office of Communications* and *Pennsylvania NOW* support a sustained commitment to this challenge. Professor *Angela Campbell*, Esq., IPR Director at the Georgetown University Law School with Advisor *Nolan Bowie*, Esq. and Board Co-Chair *Larry Gross* (and an anonymous DC attorney) contribute significantly to the project. The U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the FCC **prevail** in cementing deregulation, encouraging media monopoly, and eliminating all public interest and public accountability standards.⁹

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1989, 1991-1992	Challenging government intransigence, PLGTF convenes a Public Policy Roundtable with city, state, and federal elected officials to resolve a pervasive pattern of anti-gay violence and discrimination. In tandem, the Task Force organizes highly prepared briefings with Philadelphia District Attorneys <i>Ronald Castille</i> and later <i>Lynn Abraham</i> , each contemptuous of proposed policy recommendations. <i>Steven Aurand</i> , <i>Patricia Pierce</i> , Esq., and <i>David McColgin</i> , Esq., participate in these meetings. Convened briefings with Pennsylvania Attorney General <i>Ernie Preate</i> prompt adoption of a non-discrimination employment policy.
<i>Criminal Injustice Mounts</i>	
<i>Philadelphia Mayors Shun Gay Appointees</i>	The Task Force presses Mayors Wilson Goode and later Ed Rendell to support domestic partnership benefits and Board of Education appointments. Despite sustained and tenacious community efforts, Mayor Rendell, over <i>two</i> consecutive terms, fails to appoint highly qualified nominees to serve on the Board and thwarts domestic partnership legislative efforts to reach public <i>and</i> private sector employees, gay <i>and</i> non-gay. ¹⁰
<i>Equal Pay for Equal Work</i>	PLGTF convenes a series of <i>community forums</i> (through 1996) to organize support for expansive legislation to extend economic benefits. Advisor <i>John R. Taylor</i> , Esq. plays an early and crucial role in the domestic partnership effort, as too Task Force Co-Chair Larry Gross.
<hr/>	
1992-1994	PLGTF issues its second Pennsylvania-wide Study (2,652) finding high levels of discrimination and violence, statewide. ⁴
<i>New Study Finds Record High Levels</i>	As the nation responds to conservatives' assault against our right to education , PLGTF prepares a first briefing with U.S. Senator <i>Harris Wofford</i> [D-PA] to lead in establishing a statement of equity principles in pending <i>ESEA</i> legislation. Advisor <i>Frederick R. Haas</i> participates in this briefing. The local community mobilizes to support the effort. <i>Wofford</i> and his staff, <i>nevertheless</i> , fail to act.
<i>Our Right to Education, to Knowledge, to Justice</i>	On the invitation of the Pennsylvania Department of Education , PLGTF embarks on a labor-intensive crusade to organize support across the state to imbed equality and diversity principles into the state's proposed reform agenda. Against religious right wing opposition abetted by the <i>Philadelphia Inquirer's</i> news bias [Reporters <i>Langland</i> , <i>Motley</i> , and <i>Mezzacappa</i> locally], our collaborative effort and exhaustive public testimonies [80] at 12 sites statewide succeed <i>in part</i> . ⁶
<i>Community Mobilizes</i>	
Victory in part	The Board amends state regulations to prohibit discrimination in educational programs on the basis of sexual orientation and disability, adopts a Statement of Principles inclusive of the category "sexual orientation," and requires all 501 school districts to teach about diverse cultures and histories. The Governor who capitulates to small, but vocal religious right wing opposition rescinds this latter mandate. While important, the <i>Statement of Principles</i> does not have the effect of regulation or statute.
Victory in part	<i>Locally</i> , the Task Force responds to public school officials' invitation to participate in the District's comprehensive effort to institutionalize a system-wide commitment to multiracial, multicultural, and gender fair education . With the board leadership of <i>Rotan Lee</i> , Esq. and <i>Floyd Alston</i> , Policy 102 is adopted unanimously in January 1994. With the <i>Attic Youth</i> group, we successfully counter a conservative religious assault against the adopted policy. Over time, we host a series of strategic planning meetings with community organizations to reach education equity goals.
<i>Community Think Tanks</i>	
<i>(continued)</i>	Local leaders join PLGTF in three collaborative Rainbow press conferences to confront and challenge congressional assaults and conservative religious' attacks against our

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*Leaders Challenge
the State and the
Nation*

Pennsylvania education reform agenda. A sampling of participants includes: Board Co-Chair *Larry Gross*, Ph.D. with Advisors *Lisa Henderson*, Ph.D., *Ernie Jones*, Esq.; and Rev. *Paul Washington* together with Rabbi *Carl Choper* and Rabbi *Irwin Goldenberg*; *Carrie Jacobs*, Ph.D.; Rev. *Mary Merriman*; *Fernando Chang Muy*, Esq.; *Chris Niebrzdowski*; *Deborah Sieger*, Ph.D.; *Barbara Smith*, founder of Kitchen Table Women of Color Press; *Bertha Waters*, MSW and *Debbie Wei*, curricular specialists.⁶

*Criminal
Injustice
Mounts*

In tandem, we support community efforts to respond to **pre-election assaults** led by the Attorney General as well as the Philadelphia Police Chief and District Attorney who, respectively, invade a local bookstore, conduct a Judy Garland park “sweep,” and propel an international scandal about the arrest of one man accused of having sex with several 15-17 year old Catholic high school male students (the *Eddy Savitz* case). Several months later, Philadelphia police will brutally assault ACT-UP protestors at a demonstration against President George Bush (1992).

1995-1996

*Victory
Equal Protection
Under the
Law*

As the nation prepares for the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in **Romer v. Evans** (re: Colorado’s *Amendment Two* to deny lesbian and gay people equal protection under the law), PLGTF mobilizes local gay and non-gay leaders to participate in press conferences, forums, letter writing campaigns, media education, and grass roots strategies to complement Lambda LDEF litigation efforts. Judge John Braxton, Task Force Advisor, leads an eminent body of speakers declaring.... “[t]here is something wrong in America....” Soon thereafter, that wrong would be made right, and the people would prevail as the Court declared Amendment Two “unconstitutional.”¹¹

*The Broadcast
CEO Roundtable*

With local non-gay progressive leaders and academicians, PLGTF convenes a first time **Roundtable** for 10-15 Philadelphia Broadcast CEOs to forward broad social and economic justice issues. Advisors Judge *John Braxton*, Professor *Nolan Bowie*, Esq., and *Cindy Denmead*, *Johnny Irizarry*, *Carrie Jacobs*, Ph.D., *Ernest Jones*, Esq., *James Roberts*, and *Ellen Somekawa* with Board Co-Chair *Larry Gross*, Ph.D. participate in these efforts.¹¹

*Eight Bullets: The
Story of One
Woman’s
Survival*

Claudia Brenner (co-author, **Eight Bullets**) joins the Task Force in a press conference to announce our pending third statewide **Study**. The Study is published June 1996 with the participation of 70 organizations and a sampling of 3086 respondents.^{2, 4} Study findings prompt the Task Force to establish the **Pennsylvania Civil Rights Initiative** to reinvigorate and focus efforts on statewide civil rights and education legislation to prohibit *sexual orientation and gender identity (or expression)* based discrimination and to establish *education* as a specific category in civil rights laws.

*Initiative
Launched*

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1996-1997
Elizabethtown
The Christian Right Draws a Line in the Sand
Students Lead

In response to *local leaders'* requests, the Task Force provides substantial **on-site** support to **Elizabethtown**, PA citizens' struggle against its local Board of Education which promulgates an expansive pro-discrimination policy to prohibit teaching about diverse family forms, e.g. single parents, lesbian and gay families. Local leaders and an active student body **lead** the first protests of 600 plus who directly challenge the Board over a six-month period. In spite of minimal resources, PLGTF supports the organization of several Press conferences/Vigils to rescind the policy and to reach quality education goals. The Christian stealth Board obtains the legal assistance of the **Rutherford Institute** and **Concerned Women of America** with combined budgets of 18 million dollars. While Pennsylvania education regulations *require* non-discrimination in employment and in educational programs [1992-3], Lambda LDEF determines that it cannot litigate, but does provide moral support and consultation.

Local Leaders Oust Christian Stealth Board
PSEA Supports Diversity

Leaders *Linda Kinney Poss, Bob Stanley, Marybeth Stanley* with daughter *Beth, Karen Swiegart*, and *Tom Wilson* joined by area university professors, and many anonymous gay friends are **strengthened** by the strong support of the **PSEA** local union president, *Nancy Warble*, who speaks eloquently on behalf of teachers and students in this struggle. *Linda Martin*, President of Pennsylvania NOW/Lancaster, and *John Wilkins*. Lancaster Pink Triangle Coalition, with PFLAG/York provide a critical presence and link to area feminist and gay communities. Lancaster, Harrisburg, and Mechanicsburg area religious leaders who support the effort include: *Rabbi Jack Paskoff* with *Rev. Terry Wimmer* and Metropolitan Community Church Pastors *Christen Chew* and *Mary Merriman*, with United Church of Christ coalition representative *Doug Fauth*.⁶ The community elects a new Board that *neither* rescinds nor implements the offensive policy.

Gross Presents Study Findings to Legislators

Larry Gross, Ph.D. presents the findings of the 1996 **Study** to 20-25 legislators and later to the Governor's Cabinet at the state capitol. *Ghazala Anwar*, Ph.D., with the support of Temple University students, organizes and participates in twenty briefings for individual House and Senate key leaders and legislators to elicit their support for civil rights and education remedies. Democrat and Republican legislators' **disinterest** in (or fear of) the **compelling need to act** on human rights issues was palpable.

"... Governor Ridge does not support your civil rights agenda..."

In an extraordinary effort to meet and brief the **Governor** and key cabinet members, PLGTF organizes a team of 14 academicians, religious progressives, and community activists across the state to obtain the Administration's support for our civil rights. ² With a thinly veiled contempt, the Governor's designee re-states the Governor's opposition. A sampling of participants includes *Tony D'Augelli*, Ph.D. (Penn State); *Elise de Long* Esq. and *Scott Saffier*, FTMC (Pittsburgh); *Elaine Hill*, PFLAG/Erie; *Rabbi Jack Paskoff* and *Rev. Eva O'Diam* (Lancaster/Harrisburg).

1998-1999
The Initiative Inches Forward

The Task Force **expands** progressive gay and non-gay support for the **Initiative** and the core principles that guide this labor and capital intensive undertaking. While partner organizations remain constant (30), more than *4,300* individuals sign petitions to demand support for civil and education rights. Key organizations sign statements of support (42). Democratic Senators *Allen Kukovich* and *Allyson Schwartz* host a Task Force convened briefing in Harrisburg with activists statewide. A *sampling* includes *Elise DeLong* Esq. (Pittsburgh); *Richard Hoke* and *Dan Miller*, CPA (Harrisburg); *Sandy Henise*, PSEA;

(continued)
... There is not

Kristine Holt, Esq.; *Deb Sieger*, Ph.D. (Kutztown); *James Roberts* (Philadelphia); *Randy and Tim* (Laurel Highlands); *Melina Waldo*, PFLAG/Regional; and *Delma Welch* (York).⁷ Senator *Kukovich* [D-PA], joined by four Senators, agrees to introduce the bills and later recants. A

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enough support in the Senate ...

year later, Representative *James Roebuck* (D-PA), chair of the Pennsylvania Black Caucus, invites a briefing. While 17 legislators agree to *co-sponsor* the proposed civil rights bills, inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity, no one will serve as **prime sponsor**.¹²

Allen Kukovich

Philadelphia Bar Association Supports Effort

To strengthen the **Initiative**, the Task Force prepares a series of presentations including the Philadelphia Bar Association. *Kristine Holt*, Esq. is a featured speaker. With the leadership of *David Rosenblum*, Esq. (GALLOP), the Board of Governors adopts a resolution to support proposed amendments to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity. A Task Force presentation to *Penn State University* faculty and staff encourages their strong participation and support.

Public Interest Roundtable Argues for Police Accountability

Over the period, the Task Force convenes three **Police Public Interest Roundtables** with new Police Chief *Timoney*. The Roundtable consists of an expanding team of public interest advocacy and litigation organizations who share common goals and who represent a diverse range of women of all colors, racial and ethnic minorities, and the poor.¹³ *Timoney* proffers and then recants his agreement to partner in a comprehensive review and evaluation of Department-wide training programs. A sampling of participants includes the Barrio Project, GALLOP, the PBA Civil Rights Committee, Project Home, the Public Defenders Association, PILCOP, Women Against Abuse, and WOAR with *Larry Krasner*, Esq. and *Larry Gross*, Ph.D.

WHYY Lifts the BAN – Momentarily

On the broadcast front, **WHYY**'s new chief executive agrees to meet, ending a 15 year-ban. PLGTF prepares an extensive analysis demonstrating WHYY's programming bias and underreporting and offers thoughtful remedies. One of the most critical recommendations focuses on creating a dedicated "Public Interest" digital channel (of four channels) in contrast to WHYY's proposed "Business" Channel. WHYY fails to keep its agreement to engage in two subsequent briefings with minority organizations. Participants include: Board Co-Chairs *Kathryn Furano* and *Larry Gross*, Ph.D. with *David Acosta* and *James Roberts*.¹⁴

Policy 102: Eternal Vigilance

Locally, PLGTF **re-convenes** several Policy 102 organization supporters to press upon the Board of Education to *implement* fully the 1994 adopted policy. The Black United Fund, Asian Americans United, the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, and PFLAG/Philadelphia participate.⁶ The Board fails to act.

Shepard Vigil Board of Education President Speaks Joined by 13 Local Leaders

In response to community **crisis**, the Task Force with 13 community leaders hosts a candlelight **vigil** to mark the brutal murder of *Matthew Shepard*. *Floyd Alston*, President of the Board of Education as well as the Philadelphia Bar Association Chancellor and Chancellor-Elect join a vigil of 600 people. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* news story is inaccurate and accompanied by a large photo of a sanitation worker recycling leaves. One year later, with the support of Dignity/USA and MCC/Philadelphia, PLGTF organizes a **press conference** - focused on *Eve and Antoun's eyewitness* accounts - to bring public attention to the brutal murder of local activist *Anthony McCullough*. The *Philadelphia Inquirer's* conscious distortions of our demand for police accountability buttress the Department's inept murder investigation. (See PLGTF Report, November 1999 and original news clippings).

Knight Ridder News Bias

(continued)

A very moving Obituary about "Alphy" does not change this fact. The *Philadelphia Sun* is the only newspaper that eventually covers the story of investigators' ineptitude and bias.

Eyewitness Accounts Ignored Police Go

Over the period, PLGTF organizes **two** collaborative community briefings with **Knight Ridder's** local *Philadelphia Inquirer* and separately the *Daily News* management teams. A

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<i>Unchallenged</i>	sampling of organizations include Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), Family Pride, GALLOP, GALAEI, Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, the Jewish Labor Committee, PFLAG/Regional, and Unity. The <i>Inquirer's</i> biased coverage (see above) is paralleled by the <i>Daily News's</i> promulgation of Christian Coalition propaganda and several articles that diminish a female murder victim defined as "eccentric" [<i>Porter</i>] and that blame the gay community for the police's failure to identify various murder suspects [<i>Adams</i>].
<i>Women's role is not to submit to men</i>	
<i>Women are not to be blamed for their own murder</i>	While, overall coverage about gay and lesbian issues increases tangibly over the decade, <i>Knight Ridder</i> disregards proffered recommendations (1990-1999) related to accurate, diverse, and non-biased coverage; meaningful employment diversity at all levels; development of public interest news sections; and the use of progressive and minority information sources to counterbalance an often-conservative news and editorial bias.

Year 2000 As we move towards a new millennium, the Task Force releases its fourth **Pennsylvania Study** (3,014 respondents among 57 of 67 Pennsylvania counties). The sampling is geographically balanced, reaches near-gender parity (49% female participation), and is somewhat diverse racially among Philadelphia respondents (20% African American).⁴

Discrimination and Violence Remain at High Levels Professor *Larry Gross* presents the findings of the Year 2000 **Study** at a local press conference. (A videotape is available.) The presence of 35 gay and non-gay, minority and non-minority community leaders lends strong support and importance to the Study's findings and explicit policy recommendations.

Community Gives Moral Support Against the backdrop of twenty years advocacy, organizing, and litigation efforts, the Study shows that discrimination and violence remain at **high levels**. More than one of every two lesbian women and gay men reported **discrimination** at some point in their lives. Data from younger respondents suggest that school harassment may have increased over time. One of every two gay men and one of every three lesbian women suffered some form of bias motivated **criminal violence**. The majority of respondents did **not** report bias crime.

African Americans report higher levels of victimization Among those who did file crime reports, 75% of the sample rate police performance as "poor" or "fair." African American respondents were far more likely to report police performance as "poor." With the exception of classmate harassment in school settings, Philadelphia African American respondents reported **higher levels** of discrimination and criminal victimization than their white counterparts, annually and over a lifetime.⁴

Media de minimus Despite substantial advance publicity, *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Daily News* editors devote **minimal** attention and space to the story. Minority owned newspapers **ignore** it. Of five television stations, four stations broadcast a range of 15 – 60 seconds to the issues raised. Fox/Murdoch WTXF (29) is in abstentia. A WPHL TV (17) senior reporter attends the conference. KYW TV (3), WPVI TV (6), and NBC TV (10) assign welcomed camera personnel, without, however, reporters. KYW Radio and WHYI FM each send senior reporters and air roughly 90 second segments three or four times throughout the day. WWDB interviews participants, and WUSL attends.

(continued)

Save Giovanni's Room

When a Philadelphia radio host, on-air, targets **Giovanni's Room** linking the gay community to child molestation, PLGTF mobilizes organization leaders to gather in support of this critically important community institution.

When Viacom/Paramount promotes "**Dr. Laura**," the Task Force joins in a nation-wide effort to challenge media exploitation. Grassroots organizing efforts and negotiations with

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Stop Dr. Laura local CBS stations add to a critical mass resulting in the program's expected demise (see our
Cancel the Contract web site www.op.net/plgtf). Philadelphia and Regional *PFLAG* chapters, *Family Pride*, the *Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations*, *Drexel University's SAGA*, and the *Union of American Hebrew Congregations* participate in CBS meetings.²

United Way Subsequent to the U.S. Supreme Court's BSA decision, PLGTF invites United Way to engage in **public dialogue** about BSA funding. It refuses. In a closed-door session, United Way ignores its contract non-discrimination provisions, affirms its continued funding for the Boy Scouts (\$570,000 per year), and postures that it will only fund BSA programs "that do not discriminate." *United Way* gives an estimated 3.5 million dollars/year to organizations with **explicit** anti-gay policies, i.e. The Catholic Archdiocese, the Salvation Army, and of course, the Boy Scouts of America. [Source: Year 2000 Annual Report]

Knight Ridder **Community leaders**, with courage, speak at a well-publicized press conference. *Peter Solomon*, WIP radio show host joins *leaders* from The Attic Youth Group (*Keith Arnoldy*), the Christian Association (Rev. *Beverly Dale*), the First Unitarian Church (Rev. *Benjamin Maucere*); GLSTN/Philadelphia (*Barbara Dowdall*), MCC/Philadelphia (Rev. *Jeffrey Jordan*), and Triangle Interests (*Susan Atlas and Suzanne Baxter*) who stand in solidarity to denounce United Way's decision. **KYW Radio** respectfully records each speaker and broadcasts select excerpts on air. The cultivated *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Daily News* **refuse** to cover community voices, in solidarity, for justice. *John Timpane*, editor of the *Inquirer's* editorial page does, in contrast, publish an important PLGTF op-ed on the issue (October 11, 2000).
News Editors
Ignore Community Solidarity

Join Us in the Long March to Freedom



The beat goes on with the *financial* support and *participation* of people like **you** who care about social and economic justice. Your generous tax-deductible contributions, large or small, will make a **crucial** difference in our struggle for full civil and human rights.

Please give generously directly by check or credit card, through worksite campaigns, or through our web site (www.op.net/plgtf). *If possible*, please alert your network of friends, family, and colleagues to join you in that support. In solidarity, thank you!

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Notes and Acknowledgments:

1. Formed in 1978, the Task Force incorporated in 1982 as the *Philadelphia Task Force* (Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force). Original incorporators included *Jeremy Nicholson*, *Lois Rothenheber* (now deceased), and *Scott Wilds*.

While *each* member of the Board and staff with volunteers over time has played an *important* role in our civil and human rights work, the community owes a **very special** debt of gratitude to **Larry Gross**, Ph.D., who has served the Task Force as its most distinguished Co-Chair for nearly two decades. Professor Gross' eloquence and wisdom, his tenacity and verve, his scholarship and persuasive survey research offers an **enduring legacy** to our community, *unmatched* nationwide.

We are deeply indebted to those **unsung** heroes who have served (or continue to serve) on the Board finance committee. Despite endless cash flow challenges, each has maintained a *steadfast* belief in our work. These include e.g. Advisor *Debbie Austin*, CTCP; *Thurman Bullock*, CPA; *Linda Flood* (who has served the Board with distinction as Secretary/Treasurer); together with the beloved *Kenny Newman*, P.A. (now deceased); and *Joanne Weller*, WGB (or, the world's greatest bookkeeper), whose extraordinary precision and generosity enables our work.

We are equally indebted to the 250 community based organizations across the state and nationally who have participated in various PLGTF projects over time. A *Salute to Community Partners* is available on request. Many thanks to Richard Smith, our Volunteer of the Year; Michael Toub, Task Force computer guru and web master; and to Deming Love for preparing documents for the web site.

2. See, **PLGTF Archives**, Paley Library, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA (hereinafter "Paley"). The Archives (about 100 cubic feet on completion) consist of Task Force reports, correspondence, chronologies, and documents together with various audio and video productions. The archive is partially catalogued and accessible.
3. Campaign materials related to the **Philadelphia Fair Practices Act** (as amended, 1982) are available at Paley.
4. **Study of Discrimination and Violence against Lesbian and Gay People in the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania** (Larry Gross with Steven Aurand) is available at \$10 per report. The Year 2000 Study is accessible on our web site. Studies published in 1988, 1992, and 1996 are available in print.
5. Original and *unedited* videotapes of the (U.S. Supreme Court Justice) **Burger Roast**, the **Liberty Bell Protest**, the **Bicentennial Protest** and other events are on file at Paley. A small photo collection is housed at the Task Force offices. *Julia Blackwoman* coined the term "Burger Roast."
6. Extensive **education** reports, documents, and testimonies together with relevant press conference audiotapes and videotapes, in part, on file at Paley, and may be available through the Task Force. (Audiotapes include two **Rainbow** press conferences, 1993; two **Elizabethtown** press conferences, 1996-7; and other project documentation. Videotapes include ATTIC Youth testimony, 1994.) A small selection of summary documents is accessible through the web site.
7. In the year 2001, **Sandy Henise**, M.Ed. will serve the Board as Co-Chair with **Linda Martin** and **Paul Thomas**, Ed.D.; **Kristine Holt**, Esq., with **William Torchia**, Esq. as legal counsel; **Thurman Bullock**, CPA with **Dan Miller**, CPA as Co-Treasurer; **James Roberts** as Board Secretary; joined by **Marilyn Eastridge**, Ph.D., **Andrew Grenier**, **Melina Waldo**, MSW, and **Peg Welch**.

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8. The Folklore Project (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) houses the original, signed **Lesbian and Gay Bill of Rights Petition to the U.S. Congress**.
9. The marketplace **Petition to Deny Relicensure Applications of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Commercial Television (and Radio) Stations** correspondence, legal briefs, chronologies, commissioned studies, and press conference videotapes (1989 and 1991) are on file at Paley. Summary reports are available through the Task Force.
10. Negotiation Packets together with the **Summary and Evaluation of Policy and Program Recommendations**: 1986-1995 (1998) are available through the Task Force and are on file at Paley.
11. The **Romer v. Evans** “No on Two” press conference audiotape (1995) and the Philadelphia **Broadcaster CEO Roundtable** (1996) audiotapes are available through the Task Force and are on file at Paley.
12. Pennsylvania Civil Rights **Initiative** documents (1996 -) are available through the Task Force and are accessible, in part, on our web site.
13. A comprehensive **Police Public Interest Roundtable** packet (1998-1999) is available at \$10 per copy. Summary recommendations are on our web site.
14. **WHYY, Inc. Report**. The Task Force 1999 report includes a program analysis and proposed recommendations. The Report is available on request and is accessible on our web site (excluding attachments).

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A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. Annual audits are also available on request