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TRETTER LETTER

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE TRETTER COLLECTION

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
LIBRARIES
Archives and Special Collections

Tretter Collection Celebrates History at McConnell Reception



photo by sophia hantzes

(pictured above, left to right: Michael McConnell, University President Eric Kaler, Jack Baker, Curator Lisa Vecoli, Photo © copyright 2015 Sophia Hantzes All Rights Reserved)

Inside this Issue:

- Michael McConnell reception held at Tretter Collection
- Update on Transgender Oral History Project
- Bi+ Exhibit creates visibility
- Tretter Collection acquires Cliff Arnesen materials
- Wearing Gay History
- Exhibits, Events and Conferences

FROM THE CHAIR

By Anne Hodson, Chair

As one year ends and a new one begins, I like to take a look back at the past year and plan for the next.

The past year at the Tretter Collection has been very exciting as the Transgender Oral History Project moved into full gear. Andrea has completed 28 interviews and many additional interviews are scheduled.

The Baker/McConnell papers came to the collection. When Michael McConnell and Jack Baker applied for a marriage license in 1970, it became international news. That publicity cost Michael a job at the University of Minnesota. It also generated thousands of letters from all over the world.

Letters of support, letters contributing a dollar or two, letters seeking advice. And some letters less supportive. All of those stories and voices are now part of the Tretter Collection. Michael and Jack also corresponded with activists and scholars around the country.

Those letters offer a window into how GLBT activists debated language, tactics and strategies in the 1970s. In all, the McConnell Files at the Tretter Collection contain 34 boxes of unique voices and stories. They are an invaluable learning and research tool and will continue to be so long into the future. In October, we held a reception to introduce the papers that was attended by University President Kaler and other dignitaries.



Anne Hodson, Chair

On January 26, at 7:00 p.m. the Tretter Collection, in collaboration with the University of Minnesota Press, will host an event for the new book being published by Michael McConnell and Jack Baker, as told to Gail Langer Karwoski. Titled "The Wedding Heard 'Round the World: America's First Gay Marriage," the book is targeted to young adults. We will debut a new exhibit based on the McConnell Files, hear directly from Jack and Michael, and have copies of the book available for purchase and signature. This event is open to the public and I invite you to join us.

Our collections of Bi+, Trans*, and Two Spirit materials grew during 2015. A tremendous research opportunity has developed with the addition of the papers of Dr. Benjamin Karpman from St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington D.C. The papers span a time period from the 1920's to the 1960's and include patient records of those with sexuality and gender issues.

(Please contact curator Lisa Vecoli to inquire about access restrictions for the Karpman Collection.)

None of this collection is possible without your support. We received many new donations this past year and would love to have your materials included in the archive. Please consider donating to the archives or making a financial contribution to help us to continue this important work.

You Can Help!

The Tretter Collection relies on the support of organizations and individuals, like you! Please consider making a charitable donation to the Tretter Collection using the enclosed self-addressed envelope as part of your giving plan. Your support will help to preserve GLBT history now and for future generations.

Thank you.

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<http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/tretter.phtml>

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The University's mission, carried out on multiple campuses and throughout the state, is threefold: research and discovery, teaching and learning, and public service.

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Thanks to the generous support of our donors.....

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for their support and give thanks to countless others whose generous spirits have made our work possible. If we neglected to include your name in the list in this issue, please send us a quick note and we will gladly make sure to include your name in our next issue.

- Craig L Anderson & Kile Martz – WI (in memory of S T Rabbit & Harold Wells)
- Cliff Arneson – MA
- Megan Balistreri & Andrea Perez – MI
- Nancy V Barcelo - NM
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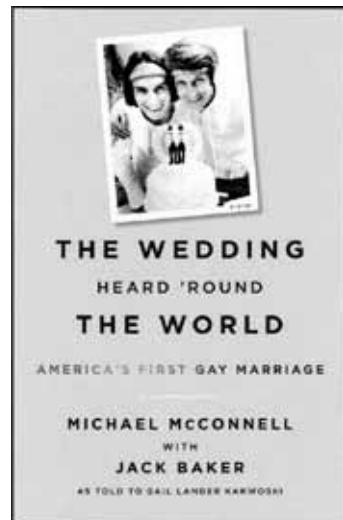
From the field....

What's happening in national & international circles.....

“The Wedding Heard ‘Round the World: America’s First Gay Marriage”

By Michael McConnell with Jack Baker as told to Gail Langer Karwoski (*to be published January 2016*)

The Tretter Collection will be hosting a launch party for the upcoming book by Michael McConnell and Jack Baker, as told to Gail Karwoski. The book is being published by the University of Minnesota Press and is scheduled for release in January of 2016. A book launch party will be held at Andersen Library on January 26 at 7 p.m. We will be joined by Michael McConnell, Jack Baker, and Gail Karwoski, as well as staff from the U of MN Press. The event is open to the public.



Book Launch & Exhibit

January 26, 7:00 p.m.

Andersen Library

In addition to the book, the Tretter Collection will be opening an exhibit based on the Michael McConnell

From the Field, continued from page 3
Files. Almost two dozen panels will offer insights from Michael and Jack's courtship, and marriage, to the letters they received from around the world and their activism on GLBT issues. The exhibit will be on display from January 11 - April 29, 2016. The exhibit is open to the public at no charge anytime Andersen Library is open. After it closes at Andersen Library, it will be available for use by community and educational organizations. For information, please contact curator Lisa Vecoli at 612-624-7526 or lvecoli@umn.edu.

The book was written for a young adult audience. Michael and Jack selected author Gail Karwoski to work on the book. The text is conversational and accessible and meant to be suitable for teenagers, young adults and researchers. Copies of the book will be available for sale at the launch event on January 26.

Telling Queer History

On October 11, 2015, the Tretter Collection hosted Telling Queer History with featured storyteller Michael McConnell. Almost 40 people attended and heard Michael talk about the first application for a same-sex marriage license in the United States and the refusal of the University Board of Regents to hire him when they learned of the application. The presentation was videotaped and will be available online in the future. If you would like to see it now, please contact the Tretter Collection.

Telling Queer History now has a website: www.tellingqueerhistory.com. They host events at rotating locations every other month. For the latest information on dates, locations and featured storytellers, see the website or look for them on Facebook.

First Friday Presentation

Archives and Special Collections holds a series of presentations called "First Friday" that invites the public to join us for lunch and a short talk based on holdings in the archives. This year's theme is humor in the archives. On

February 5, 2016, the talks will feature the Tretter Collection ("What's So Funny About Being Queer?) and the Social Welfare History Archives ("For the Individual and Common Good: How Social Welfare Agencies Used Comics



to Create Better Citizens"). They are held in room 120, Elmer L. Andersen Library. Light lunch is available at 11:45, presentations begin at noon. We also offer cavern tours on First Fridays so if you haven't been, plan to stay after the event!

Critical Conversations

The University's Office of Equity and Diversity hosts Critical Conversations during the school year. The October conversation was "Queering Twin Cities' History." It was moderated by Tretter curator Lisa Vecoli with panel members: Stewart Van Cleve (former Tretter staff member); Martha Hardy (Tretter board member); Andrea Jenkins (staff for the Tretter Transgender Oral



History Project); and Rep. Karen Clark (hopefully a future donor to the Tretter Collection!).

The panel talked about the importance of queering history both by participating and by saving and archiving. The conversation also addressed the importance of not only queering mainstream history, but also of making sure that diverse voices are represented within GLBT narratives of history.

Men's Author Series at Quatrefoil Library

The Tretter Collection was proud to co-host a Men's Author Series at Quatrefoil Library on October 24. Local authors reading their work included: Steve Lenius; Raymond Luczak; John Medeiros; Michael Kiesow Moore; Dr. Ronald Perrier; and Kevin Plover. Attendees were able to hear from the authors, ask questions and purchase signed books at the event. Several new titles were added to the archive.

Please visit the Quatrefoil Library website for information about future events including a Women's Author Series in the spring.

2016 LGBTQ ALMS Conference

In 2006, the Tretter Collection collaborated on the first GLBT ALMS Conference (Archives, Libraries, Museums and Special Collections). We worked with the University of Minnesota



Libraries and Quatrefoil Library to bring over 100 participants from around the world. Subsequent conferences were

From the Field, continued on back page

Bi+ Exhibit Creates Visibility

Thanks for our summer volunteers Eliza Edwards and Kristen Datta, the Treter Collection got an infusion of bi+ this summer! Eliza and Kristen worked to identify a list of priority materials that were missing from the archive. We purchased over 50 new titles with bi+ content to make sure that these works would be accessible now and long into the future.

Kristen and Eliza also created an exhibit on bi+ visibility for our hallway display case. They used books, magazines, stickers,

buttons and flyers to highlight the kinds of materials available in the archive and the importance of including bi+ voices.



New Acquisitions

Two Spirit Papers – The Treter Collection already has what we believe to be the largest collection of Two Spirit material in any archive. The existing 8 boxes include material from three sources: Richard LaFortune; Randy Burns; and Minnesota Men of Color. This summer and fall, we have acquired 2 more accessions of material from Richard LaFortune, adding over 20 more boxes to those already in the archive. It will take some time to process the material but we are especially pleased to be expanding content about the Two Spirit Gatherings held in Minnesota and around North America since 1988, research on boarding schools and other Native American GLBT issues.

1

2

Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus – This fall we received 16 boxes of material from the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus. We had a small selection of material but the new accession will significantly expand our holdings about the Chorus. Founded in 1981, the Chorus is celebrating its 35th season. With 180 singers, the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus is one of the largest gay arts organizations in Minnesota.

3

Senator Scott Dibble Papers – Our current holdings of 27 boxes from Sen. Scott Dibble received an infusion of 5 new boxes this summer. Again, it will take time to process the materials, but the boxes with content about marriage equality have already been utilized by an out of state researcher and author.

4

The Big Gay Race – Race t-shirts and race numbers. Minneapolis riverfront annual 5K walk/run has drawn 1000s over its 5 years of history. Supporters have included Minneapolis Councilmember Jacob Frey, Senator Scott Dibble and Outfront Minnesota.



Bisexual & Veterans' Activist Cliff Arnesen Donates Materials to the Treter Collection

By Martha Hardy

Cliff Arnesen, an Army veteran and bisexual activist, has been advocating for the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender service members and veterans for more than twenty-five years. We are pleased to announce that Cliff has donated a large collection of personal papers, photographs, videos, and other items to the Treter Collection. As a member of the Advisory Board of the Treter Collection, I met with Cliff in his Massachusetts home last summer to pick up the donated materials and got to spend a couple of days with this extraordinary man and activist.

Cliff has led a remarkable life. After a tumultuous start, Cliff was accepted to Wiltwyck School for boys, an experience he credits with changing the course of his life. Eleanor Roosevelt was deeply involved with the school for decades, raising money for the school and serving on its board. The Arnesen Papers include a wonderful photograph of young Cliff Arnesen with Eleanor Roosevelt.

Later, at age 17, Cliff joined the Army and served from 1965-1967. After a series of events led to Cliff disclosing that he was bisexual, he was imprisoned for one year, including four months in solitary confinement due to threats of violence and rape from other prisoners. Ultimately, Cliff was court martialed and received an undesirable discharge based on his homosexuality, as the Army inaccurately termed it. As Cliff says, "As a bisexual in the military, there is no distinction in terms of punishment, no refuge in being bisexual. You get the same consequences; you don't get half a discharge."

In 1977, Cliff's discharge was upgraded to general (under honorable conditions). Cliff later worked at the Veteran's Administration. He began to advocate for veterans' rights, especially gay, lesbian, and bisexual veterans. In

Cliff Arnesen, continued on page 14

A Celebration of the Michael McConnell Files

On October 26, 2015, the Tretter Collection and the University of Minnesota

Libraries were proud to host a reception in honor of the donation of the Michael McConnell Files to the archive. It was the culmination of a journey that spanned over four decades.

In 2012, Michael McConnell and Jack Baker discussed the possibility of donating their material to the Tretter Collection. They not only made history – they kept it. Their personal papers included a remarkable assortment of published materials, correspondence, legal materials, ephemera and photographs covering gay life, love and activism in the late 1960s and 1970s.

They pointed out, however, that Michael's last interaction with the University was in 1970 when the Board of Regents refused to approve his hiring as a librarian because he was gay. Before they could give their material to the University, some kind of resolution was needed. In June of 2012, University

President Eric Kaler issued a press release in which he called the treatment of Michael "reprehensible," expressed his regret that it occurred, and stated that the actions were not consistent with today's policies that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual identity, as well as gender identity and gender expression.

Below are the remarks of the speakers at the reception. [Video of the presentations is also available at <http://www.continuum.umn.edu/2015/10/celebrating-the-mcconnell-files/>](#)

Wendy Lougee, University Librarian

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Wendy Lougee, the University Librarian and it is my privilege to welcome you here to a great event, to celebrate the Michael McConnell Files, which have been donated to the Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in GLBT History. And you'll hear more about that collection shortly. It is an extraordinarily important set of documents that will immeasurably add to the Tretter Collection. But first I want to make sure to acknowledge Michael and Jack, who are here, and to thank them for their generosity, but also thank them for the opportunity to do this. To thank you, on behalf of the libraries, and on behalf of the University. This is truly a special moment.

I think it is appropriate that we are here in the Elmer L. Andersen Library. Governor Andersen was a person of wonderful quotes, but this one I liked in particular:

"What nobler purpose can there be for a University than to gather up the prizes of culture, and to preserve them, propagate them and make them available, so that what has gone before can be preserved, but also built upon."

So it is no surprise that Governor Andersen was instrumental in rallying folks together to build this extraordinary facility, to bring together all the distinctive



Photo Above:
Michael McConnell (left) and Jack Baker
(right)
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Photo Below:
Wendy Lougee, University of Minnesota
Librarian
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collections that had previously been scattered about the Twin Cities, donating his time, his energy, and ultimately his incredible personal collection, which had been gathered over the course of his lifetime. And he was also instrumental in bringing a number of other archives our way. But when it was time for the University to have an opportunity to acquire the Tretter archive, it was Elmer who voiced his support for including GLBT materials in our holdings. I like to think that he is happily with us in spirit today as we celebrate just how far we have come from 1970.

Now, I could spend a lot of time talking about all the wonderful collections here: they are international in scope; they are considered one of the top collections in the country, in terms of size and exceptional depth, in over 15 major collecting areas; but I think it is important to reflect upon how collections come to be. They are often conceived when a passionate person wants to preserve history. Such was the case when Michael and Jack began to document their very personal story that now will be preserved and sustained and used by generations to come. That is truly the power of archives—that firsthand, first person capturing of a moment in history. So, Michael and Jack, we are honored to accept the responsibility for caring for, and for sharing, your archive in the future.

And now, it is my honor to introduce the President of the University, Dr. Eric Kaler.

Dr. Eric Kaler, President of the University of Minnesota

Thank you, Wendy, and thank you for leading one of the nation's truly great University libraries. With us tonight are Provost Karen Hanson, and the University's Vice President for Equity and Diversity, Dr. Katrice Albert. Katrice will speak with you in a few minutes. I'd like to add my special welcome to Jean-Nickolaus Tretter, whose Collection in GLBT Studies is one of the nation's and, in effect, the world's most important repositories of GLBT history and culture. Welcome, and thank you, Jean.

So, here at the University of Minnesota we teach history, we study history and sometimes we make history. And sometimes, we find ourselves on the wrong side of history, and we need to learn from that. But, tonight, thanks to Michael and Jack, we are celebrating a truly extraordinary history that few universities share - the history of a remarkable journey for Jack and Michael, for the GLBT community... and for us as a University community. Our curator, Lisa Vecoli, will fully explain the story behind tonight's gathering.

But I know this: how the University treated Michael more than four decades ago - denying him a job because he was gay - was reprehensible. I regret that it occurred and McConnell, continued on page 8



Photo Above:
(left to right)
Paul Hagen, Michael McConnell,
Reverend Roger Lynn, Jack Baker,
John Hustad
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A Celebration of the Michael McConnell Files

the actions by our University clearly and emphatically are not consistent with our values or our practices today. Those actions are absolutely opposed to the climate that I now, as President, and that our Board of Regents, seek and promote.

Dr. Albert will discuss some of what we're doing now in the areas of equity and diversity, but make no mistake that the University of Minnesota is dedicated to the fair and ethical treatment of all, and that we prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, as well as gender identity and gender expression.

Thankfully, we have come a long way. For example, we are consistently listed among the most LGBTQ-friendly campuses in the nation, and we're proud of that designation.

But the Michael McConnell Files donated by Michael and Jack, who, by the way, was President of the Minnesota Student Association, and I think you saw some pictures in the slide show, tell us a history that shouldn't — and now can't — be forgotten. It's a history of struggle for equal rights for the gay and lesbian community, and particularly here in Minnesota. It's the story of the battles and victories of two courageous men.

The Michael McConnell Files are so valuable because Michael and Jack were pioneers... Because they were at the start, at the middle, and saw the end of a movement that has now made great advances. And because they have saved apparently everything that documents that period in their personal history, and our University's, and the nation's, we have a wonderful resource for scholars for years to come. So, Jack and Michael, we are grateful that you've shared these valuable documents, these important historical documents, with our University, as well as with scholars, students and curious citizens for the generations to come.

So on behalf of the entire University of Minnesota community, I am pleased to honor you, to thank you for your gift as you have honored us with your years of activism, your determination and your lives with each other. Thank you so very much.

Katrice A. Albert, Vice President for Equity and Diversity

Thank you, President Kaler, and Dean Lougee. It is my privilege to be a part of this wonderful celebration where we have the opportunity to honor not only our history, but also the work we're doing right now to be the living legacy of those who came before us.

In our office, we say that equity and diversity is everyone's everyday work. By extension, it's also everyone's responsibility to make the University of Minnesota a place where GLBTQ students, staff and faculty can thrive. President Kaler already mentioned that



*Photo Above:
University of Minnesota President,
Eric Kaler*



photo by sophia hantzes

*Photo Above:
(left to right)
Jason Jackson, Amelious Whyte, Andy
Lien and Gavin Berg
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this year was the fourth consecutive year that the Twin Cities campus was named one of the most GLBT friendly and inclusive campuses in the nation. There are a lot of people and offices whose time, energy, resources, and sweat equity are behind this kind of recognition.

Of course, our GLBTA Programs Office leads the way in that effort. The office is marking its silver anniversary, celebrating its 20th year of existence a couple of years ago, making it one of the oldest such offices in the nation. It consistently partners with other units and groups to offer comprehensive training and education about GLBTQ identities and communities, as well as supporting research and scholarship focused on gender and sexuality.

In April of this year, the Program's Office hosted the first ever Upper Midwest Queer Indigenous and People of Color Conference. In recognition of that groundbreaking and intersectional effort, the conference's two co-chairs, Jason Jackson (who is here with us tonight) and Xay Yang, recently received the Moxie Award for Community Leadership from the PFund Foundation. We're so proud of their work and their continued support of our communities.

In addition to the trans-inclusive health benefits we offer, students are now able to use their preferred name on their University ID—which is very forward movement in University communities.

Lastly, there are over 40 GLBTQ groups and initiatives to get involved with on campus, including student groups like the Queer Student Cultural Center, academic groups like Minnesota Queer Science, and staff and faculty affinity groups like Pride@Work and the Transgender Commission, which has worked diligently for many years to expand the number of gender-inclusive restrooms on campus.

There is always more work to do, but I am always encouraged and energized by the efforts of people at every level of the institution to enhance our campus climate.

As I turn it over to Lisa Vecoli, the director of the Tretter Collection, I, too, want to recognize Jack and Michael. We get nowhere alone. And we thank you for being giants on whose shoulders we stand, for giving back to the University, and for sharing your stories with us. I think I speak for everyone when I say that we all appreciate the opportunity to learn from both of you as models of inclusive excellence.

Thank you so much.

Lisa Vecoli, Curator of the Tretter Collection

Thank you all for joining us this evening. I would especially like to thank President Kaler, McConnell, continued on page 10
Tretter Letter January, 2016



photo by sophia hantzes

Photo Above:
(left to right)
University of Minnesota Regent,
Michael Hsu and Vice President of
Equity and Diversity, Dr. Katrice
Albert

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Photo Above:
(left to right)
OED staff, Frankie Jader, Jason
Jackson and Kris Lockhart
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A Celebration of the Michael McConnell Files

our speakers and our venerable founder, Jean-Nickolaus Tretter. Most of all, I would like to thank Jack Baker and Michael McConnell. As the curator of the Tretter Collection, it has been my sincere pleasure to work with them over the past 3 ½ years – an honor I appreciate more and more every day.

Today, we look back at the history of marriage equality with the certainty of success. With 20-20 hindsight, we can be sure that same sex marriage will prevail.

From Massachusetts in 2004 to the Supreme Court ruling this past June, the Wikipedia version of history is that marriage equality swept the land with a speed seldom seen in social justice movements. And that is certainly an exciting part of the story. But the full story – the archival story of Jack Baker and Michael McConnell - is much more compelling.

In 1970, Jack and Michael were the first couple in the United States to apply for a same-sex marriage license. And in 1971, they were the first same-sex couple to be legally married.

To appreciate the ground breaking nature of their story, we need to remember the world as it was in 1970.

- Homosexuality was a mental illness.
- Sodomy was a criminal act in 49 states.
- And it was legal to discriminate against homosexuals in employment, housing, accommodations and any other way you could imagine.

In short, you could be evicted, fired, arrested, jailed, declared mentally ill and institutionalized – just for loving someone of the same gender.

And yet, somehow, Michael and Jack dared to dream of marriage - of full equality.

A friend introduced them to each other at a party in 1966, telling Michael “Trust me, you two are destined for each other.” When Jack suggested they move in together, Michael agreed – on the condition that one day they get legally married. As Michael tells the story, Jack replied “Well, I guess I’d better go to law school.”

By 1970, Jack was a first year law student at the University of Minnesota and was active with FREE, the gay student group on campus. Michael was finishing work in Kansas City and looking for a job in Minnesota. Their letters were the

Photo Below:
(left to right)
Pia Sass, Kris Lockhart, Amelious Whyte,
Gavin Berg, Beth Zemsky
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Photo Above:
Jack Baker offers a hug to Curator, Lisa Vecoli
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exchanges of any lovers separated. Michael would send Jack multiple page letters about his hopes, his fears and his feelings. Jack would reply with short postcards – I miss you, I love you, don't forget to renew the car tabs. Then, in January of 1970, Jack wrote a longer letter:

The more I thought about you and our relationship the more I realized how "society" had kept me from really enjoying life by forcing a double life on me. It was because of you that I decided to unmask completely and demand respect. I haven't regretted that decision but instead have found a different type of happiness in finding real friends. It gives me tremendous pleasure to talk about my lover in front of straight people and see them listen attentively. You saw Benny and Mike – how they acted. It's as tho I've seen the sky for the first time.

(He closed the letter writing) *Someday, I promise, we'll be together again.*

That spring, Michael received a job offer from the University of Minnesota Libraries and they planned to reunite in Minneapolis. In his legal research class, Jack learned that (at that time) Minnesota statutes on marriage did not include any language specifying gender. So on May 18, 1970, Jack and Michael put on suits and ties and went to the courthouse in downtown Minneapolis to request a marriage license.

Their application became world news. Among those who heard about it were members of the Board of Regents at the University of Minnesota. In an act that was unprecedented, the Board refused to approve the job offer to Michael.

Lawsuits on the denial of the marriage license and the withdrawal of the job offer generated even more publicity. As did their request for a license in Mankato, granted before officials realized they were two men. On September 3, 1971 they were married by Rev. Roger Lynn, who continues to call them one of his most successful marriages. Jack and Michael were in Look and Life Magazines, were covered in local and national papers, and they appeared on TV shows including the Phil Donahue Show and the David Susskind Show.

This visibility drew letters from around the world - England, Brazil, Columbia, Barbados, India, Australia, Chile and many other countries. The letters, most of them over 40 years old, document the hope, the despair, the anger and the determination of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. What makes the letters so remarkable is that they provide a window into the lives of people whose very survival depended upon being hidden. But in this moment they spoke for themselves.

There were letters of support - sometimes with a dollar or two enclosed. Dozens of letter sought advice – including two lesbians, 19 and 20 years old, who wrote:

If we did go through with the ceremony would it entitle her to use my last name?... We read about you and Michael in Look magazine. It made us feel proud because it's the first time that we've seen anything about homosexuals printed in a national magazine.

McConnell, continued on page 12



photo by sophia hantzes

Photo Above:
(left to right)
Rebecca Jean Lawrence, Beth Zemsky,
Anne Hodson (Tretter Board Chair),
and Andy Lien (Lavender Magazine)
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A Celebration of the Michael McConnell Files

I believe it's time for (the) public to accept us.

Another from Tennessee wrote:

May I please extend to each of you my profound congratulations upon your recent matrimony and convey my deepest felicitations for a productive and pleasant life together.

I am a homosexual who lives in agony, turmoil and fear every moment of my existence. This is simply because no one has entered my bleak life as the two of you found happiness in each other. Maybe one day my need for steady human companionship and compassion shall be answered.

There is a 44 page letter from someone serving in the marines:

This last subject I'm going to cover has been on my mind for about 4 or 5 years now. It's something that has really held my interest, it's daring, yet so exciting. It's the subject of me becoming a female, a transsexual. I understand that it can prove to be fatal, but sometimes, well most of the time, I feel that even living as a real female for five years would be almost worth it.

I could literally keep you here for a week, reading letters of hopes and fears, tears and dreams. But instead, I will close by quoting from a letter Jack wrote in January of 1971:

I'm glad you are trying to form a Gay Liberation organization. As you can see, it's a lot of hard work. But it's fun and very satisfying knowing you're helping to end the senseless oppression of Gay people. I hate to say this but as you have found out, sometimes those who will oppose you the most will be Gay people. I explain it away as a fear of the "heterosexual backlash." A lot of Gay people have written to us saying that we should just be quiet and live by ourselves and not make so much of a big deal of things. They say that if we continue to create publicity, that will be an excuse for the police, etc. to start a campaign of open oppression. Unfortunately I don't believe that and I must act according to what I consider is the betterment of everyone.

Times are a changing. We're in the midst of a serious social revolution. Welcome aboard.

The times have indeed changed, in large part due to the courage and vision of Jack Baker, Michael McConnell and the hundreds of people who wrote to them.

The Tretter Collection is honored to hold these voices. In 50 years I hope young people will find their contents unthinkable. Most of all, I hope they remember and honor those who fought so hard for equality and dignity for the entire gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

I would like to welcome our honorees: Jack Baker and Michael McConnell. Forty five years later, their vision for marriage equality has come true across the country. Two years ago my wife and I were honored to have them as guests at our wedding reception. And this evening, just three days short of the 49th Anniversary of their meeting in Oklahoma, I am delighted to introduce them to you.

*Photo Below:
Michael McConnell (speaking), with
Jack Baker*



Michael McConnell

(after a standing ovation)

Holy cow! I told Jack one day "Did we really do all that?" Yeah, yeah we did. What I want to say today is going to be very brief. The reason you can listen to Lisa, to President Kaler or other speakers here say the things they've said about us is because we saved our history. And what I say to each of you is "Do not undervalue your own history. Preserve it and present it to the Tretter Collection."

The other thing I want to say is that as human beings we are about stories. We tell stories. That's what we do as human beings. Whether we are sitting around a campfire with Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa - or sitting in a cave someplace in northern Minnesota - or we're sitting in a comfortable living room with a martini – we tell stories. That is what we're about. We write books, we do films, we write articles. And those stories come from the record we keep. For many cultures that was oral. For us, it is print. And now, in the future, it will be digital. It is very important to save your history. Our stories will generate thousands of other stories. The Tretter Collection, which has 6 million pages in 50 plus languages, will generate trillions of stories. So, save your story and put it in the collection.

Jack Baker:

When I campaigned to be student body president I made a promise that we would get students appointed to all of the committees for the Board of Regents as non-voting members. At the time the chairman of the Board of Regents was former Governor Elmer

Andersen, the President of the University was Malcolm Moos, and I am happy to say that the Regents activities in rescinding Michael's appointment to be a librarian had absolutely no effect on our relationship. And between Governor Andersen and President Malcolm Moos they made it happen that students are what they now call student representatives to the Board of Regents.

I was very happy to hear in my conversation with President Kaler that when he came here in 1980 he became a student representative to the Board of Regents. So we've come full circle in terms of the University and the Regents and their activity. And now we are here celebrating, looking back and reminiscing on what actually happened back then, and forgiving all of the sins that occurred and enjoying the company of all of you today. Thank you very much.

Wendy Lougee:

Thank you Jack and Michael for your wonderful remarks. It is great to have you here with us. Thank you again to our speakers and all of you who are here tonight. Thank you. Goodnight.



Photo Above:
Michael McConnell (left) and Jack
Baker (right)
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Wearing Gay History

By Eric Gonzaba, George Mason University

In November 2014, as part of a class project, I set out to photograph and digitize historical LGBT t-shirts of the Chris Gonzalez Library and Archives of Indianapolis, Indiana. The archive is a small but extensive collection of LGBT books, periodicals, films, and ephemera of Midwestern LGBT history and culture.

My goal? To prove that the LGBT history could be found in places outside New York or San Francisco, and to use material culture (in this case, the inexpensive t-shirt) to illuminate hidden queer history.

Wearing Gay History was born!

After receiving some great feedback on the initial collection, I began searching for more shirts to add to the digital archive. Eventually the site reached textile collections in LGBT archives located in Chicago and Washington DC and helped digitize a few hundred historical LGBT t-shirts at each of the sites. Last spring, thanks to generous funding from George Mason's Department of History and Art History, I was able to travel to Minneapolis to begin digitization of t-shirts from the queer communities of the Upper Midwest.

When Curator Lisa Vecoli suggested that she had a lot of t-shirts stored at the Tretter Collection facility, I assumed she was exaggerating. T-shirts take up lots of space, I thought, and she probably overestimated in her initial counting. As it turned out, I was the one who was mistaken. Lisa led me deep underground the Elmer L. Andersen Library to loads and loads of cardboard boxes filled with hundreds and hundreds of t-shirts, hats, bandanas, socks, coats—think a really queer historical Dillards.

Initially, I silently panicked. After all, I only planned a three-day trip! However, instead of resorting to anxiety of the magnitude of work that lay ahead, I saw the boxes as an



incredible opportunity. I thought about all the rich history of our bisexual, lesbian, transgender and gay communities that lay within those boxes. I had hit the jackpot.

Throughout the next week, an amazing team that consisted of Lisa Vecoli, Kristen Datta, Emily Atchison, and "Bob the Mannequin" pushed through the mess that is digitization work and processed over one thousand t-shirts found in the Tretter Collection archives. One of the most important benefits the Tretter Collection textiles brought to Wearing Gay History was the inclusion of diverse LGBT cultures within the digital archive. For instance, Tretter's collection introduced several shirts relating to indigenous queer historical experiences, including some t-shirts from the American Indian Gays and Lesbians, a group formed in Minneapolis in 1987. A t-shirt from the first-ever international Two Spirit gathering known as the Basket and the Bow proves a strong example that

our queer heritage ought not to be whitewashed.

Rather, our diverse communities and their histories can be explored through everyday items like common t-shirts.

The Tretter textile collection also includes many fascinating

garments related to events outside of the Upper Midwest. A t-shirt from Alaska's 1979 delegation to the March on Washington, a tracksuit from the 1982 San Francisco Gay Games, and two t-shirts from Shanghai's first gay pride are just some of the items now easily viewable and searchable on the digital archive.

I invite you to check out the entire set of textiles from Tretter Collection on WearingGayHistory.com and explore the many ways queer Minnesotans have expressed their identities, quite literally, on their sleeves.



Cliff Arnesen, continued from page 5

1989, Cliff participated in the Eighth Congressional Speaker's Conference on the Concerns of Vietnam Veterans in Washington, D. C. On May 3, 1989, Cliff gave testimony before the United States House Committee on Veterans Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on a variety of issues of concern to gay, lesbian, and bisexual veterans, including HIV and AIDS, homelessness, substance abuse, homelessness, Agent Orange, and less than honorable discharges received by gay, lesbian, and bisexual service members. On May 16, 1990, Cliff gave testimony again, this time to a special Congressional panel on HIV and AIDS. He is thought to be the only openly bisexual veteran to ever testify before Congressional committees. Cliff's papers included many documents related to these events, as well as photos.

Cliff continued to advocate for gay, lesbian, and bisexual veterans in variety of ways during the years that followed. The Arnesen Papers include dozens of letters between Cliff and members of Congress such as Ted Kennedy, John Kerry, Barney Frank, and Gerry Studds, as well as President Bill Clinton. Also in the collection are numerous documents pertaining to Cliff's service as President of New England Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Veterans and co-founded National Gay, Lesbian, & Bisexual Veterans of America, now known as American Veterans for Equal Rights.

One of the most powerful and moving items in the collection is a video of The Irish American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group of Boston marching in the 1992 Boston Saint Patrick's Day Parade. Per court order, only twenty-five people were allowed to march with the contingent. At times, the footage is intense. Although heavily flanked by a police escort, some parade watchers still hurled insults at the marchers, spit on them, and threw things at them.

Following the parade, the marchers and a couple hundred supporters gathered at a church for a debriefing meeting. The video includes commentary and speeches from these participants and supporters.

Cliff Arnesen, continued on back page

The Transgender Oral History Project Update

By Andrea Jenkins

Wow, what a whirlwind for the Trans Oral History Project in the past three months. We have completed 28 interviews to date, with a wide variety of identities, ages and ethnicities. Our oldest interviewee is an 81 year-old Trans woman faith leader and our youngest participant is a 20 year-old genderqueer student at Macalester College. It is a tremendous honor for me to be a witness to so much beauty and brilliance that is from the Trans and Gender Non-conforming community.

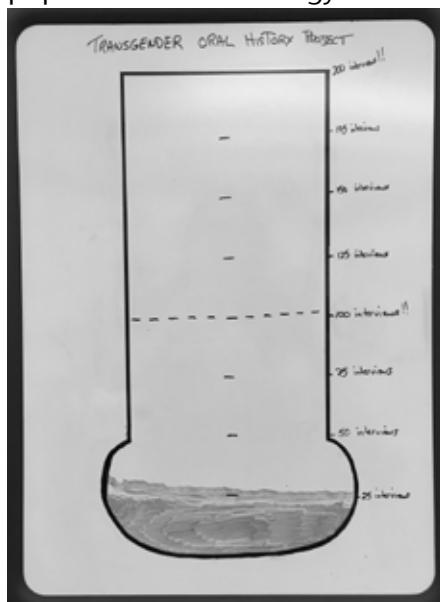
I have had an amazingly busy summer, which started with being Grand Marshal of the Twin Cities Pride Parade; it was a fantastic experience that is almost indescribable. Riding down Hennepin Avenue in a convertible on one of the best days of summer, waving to hundreds of thousands of friends, family and supporters is something that everyone should get to experience at some point in their lives. But that wasn't even the best part, the best part came when I and about 40 other Trans identified folks and allies staged a die-in at the Grandstand on 9th and Hennepin.



That was a moment that I will never forget. It was to bring attention to the fact over 20 Trans women of color have been murdered in 2015. It was such a powerful statement and I believe was in keeping with the original intent of Pride Celebrations and that is to bring

attention to the injustices facing marginalized sexual minorities.

The fact that violence, housing and employment discrimination are major issues for Trans and Gender non-conforming folks is the main reason I chose to be a part of this project. Creating awareness through telling our stories is one of the most powerful ways to help shift attitudes in the broader population. It is a strategy that



has worked well in the fight for marriage equality; oh another little announcement was made in June; the Supreme Court ruled that same sex marriage was legal across the United States of America. That was a significant victory for the LGBT community, and now we must work to achieve the same types of victories for Trans-identified folks.

So over the summer we worked on setting up the project; we developed an amazing Advisory committee that includes Community elder June Remus, Dr. Karla Padron, Dr. Dominique Tobell, Damion Francisco Mendez, Quinn Villagomez, Professor Kevin Murphy, Anne Hodson, Lisa Vecoli and J.P. Arcani. The beauty of the advisory committee, beyond its age, gender and ethnic diversity is that

they helped to develop meaningful questions, select the technology for the project and provide an authentic voice for the communities that we are trying to reach.

After that I literally just jumped right in the water and started interviewing. Of course I began with folks that I know well and that would put up with my stumbling around with the equipment, which was rather prescient because there was much stumbling early on. I am happy to report that things have smoothed out tremendously, and I am beginning to feel very comfortable behind the camera.

The stories that I am privileged to witness are fascinating in their everyday(ness), but also inspiring in their messages of triumph over adversity. One participant stated: "The Trans Oral History Project humanizes and connects the transgender narrative through space and time in an unprecedented compilation of personal and collective stories. Growing up, I felt isolated because I did not see my trans identity reflected in the broader cultural discourse around gender. I wish I would have had a resource like this when I was younger. I am honored to contribute my story to the collection so that future generations of trans folks know that we have always been here, and we aren't going away."

I have interviewed seniors, the oldest being 81 years old, and students, the youngest so far is 20 years old. And for as many people that I have interviewed, there is almost an equal number of identities indicated, from genderqueer, to pansexual, to polyamorous, to asexual and you know what, that is alright with me. I am more excited about this project now than I was when I first started, and let me tell you that is a high hurdle. Stay tuned everybody, the best is yet to come.

The Tretter Collection
Special Collections and Rare Books
University of Minnesota Libraries
111 Elmer L. Andersen Library
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Minneapolis, MN 55455
<http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/tretter.phtml>

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From the Field, continued from page 4
held in New York, Los Angeles and
Amsterdam.

In the summer of 2016, the latest in the series will be held in London. The upcoming LGBTQ ALMS Conference, "Without Borders," will be co-hosted by the London Metropolitan Archives and Bishopsgate Institute, June 22-24, 2016. Curator Lisa Vecoli is planning to attend the conference and hopes to present a paper on our efforts to include diverse voices in the archive.

To date, keynote speakers have not been announced. Proposals for presentations are due by January 8, 2016. For more information, see the LGBTQ Archives, Libraries, Museums and Special Collections page on Facebook.

Moving Trans* History Forward Conference

The second international "Moving Trans* History Forward" conference is scheduled for March 17-20, 2016. The conference is hosted by the Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria, British Columbia. The keynote speakers

are scheduled to include Jamison Green and Martine Rothblatt. The first gathering, in 2014, drew participants from around the world to discuss and collaborate on efforts to add transgender voices to archives and collections.

Andrea Jenkins, staff for the Transgender Oral History Project, is planning to attend and present on the Tretter Collection's project. For more information on the conference, or the Transgender Archives, visit the website: www.transgenderarchives.uvic.ca

Cliff Arnesen, continued from page 14

On Veterans' Day 2015, in preparation for writing this article, I asked Cliff what he envisions for his materials in the Tretter Collection. Here is what he said:

It is my hope that the materials which I have donated to the Tretter Collection archives will serve to foster a better understanding between people of all sexual orientations, within our society and around the world. And, it is my wish that my life's journey and advocacy will

encourage bisexual people to consider making their own contributions to the Tretter Collection archives, as well.

For the record, I state that bisexuality is NOT a counterfeit behavior or a phase. It is a true sexual orientation of physical and emotional attraction to both genders. It is fluid and runs on a continuum.

We must ALL band together to fight the injustice of the aforementioned dark forces of evil. Otherwise, we defeat the very purpose of trying to secure human and civil rights for each other, which is the ultimate injustice!

To this effect, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

As for myself, I have learned in my painful journey through life that "love is where one finds it."

Sincerely and Bisexually Yours,
Cliff Arnesen