



Founded in 1985, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) Historical Society is recognized internationally as a leader in the field of LGBTQ public history. Our operations are centered at two sites: our GLBT Historical Society Museum, located since 2011 in the heart of San Francisco's Castro neighborhood; and our Dr. John P. De Cecco Archives and Research Center, open to researchers in the Mid-Market district.

### **OUR MISSION**

The GLBT Historical Society collects, preserves, exhibits and makes accessible to the public materials and knowledge to support and promote understanding of LGBTQ history, culture and arts in all their diversity.

### **OUR VISION**

We envision a world in which LGBTQ people are appreciated and celebrated by one another in all their diversity and by all people for their contributions to history and culture.

We envision a world in which everyone can learn about LGBTQ history as a vital means for promoting civic engagement, social justice, and political change.

We envision a world in which LGBTQ people find acceptance, strength, and pride in acknowledging their heritage and in sharing it with society as a whole.

### **OUR VALUES**

We believe that knowledge of our diverse LGBTQ past is an invaluable resource for understanding the challenges of the present and inspiring dreams for a future of greater social justice.

We appreciate the importance of LGBTQ history for building community and promoting connection.

We support debate, dialogue, and discussion about the LGBTQ past as a way to educate, inspire, and empower LGBTQ people and our allies in building our future.

A man with sunglasses and a person in a mask pose at the 1977 Castro Street Fair; photograph by Crawford Barton, Crawford Barton Papers (1993-11), GLBT Historical Society.







The GLBT Historical Society grabbed some big headlines last year, from unveiling the only known remnant of one of the original rainbow flags, to our work to document the home of lesbian pioneers Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, to San Francisco Mayor London Breed's announcement of an unprecedented investment in the creation of a new museum of LGBTQ history and culture. But that's just a fraction of what we have accomplished.

Our team has been hard at work building out new online resources to make our collections more accessible than ever. Our virtual exhibitions and online events make it easy for people around the world to get a curated look at LGBTQ history. With digital archival collections and primary source sets on our website, we can better serve researchers and lifelong learners who want to take a deep dive into their history.

Despite the challenges of life during the ongoing pandemic and all the myriad difficulties of the last year, our team worked hard to keep our history alive.

We are incredibly proud of the work we have accomplished this year, and truly grateful for the support we receive from our community. As you page through this report, we hope you feel a sense of immense pride in knowing that your contributions help make all our success possible. Together, we can keep our history alive for current and future generations.

With respect for our shared past and hope for our future,



Kelsi Evans
Interim Co-Executive Director



Andrew Shatter
Interim Co-Executive Director



**Lito Sandoval**Acting Chair, Board of Directors



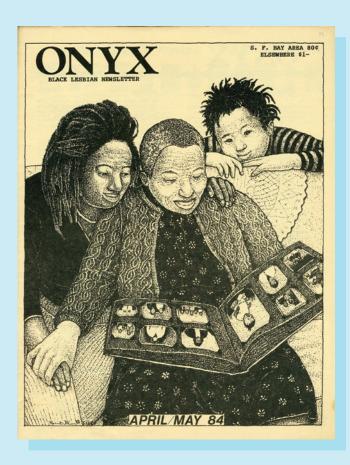
In the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the archives team at the Dr. John P. De Cecco Archives and Special Collections continued to serve remote researchers by expanding and enhancing our online offerings. In June, we reopened the reading room and welcomed in-person researchers again for the first time since the onset of the pandemic. With staff back onsite, we also began accessioning the significant backlog of collections that were donated or promised to the society during our closure.

To strengthen our online offerings, we expanded our popular, subject-specific primary source sets. These sets are especially helpful to students, educators and novice researchers. New additions include sets on the performing arts, nonbinary and genderqueer people, and incarcerated people. We also added seven new digitized archival collections, including:

- Footage of recorded dance performances produced by the Purple Moon Dance Project. The Project was established by Jill Togawa in 1992 with the goal of promoting visibility for lesbians and women of color through the medium of dance.
- The entire print run of Onyx: Black Lesbian Newsletter, an influential bimonthly publication that ran from 1982 to 1984. The publication accepted written and graphic work by Black lesbians, including news, reviews, essays, political commentaries, interviews, and poetry.

- The Daniel A. Smith and Queer Blue Light
  Videotapes, a collection of lively home footage
  recorded by the 1970s video collective Queer Blue
  Light, which was devoted to documenting LGBTQ
  San Francisco. Subjects include protests, art
  events, street interviews, skits and intimate scenes
  of gay men at home.
- The Vanguard 1966 Street Sweep Photographs, a stunning collection documenting a demonstration by members of Vanguard, an organization of LGBTQ youth and others living on the streets of the Tenderloin district in San Francisco. The Street Sweep announced Vanguard members' commitment to the neighborhood and protested ongoing police harassment.

We also continued implementation of a new Digital Asset Management System (DAMS). The DAMS provides robust digital infrastructure and will help us better preserve and share digitized content.



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The archives formally accessioned 27 new donations in 2021 that document an impressive array of LGBTQ topics and people. In addition to the segment of the original rainbow flag, now part of the Gilbert Baker Collection and on display at the museum (see the following article for full information), new acquisitions include:

- A large addition to the Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Papers, donated following Lyon's death in 2020. Among their many accomplishments, this pioneering couple were cofounders of the Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian-rights organization in the United States.
- The Felicia Elizondo Papers, documenting the life of the late Felicia "Flames" Elizondo, a trans activist, former sex worker and longtime AIDS activist who passed away in May 2021.
- The Beverly Shaw Papers, which provide a rich look into the life of a lesbian torch singer who played at many West Coast venues, including the famed Mona's 440 Club in North Beach, San Francisco's first major lesbian establishment, and her own Club Laurel.
- The Daniel Sonnenfeld Papers, documenting his involvement with a number of local and national deaf and gay organizations, including the Rainbow Lambda Society of the Deaf and International Mr. and Ms. Deaf Gay Leather.

- An addition of over 35 oral history recordings to the Lesbian Archives of Sonoma County Collection, consisting of in-depth interviews with numerous women detailing lesbian life and activism in Northern California.
- The Denise D'Anne Papers chronicle the life of D'Anne, an activist, environmentalist, civil servant, writer, candidate for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and proud trans woman who transitioned in 1968.

Finally, we started some exciting funded projects in 2021. The archives were awarded a major yearlong grant by the National Archives' National Historic Publications and Records Commission supporting the processing of ten unique music and theater-related collections. The grant funds specialized preservation work, the creation of updated catalog records and detailed finding aids, and digital preservation of selected items. We were pleased to welcome back Megan Needels, who previously worked with us in 2020–2021, as project archivist for this grant.

We were also awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities American Rescue Plan grant to help us accession and process the backlog of donations that amassed during our pandemic closure. We look forward to making new resources available to researchers through this generous support in the coming year.

Left: Vanguard member wearing a "Market Street Needs a Cleanup" sign, 1966; photographer unknown, Vanguard Street Sweep Photographs (2021-21), GLBT Historical Society.

Middle: The front cover of the April/May 1984 issue of *Onyx: Black Lesbian Newsletter;* Periodicals Collection (GLBT-PER), GLBT Historical Society.

Right: Northern California Leather Association of the Deaf/ Southbay Leather & Uniform Group Beer/Soda Bust flyer, 1993; Daniel Sonnenfeld Papers (2021-10), GLBT Historical Society.



One major highlight of 2021 was the acquisition of an almost mythical artifact: a fragment of one of the two monumental rainbow flags first raised on June 25, 1978 at the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day celebration. Thought to have been lost for over 40 years, the fragment was recently rediscovered and is the only known surviving remnant of the two inaugural rainbow flags.

Displaying the original design's eight colored stripes, the flag was created, sewn and dyed by Gilbert Baker (1953–2017), Lynn Segerblom (Faerie Argyle Rainbow), James McNamara, Glenne McElhinney, Joe Duran, Paul Langlotz, and approximately 30 other volunteers. It was conceived in 1978 when City Supervisor Harvey Milk (1930–1978) and other local activists appealed to Baker, the co-chair with Segerblom of the Decorations Committee, to create a new symbol for the LGBTQ community to be unveiled at that year's Gay Freedom Day celebration.

Together, they transformed a thousand yards of white muslin into two flags approximately 30 feet high by 60 feet wide. Each featured eight colored stripes, to which Baker assigned symbolic meaning: Pink for sex, red for life, orange for healing, yellow for the sun, green for nature, turquoise for art and magic, blue for serenity and purple for the spirit.

The original two flags differed slightly. One arranged the eight stripes in spectral order, from pink at the top through purple at the bottom. The second design reversed the stripes and featured a canton of tie-dyed white stars on a blue field—a suggestion from Segerblom as a response to the United States flag. In 1979 the hot pink stripe was dropped from the design due to the unavailability of flag fabric in the color, and the turquoise stripe was removed to create an even number for display on each side of the streetlamps on Market Street for that year's Gay Freedom Day parade. This resulted in the popularly known and still most common six-stripe variant of the flag.



The fate of the 1978 flags has long been obscure, as both disappeared from view after 1979. They were stored on the top floor of the Gay Community Center, then located at 330 Grove Street, where a leaky roof caused significant water and mildew damage. The version with stars is believed to have been stolen. When Baker went to retrieve the stripes-only flag in 1979, he salvaged a segment by cutting about one-third of the hoist away from the damaged area of the fly. He retained possession of it for four decades.

Following Baker's death in 2017, his heirs donated a major collection to the GLBT Historical Society. The flag segment only reappeared in 2019 when Baker's sister, Ardonna Cook, lent it to Gilbert Baker Foundation President Charles Beal to be carried in the June 2019 Stonewall 50 Pride Parade in New York City. Several telltale clues pointed to the loaned fabric as a piece of the original 1978 flag. Expert vexillologist James Ferrigan, who had worked with Baker at the Paramount Flag Company

in San Francisco in the late 1970s, consulted with Beal over several months to authenticate the flag and prepare an official vexillological report. The Gilbert Baker Foundation donated the flag to the GLBT Historical Society in April 2021, and it is now part of the Gilbert Baker Collection.

The flag was formally unveiled at a ceremony at the GLBT Historical Society Museum on June 4, attended by San Francisco Mayor London Breed, California State Senator Scott Wiener, San Francisco District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, San Francisco Treasurer José Cisneros, and other dignitaries. It is now the museum's centerpiece, to be cherished for generations as the first example of an iconic symbol that emerged in San Francisco to become an intrinsic part of LGBTQ identity, culture, politics and society around the globe.

The flag segment donated to the GLBT Historical Society in April 2021; photograph by Matthew Leifheit, courtesy of the Gilbert Baker Foundation.



gender-nonconforming people in the world.

SCRAP

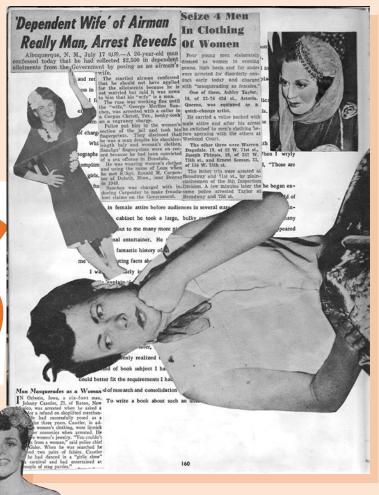
The archive, established in 2017, is named in honor of Northern California trans pioneer Louise Lawrence, who began living full-time as a woman in 1942, first in Berkeley and then San Francisco. In 1960, along with Virginia Prince and others, she published the first incarnation of Transvestia, the first widely distributed magazine focused on the cross-dressing and later the larger trans community. Louise's address book was the initial subscription list and she was instrumental in developing the trans community's connection to pioneering sex researchers such as Alfred Kinsey and Harry Benjamin.

This interview with Ms. Bob Davis was conducted in November, 2021.

What are some of the initiatives that LLTA has been focusing on during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Ms. Bob: Back in 2019, I gave a talk at the "Queering Memory" conference in Berlin called "Glamour, Drag and Death: HIV/AIDS in the Art of Three Drag Queen Painters." It focused on the artists and performers Jerome Caja, Doris Fish and Miss Kitty, all three of whom died between 1991 and 1995, and includes analysis of artworks held by both LLTA and the GLBT Historical Society. I published an article based on the talk in Transgender Studies Quarterly this February, and now I'm working on turning the material into a short documentary film to reach a wider audience. I want people to learn about how these artists confronted AIDS. It was less intellectual; they responded in a visceral, emotional way, in a very valiant fight to retain their identities in the face of this horrible crisis. It's now thirty years since the height of the AIDS pandemic, and there's a whole generation of LGBTQ people who simply don't have that lived experience. It's important to pass on this history so they can learn about what the community went through.





What can you tell us about your ongoing online

"scrapbook" project on the LLTA website?

Ms. Bob: It's an online project called "I Think This is Our Denise: Discovering Forgotten Scrapbooks of Trans History," and it's based on a remarkable collection of six large scrapbooks donated by Taryn Gundling in 2014. They belonged to a trans woman named Denise, and contain over a dozen pages of candid photographs of transgender people and cross-dressers from the 1960s and 1970s. This was a time when the transgender community was just beginning to define itself and establish networks. It took four years of research to learn more about Denise and the people in the photographs. I recognized some of them in other LLTA archival collections; in issues of *Transvestia*; and in photographs held by the Art Gallery of Ontario,

Two pages from the Female Mimics scrapbook, one of six scrapbooks compiled by a trans woman named Denise held by the Louise Lawrence Transgender Archive; courtesy LLTA.

many of which were published in the book *Casa Susanna*. These photos depict transgender people vacationing at several Catskill mountain resorts, one of them named Casa Susanna, run by Susanna Valenti and her wife Marie. These establishments served as safe spaces for transgender women to vacation in their gender of choice in the 1960s and 1970s.

Now we're using the scrapbooks to do a deep dive into transgender history. LLTA is partnering with the Art Gallery of Ontario; the Transgender Archive at University of Victoria; the website "A Gender Variance Who's Who"; and the Digital Transgender Archive to create an online hub that connects the resources of all five organizations to present photographs, biographies, and autobiographical articles about the individuals in the scrapbook. For example, many of the people in the snapshots wrote autobiographical articles in early issues of Transvestia, so the site connects you to essays they wrote about their lives. This project will allow them to really live again, and the site is being beautifully put together by our webmaster Robyn Adams.

You've been curating LLTA for many years now. What's something you want people to learn about transgender history?

Ms. Bob: One of the things I'm personally interested in conveying relates to the growing awareness of trans, nonbinary, gender-nonconforming, genderqueer identities that we see today. When you examine historical materials, you realize that these shades of gender and gender identity have always been with us; they aren't just emerging or being "invented" now. Trans people in the early 1960s, when the community first began to organize, were working with different terms, often borrowed from the medical establishment and out of date now. They certainly didn't have the vocabulary that is available today. But if you dig down, the documentation reveals that people were defining, exploring, and working out their identities in complex ways. Understanding this supports us in continuing the work of building our community in the present so that we can display more of our rainbow.

Louise Lawrence Transgender Archive is open to students, scholars, and the public by appointment only. Learn more about the archive at

⊕ LLTransarchive.org

The reading room of the Louise Lawrence Transgender Archive; photograph courtesy Ms. Bob Davis.





For the GLBT Historical Society's museum and exhibitions team, 2021 provided opportunities to both build on existing strengths and lay the groundwork for future initiatives. A major highlight of the year occurred in June, when we reopened the museum to the public after more than a year of pandemic closure.

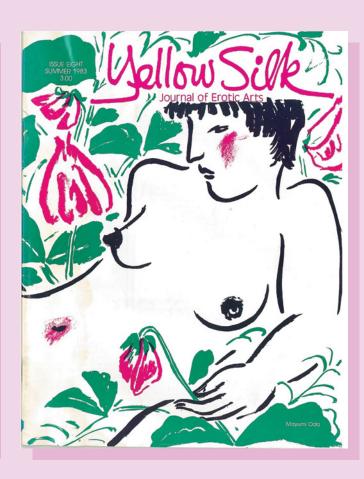
We celebrated our reopening with the public announcement of a major acquisition: a segment of one of the two original rainbow flags designed for the 1978 San Francisco Gay Freedom Day celebration. Long believed to be lost, the flag is now proudly on display in a custom-built case at the museum.

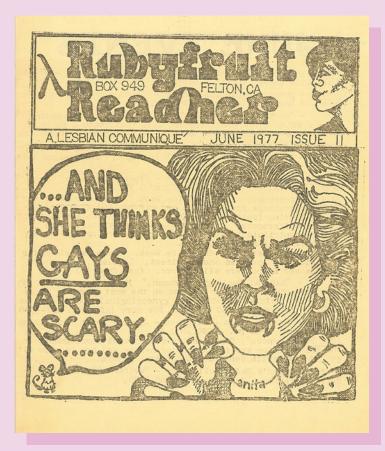
While planning for the reopening of the museum, we also curated two original online exhibitions that can be viewed on our website.

• In April, with support from the Bob Ross Foundation and the Bay Area Reporter (BAR), we unveiled Stories of Our Movement: The Bay Area Reporter at 50. Curated by photographer Rick Gerharter, the exhibition documented the history of San Francisco's queer newspaper of record, the oldest continuously published LGBTQ newspaper in the United States. The exhibition celebrates the paper's golden jubilee and dovetails with the recently completed BAR digitization project.

Years of research and processing work undertaken on our Art and Artifacts collection culminated in the exhibition Queeriosities: Treasures From the Art and Artifacts Collection, which opened in July and was curated in house by three staff members, Nalini Elias, Mark Sawchuk, and Ramón Silvestre. The exhibition features over a dozen carefully selected items, from former San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan's decidedly unstylish leather loafer, lost in a 1991 riot; to drag queen Doris Fish's Day-Glo paintings; to a stuffed, plush Tinky Winky "Teletubbies" toy. Queeriosities tells a vivid story about the vibrancy and diversity of LGBTQ life through the lens of material culture.

In addition to these new shows, we selected a number of our most successful past museum exhibitions for digitization, making this content available to global audiences.





- At the beginning of the year, we created a
  digital version of Empowerment in Print: LGBTQ
  Activism, Pride and Lust, a highly successful 2018
  museum installation. The exhibition draws one
  periodical from A to Z from the over 4,000 titles in
  the society's Periodicals Collection, reflecting how
  queer people from diverse communities have used
  periodicals to form social networks, create culture,
  express desire and inspire activism.
- In February, we updated our 2013 museum exhibition *Legendary: African American LGBTQ Past Meets Present* as an online exhibition, enriching and expanding it with new archival content. Reflecting themes of art, belonging, justice and sexuality, this exhibition highlights local Black, queer community leaders and events that have left an indelible imprint on the fabric of today's LGBTQ community. The exhibition also served as a tribute to its late curator, Byron Mason, a former GLBT Historical Society board member.

At the museum, we devoted significant efforts to remaining abreast of constantly changing state and city COVID regulations. Following the emergence of the Delta variant over the summer, we introduced a vaccination policy for museum entry that went

into effect in August. Staff and volunteers displayed remarkable dedication and deftness at adapting to the rapidly shifting public health situation throughout the year.

We also established the foundations for our priorities in 2022, which include a revision and relaunch of our beloved Community Curator program. This initiative invites members of the public, historians and curators to develop exhibitions in collaboration with GLBT Historical Society curatorial staff.

Finally, throughout the year, we maintained our popular program series, organizing a total of 34 programs on wide-ranging topics. We were especially excited to introduce two new program series. "Queeriosity Corner" is a quarterly event series that, like the *Queeriosities* exhibition, showcases never-before-seen objects from the Art and Artifacts Collection and other archival collections in a "show and tell" format. Reflecting growing public interest in our audiovisual materials, the quarterly "Mighty Reels" program series introduces participants to selected rare historic video footage from the archives.

Left: This photograph of revelers at a 1977 Halloween party is featured in the *Legends* online exhibition. Photographer unknown, Collection of Slides of Black Gay Events (1997-39), GLBT Historical Society.

Middle: Yellow Silk: Journal of Erotic Arts, no. 8 (Summer 1983); Periodicals Collection (GLBT-PER), GLBT Historical Society.

Right: Rubyfruit Readher: A Lesbian Communiqué, no. 11 (June 1977); Periodicals Collection (GLBT-PER), GLBT Historical Society.



Experience a guided virtual tour of the Lyon-Martin House at

It did not take long for the community to turn from grief to action following the death of Phyllis Lyon (1924–2020), who passed away at her house in San Francisco in April, 2020. She and her partner of more than 50 years, Del Martin (1921–2008), were lifelong activists, and were among the cofounders of the Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian-rights organization in the United States.

Just a few months after Lyon's death, the Noe Valley house that Lyon and Martin shared for over five decades was sold and threatened with demolition. Community members responded immediately by organizing to attempt to save this historic structure from erasure. They established the grassroots group Friends of the Lyon-Martin House, for which the GLBT Historical Society, whose archives hold Lyon and Martin's papers, serves as fiscal sponsor.

### **CONNECTING TO OUR HISTORY**

"Connecting our history to the physical places where that history unfolded makes the stories really come to life," says Shayne Watson, a cofounder of Friends of the Lyon-Martin House. "Imagine trying to convey the significance of Stonewall without the actual Stonewall Inn, or the Compton's Cafeteria Riot without that now-iconic building at the corner of Turk and Taylor. A bronze sidewalk plaque just doesn't cut it."

Watson served as co-chair of the Arts, Culture & Heritage Committee for San Francisco's LGBTQ Cultural Heritage Strategy, published in 2020. She insists on the fact that the Lyon-Martin House was not simply a residence. Lyon and Martin purchased the house the same year that they and others cofounded the Daughters of Bilitis, and the building quickly became the beating heart of the organization. They held meetings in its living room, planned events, edited DOB's journal *The Ladder*, and built their lives together within its walls.

Recognizing this, and responding to steadfast community support, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously bestowed the status of San Francisco Landmark on the house on May 4, 2021. Friends of the Lyon-Martin House is now working with the property owner, digital historic preservation firm CyArk, the city and other stakeholders to document the historic structure and plan for its long-term future.

### A VIRTUAL TOUR FOR A CITY LANDMARK

While conversations regarding the physical structure's future are ongoing, Friends of the Lyon-Martin House and the GLBT Historical Society devoted significant efforts in 2021 to a unique documentation project with CyArk. In early 2022, the three organizations unveiled a groundbreaking, 3-D virtual tour of the Lyon-Martin House. The virtual tour is available to the public and can be experienced on our website at glbthistory.org/lyon-martin-house.

CyArk's virtual tour of the Lyon-Martin House is a major evolution in digital historic preservation efforts, enabling far more members of the public to experience and learn about the Lyon-Martin House than would otherwise be possible. The house's small size, limited occupancy and situation on a steep hill in a residential neighborhood present significant public access and accessibility challenges. The virtual tour eliminates all potential safety, accessibility and occupancy challenges while providing a seamless, three-dimensional experience for virtual visitors enriched by historic photographs, interviews and commentary.

CyArk created the 3D model for the tour using thousands of photographs and laser scans to accurately document the home as it existed shortly after Lyon's passing. The rendering additionally incorporates digital versions of several of Lyon and Martin's possessions currently housed in the GLBT Historical Society's archives to provide a sense of the interior when they lived there. The tour is organized into a total of 17 stations, taking in areas including the front yard, living room, second-floor landing and kitchen.

Each station is accompanied by historic commentary, reflections and interviews provided by LGBTQ historians, friends and family members of Lyon and Martin, including Marcia Gallo, associate professor of history at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas; Don Romesburg, professor of gender and women's studies at Sonoma State University; and Kendra Mon, the couple's daughter. Finally, the tour incorporates the voices and reflections of Phyllis and Del Martin themselves, drawn from the extensive oral histories and interviews conducted prior to the deaths and held in the GLBT Historical Society's archives.

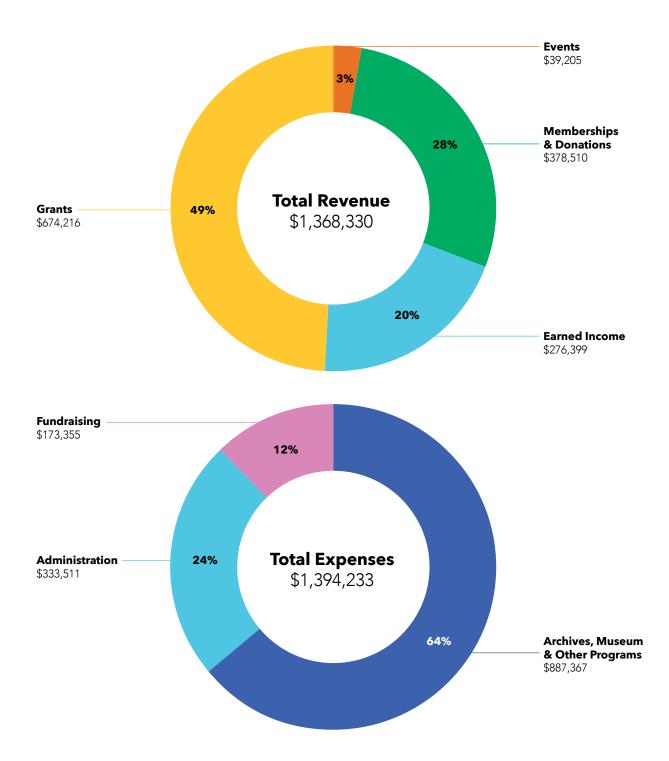
As San Francisco District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, who sponsored the historic landmark designation for the site and represents the Noe Valley neighborhood, remarked on the occasion of the tour's launch, "It's one thing for the city to grant landmark status to a building, but it takes community-led efforts like this to make that history accessible and fresh, something that's especially needed when it comes to queer history."

II IT'S ONE THING FOR THE **CITY TO GRANT LANDMARK STATUS TO A BUILDING**, **BUT IT TAKES COMMUNITY-LED EFFORTS LIKE THIS TO MAKE THAT HISTORY ACCESSIBLE** AND FRESH, **SOMETHING** THAT'S **ESPECIALLY NEEDED WHEN IT COMES** TO QUEER HISTORY.

Del Martin (left) and Phyllis Lyon (right) in their living room in San Francisco, ca. 1970s; photographer unknown, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Papers (1993-13), GLBT Historical Society.



# BY THE NUMBERS



Financial information is preliminary. For full and finalized financials, please visit our website: glbthistory.org/reports.

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An atmospheric photograph of Maria Sanchez posing, ca.1978. Sanchez was a Cuban-American DJ who spun records at local venues such as the Sutro Bathhouse and the Fairoakes Hotel. Her collection contains photographs, disco zines, ephemera and a number of quarter inch reel tapes of Maria's DJ sets. Items from this collection were digitized thanks to a grant from the U.S. National Archives' National Historical Publications and Records Commission called "Sing Out: Processing and Digitizing LGBTQ Music and Theater Collections. Photographer unknown, Maria Sanchez Papers (2006-19), GLBT Historical Society.

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The GLBT Historical Society is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Tax ID #94-2989004

This report was designed by Christopher Paguio.

### **ABOUT THE COVER**

The two original eight-color rainbow flags flying at United Nations Plaza during San Francisco Gay Freedom Day 1978. A segment of the flag in the foreground was donated to the GLBT Historical Society in April 2021. Photograph by Mark Rennie, courtesy of the Gilbert Baker Foundation.