

PROCLAMATION



City and County of Denver

Proclamation No. CP13-0737

Marking the 40th Anniversary of a Major Event in progress of Fair and Equal Treatment of Denver's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) People

WHEREAS, in 1972, a brave band of gay and lesbian residents determined it was time for their community to come out of the closet, create the Gay Coalition of Denver, and fight for their rights as equal members of society; and

WHEREAS, the Gay Coalition of Denver rallied the community to protest illegal and discriminatory arrests of hundreds of gay men in the first three months of 1973, which included rounding them up with the infamous "Johnny Cash Special" bus; and

WHEREAS, in spite of months of trying to meet with Council members to discuss the pattern of illegal arrests and to suggest definitions and other clarifying changes to city ordinances that would help prevent unconstitutional treatment of a targeted group of citizens, the changes Council was scheduled to consider would not have ended discriminatory application of the laws; and

WHEREAS, on October 23, 1973, the gay community and its allies filled Council Chambers to overflowing, the first public demonstrations in Denver by a community that risked derision, abuse and arrest based on who they loved, and refused to leave until they were given the chance to be heard and present their evidence; and

WHEREAS, with the leadership of Councilmen Bill Roberts and Irving Hook, Denver City Council agreed to extend a 30-minute hearing into more than three hours of testimony that turned the tide, bringing government harassment of gays and lesbians to the public for the first time, and resulting in the repeal of four criminal ordinances used to discriminate against the community; and

WHEREAS, this public demonstration and policy victory was a first step toward allowing Denver residents to openly express their sexuality, and was a catalyst for the birth of a new dynamic and united gay community, which continues to thrive today, serving vulnerable GLBT residents in need of services and advancing relationship recognition, equitable health care access and other human rights for GLBT residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER THAT:

Section 1. The Council hereby recognizes the 40th Anniversary of the Council meeting held on October 23, 1973, an important milestone in Denver's progress toward fair and equal treatment of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender community, notes substantial progress since that pivotal meeting, and acknowledges there is still work to be done.

Section 2. That the Council hereby recognizes gay attorney Jerry Gerash, who participated in these historic events and documented them in the film *Gay Revolt at Denver City Council, October 23, 1973, And How It Changed Our World*, that will be shown on Wednesday, October 23, 2013 at the Sie Film Center, and recognizes the courage of all the members of the LGBT community and their allies who participated in the events of 1973.

Section 3. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall attest and affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Jerry Gerash, the Chair of Denver's GLBT Commission, and the Executive Director of the GLBT Community Center of Colorado.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL October 21, 2013

PRESIDENT