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LG MS 021 Maine Civil Rights March & Rally Committee Archives Finding Aid

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**MAINE CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH & RALLY COMMITTEE ARCHIVES
LG MS 21**

**Total Boxes: 1
Oversize drawers: 1
Linear Feet: 3.25**

**By
Maeve Wachowicz**

**Portland, Maine
February 2012**

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Administrative Information

Provenance: Maine Civil Rights March & Rally Committee Archives was donated in 2009 by Jean Lavigne, the Treasurer and coordinator of the rally site for MCRMRC.

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Cite as: Maine Civil Rights March & Rally Committee Archives, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ Collection, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries.

Restrictions on Access: This collection is open for research.

Historical Note

In May of 1997 the Maine legislature passed an anti-discrimination law that protected people from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. However, the provision was repealed by voters in a special election on February 10, 1998.

Devastated by the results of the vote, Linda Kizer a member of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor, Maine started the Golden Ribbon Campaign, in which participants wore a gold ribbon symbolizing the golden rule: "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Inspired by Kizer's campaign, the pastor of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor, Sue Jamieson, and her partner Diane Campbell started working with another member of the congregation, Ron Hersom, on the possibility of having a Civil Rights March in Maine.

The group began reaching out to other activists, faith groups, and universities in Maine, ultimately forming the Maine Civil Rights March & Rally Committee. Committee members included Ron Hersom, Hugh and Eda Morrison, Linda Kizer, Janet May, Sue Jamieson, Diane Campbell, Eric Brown, Joan R. Day, Adella Reidt, Becky Rae, Kris Broski, Oreo Nalley, Pat Hofmaster, and Jean Lavigne.

The Committee held the Maine Civil Rights March & Rally on October 10, 1998 to draw attention and voice opposition to the February vote. The march was a 10 mile walk from Orono, Maine to Bangor, Maine. Three hundred people participated in the walk and about 800 joined in the rally following the march.

A week later on October 18, 1998, the Maine Civil Rights March & Rally Committee organized a vigil and memorial service in honor of Matthew Shepard, held in Bangor, Maine at the Hammond Street Congregational Church. Shepard was a gay college student at the University of Wyoming who was the victim of a hate crime on October 7, 1998. Two young men, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, led Shepard to a remote area outside of Laramie, Wyoming, tied him to a split-rail fence and severely beat him. Shepard was discovered tied to

the fence and still alive 18 hours later by a passing cyclist. He died in the hospital several days later as a result of his injuries.

The Maine Civil Rights March & Rally Committee also held an interfaith vigil titled *Stop the Hate: Interfaith Vigil Against Hate Violence*, a year later on October 7, 1999, the anniversary of the crime perpetrated against Matthew Shepard.

Shepard's death had sparked discussion and debate about expanding hate crimes legislation in the United States, but it was not until October of 2009 that President Barack Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act into law. The Act expands the 1969 U.S. federal hate crime law to include crimes motivated by the victim's gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

In Maine, legal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation was attempted and failed again in 2000, but was finally achieved in 2005 through a law passed by the legislature, signed by the governor, and upheld by voters through referendum.

Description of the Archives

The materials in this collection pertain to the activities and events of the Maine Civil Rights March and Rally Committee. The archives are arranged chronologically, beginning with information about the referendum vote overturning the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Maine Human Rights Act in 1998 through the Golden Ribbon campaign, the Civil Rights March and Rally, and the Interfaith Vigil Against Hate Violence in 1999.

Notably, the archives contain five VHS tapes, which have a total of about 15 hours of footage from the march and rally, the Hammond Street candlelight service, the Matthew Shepard memorial service, the Civil Rights Celebration at the Maine Center for the Arts, the MCRMRC press conference, and numerous interviews. The footage was taped by two documentary filmmakers who had the intention of making a documentary film about the movement.

VHS #1 primarily has footage from the march itself, the rally, the interfaith candlelight service before the march, interviews, and the press conference with Ron Hersom, Sue Jamieson and other faith and community leaders, announcing the march and rally.

VHS #2 has interviews with Reverend Sue Jamieson and Ron Hersom, footage of musical performances from the Civil Rights Celebration at the Maine Center for the Arts, and footage from the march and rally.

VHS #3 has footage of musical performances from the Civil Rights Celebration at the Maine Center for the Arts, and of the rally.

VHS #4 has musical performances from the Civil Rights Celebration at the Maine Center for the Arts, interviews and footage from the Matthew Shepard memorial service, the Hammond Street Church candlelight service, and other interviews.

VHS #5 has footage from the Hammond Street Church candlelight service.

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	1	Map and tally of Human Rights Act Sexual Orientation Referendum Vote	1998 Feb 10
1	2	Golden ribbon pin card and pamphlets,	[1998]
O/s	Dr19	Golden ribbon pins	[1998]
1	3	Permits, letters, invoices, and brochures about march and rally planning	1998 Jun-Sep
1	4	Funding, advertising, and participation forms	[1998]
1	5	Faxes and letters	1998 Oct
O/s	Dr19	Banners (2), white with graphic of Maine, 10x4ft - "The Maine Civil Rights March & Rally"	1998 Oct 10
O/s	Dr19	Banner, green, 10x4 ft - "The Golden Rule"	1998 Oct 10
O/s	Dr19	Posters (18), Maine Civil Rights March & Rally	1998 Oct 10
O/s	Dr19	Stickers, white and red - "Civil Rights for ME"	1998 Oct 10
O/s	Dr19	Stickers, gold and black - "Civil Rights for ME"	1998 Oct 10
1	6	Brochures, flyers, magazines	1998 Oct 10
O/s	Dr19	Video cassette tape - "MCRM VHS #1"	1998 Oct 10
O/s	Dr19	Video cassette tape - "MCRM VHS #2"	1998 Oct 10
O/s	Dr19	Video cassette tape - "MCRM VHS #3"	1998 Oct 10
O/s	Dr19	Video cassette tape - "MCRM VHS #4"	1998 Oct 10
O/s	Dr19	Video cassette tape - "MCRM VHS #5"	1998 Oct 10
1	7	Handwritten notes about video cassette footage	undated
1	8	Bangor Daily News article	1998 Oct 12
1	9	Matthew Shepard memorial service email and Interfaith Vigil Program	1998 Oct
1	10	Letter from Bob Poirier and video log sheets	1999 Nov 8