

WISCONSIN LGBTQ HISTORY PROJECT

Reconnecting with our past to inspire Wisconsin's future.



MISSION
To reconnect Wisconsin with its long-hidden LGBTQ history and heritage.

PURPOSE
We research, document, preserve, celebrate and elevate local LGBTQ history.

HISTORY

1975-1980: Louis Stimac teaches the first "gay history" courses in Wisconsin at the Milwaukee Free University.

1994: History Project is founded at PrideFest as a #Stonewall25 collaboration between local researchers and Jim Kepner of ONE Institute. Under the leadership of Don Schwamb, the passion project becomes the state's largest collection of LGBTQ historical content.

2021: Incorporated as not-for-profit with a Board of Directors and fiscal agent.

2025: Achieved independence as a 501c3 nonprofit.

DONATE HERE:

WHO WE ARE

BOARD

Michail Takach
President & Chair

Ricardo Wynn
Vice-President

BJ Daniels

Amaad Rivera-Wagner

Dan Terrio

Diane Gregory

COMMUNITY ADVISORS

Bernie Hoes
Advisory Board Chair

VOLUNTEERS

- Feature Writers
- Grant Writers
- Digital Designers
- Tour Guides
- Event Planners
- Educators
- Researchers
- Explorers

WHAT WE DO

- Historical Research
- Website & Archive Management
- Authoring & Publishing
- Workplace Presentations
- Pop-Up Exhibits
- Education & Outreach
- Historic Preservation
- Community Advocacy
- Podcasts
- Research Support
- Special Events
- Media Consulting

105 Biographies Written in 2025

IMPACT STATS

1.75M Annual Website Visits (+70% YOY)

600,000 Unique Visitors Worldwide (+50% YOY)

300,000 Organic Facebook Impressions (+166% YOY)

150,000 Organic Instagram Impressions (+250% YOY)

COMMITTEES

- Fundraising
- Outreach
- Archives & Collections
- Team & Talent
- Brand & Creative

OUR PROGRAMS FOR 2026

- **The Beacons Project:** honoring our LGBTQ elders with oral history documentaries and traveling exhibits in Green Bay, Milwaukee, and Madison.
- **The Summer to be Seen Tour:** celebrating our season of visibility with an four-month outreach tour of 16 hometown prides across Wisconsin.
- **LGBTQ Landmarks Program:** advancing civic recognition and commemoration of queer heritage sites throughout the state, including historic markers, rainbow crosswalks, and preservation projects.
- **Remember Their Names:** confronting the collective harm caused by Dahmer with a series of reflective community listening and healing events, in partnership with the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center.
- **BeSeen Awards:** recognizing trailblazers, pioneers, and pacesetters who have made significant lifetime contributions to Wisconsin LGBTQ history.
- **Forever Young:** publishing our third book, an oral history of Gen X LGBTQ youth experiences.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2026

Activate

- Create a statewide network of local storytellers to increase reach and impact.
- Transform our internship program into an LGBTQ leadership development engine.
- Build the state's highest-caliber non-profit/volunteer talent operation.

Accelerate

- Preserve our heritage by expanding our LGBTQ Landmarks program statewide.
- Protect our collections by finalizing our next-generation website, elevating our archival operation, and strengthening our stewardship programs.
- Strengthen organizational structures, roles, and responsibilities through succession and sustainability planning.

Amplify

- Prioritize diverse lived experiences so that all Wisconsin citizens feel seen, represented, and connected within the Project.
- Elevate our thought leadership brand through national media, academic, historian, and library/museum partnerships.
- Reinforce community trust through limitless access, accountability, and transparency.

All anchored in a foundation of social justice.

