

Milwaukee Pride: Unites with Wisconsin LGBTQ History Project to preserve local heritage

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Project will expand programming, outreach and events in 2019

Milwaukee, WI. - Milwaukee Pride, Inc., the 501(c)3 nonprofit parent organization of PrideFest Milwaukee and BeOUT Milwaukee, announces it will take stewardship of the celebrated [Wisconsin LGBTQ History Project](#), in honor of [National LGBT History Month](#) and the approaching [WorldPride NYC / Stonewall 50](#) celebration.

The Project, which originated as a PrideFest tent exhibit in 1995, is now the state's largest digital collection of local LGBTQ history. Founded by webmaster Don Schwamb in 2001, the History Project website chronicles nearly a century of people, places, events, organizations and celebrations that shaped and defined Wisconsin's LGBTQ heritage.

As a fiscal agent, Milwaukee Pride will provide financial, marketing and staffing support, while integrating the History Project as a cultural education program, interactive resource, and ongoing source of pride for the community.

"I founded the Project out of my long-term sense of community," said said Schwamb, a long-time gay activist and historian. "I wanted to preserve memories of where we came from, and how we got to here: the less discriminatory, more accepting world of today."

"For the first decade, the web site was a one-man operation, and I initially relied heavily on gay media of the 1970s and 1980s. Thanks to contributing author and historian Michail Takach, and a Facebook group managed by photographer Jamie Taylor, we have greatly expanded our content through extensive historical research, crowd-sourcing events and interviews. Already comprised of over 1,500 web pages and 20,000 images, the History Project continues to grow and evolve

every day through community contributions.”

“The sponsorship of Milwaukee Pride is a major milestone for the History Project,” said Schwamb. “It ensures the long-term operation and relevance of the web site, in helping to document the larger story of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.”

Milwaukee Pride will commit two resources to supporting the Project’s ongoing growth and development. Vincent Tripi, Director of Education & Outreach, will become organizational liaison and partner to Don Schwamb, leading event, exhibit and program design. Michail Takach, Vice President of Communications, will assume a curator role while networking with other LGBTQ historical resources and designing a new digital experience.

“Pride begins with finding your tribe and embracing your heritage,” said Takach. “For generations, LGBTQ people were denied this experience as they faced shame, discrimination and exclusion simply for being who they were. Many people worked very, very hard to ensure that LGBTQ history remained hidden and that individuals felt isolated and disconnected from their community. For many LGBTQ people, history begins the moment they came out, with limited knowledge of the world we once lived in, or the achievements of those who came before them.”

“In alignment with the mission of Milwaukee Pride, the History Project serves a critical cultural purpose: to record, preserve and honor the experiences of our LGBTQ pioneers, before their stories are lost forever to time. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising, this risk of cultural loss is becoming more and more real in America.”

Join us for our first History Project event!

On Monday, October 22, Milwaukee Pride and the History Project celebrate National LGBT History Month with a [Stonewall Stage Talk](#) at the Milwaukee Central Library (814 W. Wisconsin Ave.,) featuring civic leader, author and historian [Dick Wagner](#). This event is FREE and open to the public.

Dick will share stories from his upcoming book, *We’ve Been Here All Along: Wisconsin’s Early Gay History*, including widespread efforts to suppress Wisconsin’s homosexual sub-communities through concentrated police and court discrimination, as well as the groundswell that fueled the community organization and civic action of the Stonewall Era.

A Q&A reception will follow the presentation. Guests are also invited to view the Wisconsin LGBTQ History Project exhibit, presented in partnership with the [Milwaukee Public Library](#) throughout October.

Questions? Contact us at info@milwaukeepride.org.