

Celebrating a rich history

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generating heated criticism for its negative portrayals of gay men.

Just three years after the release of "Faggots," the first AIDS cases hit New York and Kramer immediately began calling for action to stop the spread of the disease and to help those already devastated.

Kramer co-founded Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), which provided much-needed care and support to gay men with AIDS, many of whom had been rejected by hospitals and shunned by others in the community.

What began as a small gathering in Kramer's apartment today boasts a huge list of breakthroughs for AIDS support, including creation of the first AIDS hotline, which received 100 calls its first night; the first AIDS Walk, with 4,500 walkers raising \$710,000; and the first million-dollar AIDS fundraiser, an art auction held at Sotheby's.

Despite the agency's success, Kramer left his position at GMHC in 1983 due to what he perceived as a lack of political presence. He realized his political desires in 1987, co-founding the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP).

ACT UP became known for its militant protests and civil disobedience. Actions included famed disruptions on Wall Street, at the New York City General Post Office and at the National Institutes of Health, as well as a brief takeover of the "CBS Evening News" in 1991.

Throughout his career as an activist, Kramer continued to work as a writer. One of his most acclaimed works is "The Normal Heart," which explores his own experiences as a gay man during the AIDS crisis.

For his service and political contributions, Kramer will be remembered as one of the earliest and most influential AIDS activists. He currently lives in New York and Connecticut with his partner, architect David Webster.

Tom Waddell

A testament to the inclusiveness and diversity of the gay community, Dr. Tom Waddell's vision of a global gay sporting event resulted in the first-ever Gay Games.



Originally held in 1982 in San Francisco, with nearly 1,350 athletes competing from 12 countries, the Gay Games have grown into one of the most popular sporting events in the world.

Modeled after the Olympics, the seventh Gay Games, held in the summer of 2006 in Chicago, drew some 12,000 athletes and 140,000 spectators of all races and sexualities.

Athletics always played a dominant role in Waddell's life. In the late 1950s, he excelled as a gymnast and football star at Springfield College. Following his graduation in 1959, he

immediately began training for the decathlon.

It was his athletic talent that allowed him to avoid serving in Vietnam when he was drafted into the Army in 1966. Instead he trained for the 1968 Olympics, where he placed sixth out of 33 decathlon participants.

Following a knee injury in 1972, Waddell decided to shift his focus to practicing medicine. He worked throughout the Middle East, including a stint as team physician on the Saudi Arabian Olympic team in 1976.

After seven years, Waddell returned home to San Francisco. He conceptualized a gay sporting event after participating in one of the city's gay bowling leagues.

He traveled across the country in promoting the first "Gay Olympics." Despite an injunction by the United States Olympic Committee and a Supreme Court ruling disallowing use of the word "Olympics," the '82 event was a resounding success.

Although Waddell was diagnosed with AIDS in 1985, he continued to compete and won the javelin throw at Gay Games II in 1986. He died of AIDS-related complications on July 11, 1987.

Waddell's generous spirit continues through the inclusiveness and diversity that is paramount to the Gay Games.

Barbara Gittings

On July 4, 1965, Barbara Gittings picketed outside the steps of Independence Hall in

Philadelphia brandishing a sign that read: "Homosexuals should be judged as individuals."

Her work as an activist was only getting started with that first protest. Today, after more than 43 years in the civil rights movement, Gittings has made an indelible impact on the fight for LGBT equality.



She was a founding member of the New York chapter of the early lesbian group Daughters of Bilitis and a former editor of the DOB's national magazine, "The Ladder."

Her tenure at "The Ladder" led to a shift in the organization toward direct action, a concept that Gittings implemented in her struggle with the American Psychiatric Association.

Gittings joined Frank Kameny in the campaign against the APA's classification of homosexuality as a mental illness, a battle that included a rogue exhibit at the APA's 1971 convention and participation in several APA panels. The campaign's goal was realized in 1973 when the Board of Trustees agreed on homosexuality's removal from the list of disorders.

In perhaps her most notable contribution, Gittings' work with the American Library Association dramatically increased

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