A VISUAL JOURNEY: FROM AIDS TO MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Mark A. Lee
Photographer

Mark A. Lee has been an Indianapolis photographer for thirty years. His work has appeared in a number of area newspapers and magazines, including the Indianapolis Star, NUVO, Usine Indy, and Hamilton Business Magazine, and nationally, in Frontiers Magazine and the Advocate. A recipient of CICOA’s Caregiver of the Year Award in 2014, Lee is currently working on a book based on his experience caring for his father, who had Alzheimer’s, and employees. As of June 2016, Mark is now the managing editor for Usine Indy.

“This exhibit is dedicated to the man who made me into the person I am today: my father, James B. Lee.”

- MARK A. LEE

Indiana LGBT Collecting Initiative supported by the Etroyson Family Fund and a grant from The Indianapolis Foundation, a CICF affiliate

Presented by:

Lilly

Cummins

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
IN MEMORIAM

REVEREND HOWARD WARREN

Reverend Howard Warren was the associate pastor at Orchard Park Presbyterian Church before being ousted as HIV positive and gay in December 1988. He then went on to work as the director of pastoral care at the Damien Center. Howard flourished in his new position for the next ten years and quickly became known throughout the community as God’s Glorious Godly! I cannot help but think it is because of Howard, and the person he was allowed to become that we now have marriage equality in the Presbyterian Church.

He could often be seen wearing purple-sequined hats and multicolored garments, always with a smile on his face! Even in the face of anger and hostility toward him, he never lost his love for people, and he never really gave up on the idea that “Somewhere there’s a place for us...” In the words of Reverend Jane Spahr, Howard was a man who “exploded out of the closet!” This particular photo was taken two years before Howard died. The sad and distant look in his eyes shows the devastating effects Alzheimer’s had on him.

“Our job as God’s More Light people is to bring everyone alive, set them free to live and love, here and now and forever.”

Reverend Howard Warren, Presbyterian Church in Chicago, IL, 1996.

“As a gay man in my fifties, it can be argued men of my generation have lived our lives backwards: we dealt with death and dying in our twenties, began adopting kids and raising families in our thirties and forties, and marrying in our fifties and sixties.

Mark A. Lee, Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History, Summer 2015
Mark Wright first spoke at Orchard Park Presbyterian Church on "AIDS and the Caring Church" at the insistence of Reverend Howard Warren in the summer of 1987. He became a volunteer buddy at the Damien Center shortly after listening to him speak. Seven years later, I moved in with Mark to help care for him during the last thirteen days of his life.
In October 1981 a group of men, many of whom still had full beards and moustaches, dressed in drag and called themselves the Bag Ladies. Since then, it's been high camp with a purpose, as they pride themselves on putting the FUN back in fund-raising. As silly as this evening may sound to an outsider, they have raised between one and two million dollars over the last thirty-five years for the HIV-positive community and LGBT youth.
BAG LADIES

[Images of various drag queen performers and behind-the-scenes moments.]

When opening into the queen above her, you can see the fun and Oh the Queen on her bag lady and her lady.

[Image of two drag queens posing with makeup and costume.]

[Another image of a drag queen with large glasses and a smiling face.]
BAG LADIES
IN MEMORIUM

CAROL TREXLER

A trailblazing social activist, Carol Trexler was a passionate, loving woman, who cared about breaking the cycle of poverty and about equality for all. Within the LGBTQ community, she is perhaps best known for leaving directly from one of her last treatments of chemo therapy to testify against HJR-3. On January 22, 2014, the packed room listened closely as she testified how her wife, Donna, was denied access to medical records from the hospital. Her voice was hoarse from the chemo, but her convictions were strong.

"Despite all of our legal documents, the doctors didn’t look at Donna as my wife when she was in the hospital with cancer," she said. "Every form I filled out was another reminder that we were treated differently. . . . I want to be sure that Donna will be with me at the end, and that she will have the same rights of a surviving spouse." Representative Brian Bosma and the Republican Committee voted to pass HJR-3 on to the rest of the House, but it was too late. A fire had been lit in the rest of us as we listened to Carol’s words. Carol lived the rest of her life the same way she had always lived.

"Carpe Diem, by seizing the day, and making the most of it!"

“I was a hospice chaplain, so the act of dying is not ugly. It’s a beautiful moment.”
- Carol Trexler

MILTON LINDREN JR

I first met Milton Lindren Jr. when he was doing some accounting for New Hope Presbyterian Church in Fishers, Indiana. He was recently divorced (after his wife found out he was gay), and starting his life over. Upon learning I am also gay, he approached me about taking some photos of him in his birthday suit, to help commemorate his sixty-fifth birthday.

Five years later, I was shocked to learn both he and his partner, who was also in his seventies and confined to a wheelchair, had been brutally murdered in their home. At the time of his funeral, there were rumors that it was a hate crime, and some neighborhood boys had left a note on their front door a few weeks before with the word “Fag” written across it. It turns out these rumors were started by Michael Brown, who has since been convicted of killing both men with a hammer and an aluminum baseball bat he stole from his girlfriend’s home.

Brown was a con artist, pretending to be a doctor who was down on his luck, who Lindren allowed to live in his home for six months prior to the murders. Brown later confessed he had killed the men because “they had found out that he’d been stealing from them.” Brown is currently serving two consecutive sixty-year sentences (one for each man). He tried to appeal in 2010, and his appeal was denied.
IN MEMORIUM

PAUL CHASE

A kind, gentle, highly intelligent, funny, and humble man, Paul Chase left his father’s law firm to advocate for the rights of those who were HIV positive in the late 1980s and early 1990s, pro bono. He and his partner, Terry Briner, were together for forty years before Paul was killed in a car accident on June 25, 2014, the same day same-sex marriage was legalized in Indiana. Terry has since joined with Paul’s mother Lorraine to help create the Paul M. Chase Memorial Prize for high school students in Paul’s honor.

“There was no hate in Paul, no evident resentment of the people who would deny him a place at the civic table, no vitriol for the vitriolic, just an abundant kindness, an inner serenity and a killer sense of humor.”

- Sheila Kennedy

STEVE JOHNSON

Often referred to as the “right hand man” of Paul Chase and the heart and soul of the Indiana Community AIDS Action Network (ICAN), Steve Johnson was known for his infectious laughter and incredible bear hugs. Steve worked tirelessly with Paul’s other assistant, Amy Hendren, to help organize AIDS Watch ’90, lobbying congress in Washington, D.C., for more funds for people with HIV. Steve loved pushing boundaries and getting people to step outside of their comfort zones.

“Outside is where all of the really good stuff happens.”

- Steve Johnson
The first public Pride event was held on the Circle in 1990. Gay men were still being arrested at the time for "loitering" on the Circle, so it was important for us to take a stand.

"I knew we made it a gay community three years ago when they closed down part of Meridian Street for the Pride Parade. That's when I knew we had arrived."

Michael Bailey, Founder of the Circle Outpost
Gay and Lesbian Archives
IUVO 2875

IUVO 2876

IUVO 2877
MARRIAGE EQUALITY

For two and a half days, between June 25 and June 27, 2014, same-sex couples who had been together for anywhere from a few months to several decades, were able to legally wed in Indiana. The pure joy and abundant love that filled the room as each couple tied the knot was unforgettable. It would be several months before same-sex marriages were legal yet again in Indiana, and almost a year to the day when it became legal in the entire country on June 26, 2015.

"No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice and family," Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote.

"In forming a marital union, two people become something greater than they once were."

The South Bend Pride parade and the debut of COSBY by the Smurfs were on July 7, 2017, to bring a little bit of musical magic on the final day of the Indiana State Fair.
MARRIAGE EQUALITY
MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Photos: The first same-sex couple to marry in their home parish was granted on June 26, 1965. They were legally married in New York City on August 9th, 2011. They currently live in [insert city] and have been married until the Supreme Court rules in favor of marriage equality on June 26, 2015.

Another couple and also the first gay couple was "shot married" by the State of New York on December 26th, 2011, and planned an evening of celebration. More than 10,000 gay couples married in the first day of New York's statewide marriage equality law. A total of 1,270 licenses were issued in New York City on December 26th, 2011.
"The fight for full equal protection has just begun. The fact remains that we can still be fired from our jobs, or kicked out of our housing, just for being gay or lesbian. And in the case of our transgender brothers and sisters, we can be kicked out of bathrooms as well."

Mark A. Lee,
Trains of Indiana and Midwestern History,
Summer 2015