



Greater Palm Springs Pride

NEWS RELEASE

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Greater Palm Springs Pride Announces 2011 Pride Honorees

*Jean Harris, Gilbert Baker, John Palatinus,
Geoff Kors, James Williamson, Dana Adkins and George Zander to be honored*

PALM SPRINGS (September 23, 2011) Greater Palm Springs Pride announced today that it will bestow its annual Pride Honors on the creator of the rainbow flag, a midcentury photographer, community activists and volunteers. The prestigious Pride Honors Awards are presented annually to individuals in order to honor the work they have put into furthering the causes of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals and their allies. The awards will be presented at a ceremony on November 4, at the Hyatt Regency Suites in Palm Springs.

Lifetime Achievement Awards will be presented to equal rights activist Jean Harris, John Palatinus, a Palm Springs octogenarian and midcentury beefcake photographer, and Gilbert Baker, the creator of the rainbow flag. Geoff Kors and James Williamson will be recognized as 2011 Spirit of Stonewall Special Guests for their activism, volunteerism and community service on behalf of the LGBT community; and proud advocates for LGBT causes George Zander and Dana Adkins will be recognized with the Spirit of Stonewall Community Service Award.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to recognize an individual whose lifetime body of work has left a lasting major imprint on the LGBT community. 2011 recipients are Jean Harris (1944-2011), Gilbert Baker and John Palatinus.

Jean Harris was a political tour de force known for her spirited use of colorful language and down-to-earth style. She was a well-known aide in the San Francisco City Hall offices of former Supervisor Harry Britt, former Mayor Frank Jordan and former Director of Public Health Dr. Sandra Hernandez.

A community organizer she helped form the Lesbian Agenda for Action, the very first Lesbian Political Action Committee in the country and she lead San Francisco's first domestic partner's campaign in 1989 and organized the LGBT community to defeat a



Jean Harris (1944-2011)

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statewide discrimination measure (No on 13). She was the first executive director of “Basic Rights Oregon” and served as the executive director of The California Alliance for Pride and Equality (CAPE), which was to become the present-day Equality California (EQCA). Jean was a respected field organizer and local, state and national campaign organizer. For over forty years Jean served the Democratic Party in leadership roles on numerous committees as well as serving as Chair of the California Democratic Party Lesbian/Gay Caucus.

Jean was 66 years old and died at home in Palm Springs, California. She is survived by her partner, Denise Penn.

Gilbert Baker is an artist and civil rights activist who in 1978, designed the Rainbow Flag, perhaps the most common symbol of LGBT Pride and most visible symbols of the LGBT movement.

Baker served in the U.S. Army from 1970 to 1972 stationed in San Francisco at the beginning of the gay rights movement. After his honorable discharge from the military, he taught himself to sew. He used his skill to create banners for gay-rights and anti-war protest marches. It was during this time that he met and became friends with Harvey Milk.

In 1994 Baker moved to New York City and continued his creative work and activism. That year he created the world’s largest flag (at the time) in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots that took place in 1969.

In 2003, to commemorate the Rainbow Flag’s 25th anniversary, Baker created a Rainbow Flag that stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean in Key West. After the commemoration, he sent sections of this flag to more than 100 cities around the world.

John Palatinus is a revolutionary artist who was persecuted for his art in a time noted for its repression of gay men and women. As one of the first beefcake photographers of the 1950s, he pioneered a new genre of male art – known as physique photography.

In 1954, he began photographing young bodybuilders, using light and shadow to highlight the topography of the male physique - often using posing straps to carefully conceal genitalia.

What John and his contemporaries considered art was viewed as profanity by conservative, pre-Stonewall authorities. As a result, US postal authorities and NYC Police raided Palatinus’ studio, confiscating all of his photographs, negatives, cameras and equipment. John was tried and convicted.

At 82, John now lives in Palm Springs, and may be one of the last living photographers from the 1950s golden era of physique photography. By today’s standards his arrest is ridiculous. He has



Gilbert Baker.
Photo: Mick Hicks



John Palatinus

lived to experience the revival of his works. Some of his original work has emerged from the underground, resulting in shows in Paris, Berlin, San Francisco, New York and Key West.

Recognized as the 2011 Spirit of Stonewall Special Guest for their activism, volunteerism and community service, **Geoff Kors and James Williamson** are Palm Springs residents who have a long and distinguished record of service to the LGBT community.

Geoff served as executive director of Equality California for nine years from 2002 until 2011, building the largest and most successful statewide LGBT rights organization in the nation. Under Geoff's leadership, EQCA passed more than seventy pieces of LGBT rights legislation, many of which he conceived and helped draft, and then developed and implemented the strategy to ensure they were enacted and signed into law. As a result, LGBT Californians today have the most comprehensive civil rights protections in the nation.



James Williamson and Geoff Kors (left to right)

Kors served as a partner in an LGBT civil rights law firm and as director of the ACLU of Illinois Gay and Lesbian Rights and AIDS and Civil Liberties projects. He has served on many boards including the executive board of the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club where he originated the idea for, and helped orchestrate passage of, San Francisco's landmark Equal Benefits Ordinance.

James has been extremely active in the LGBT community, volunteering for numerous organizations including the Shanti Project, where he served as an emotional support volunteer to people with end state HIV/AIDS, and as a member of the LGBT advisory committee to the San Francisco Human Rights Commission. In 2002, James joined the board of directors of the Asian Pacific Islander Wellness Center, where he served on both the executive committee and as the organization's treasurer.

After two terms of service on the API Wellness board, James joined the board of the Horizons LGBT Community Foundation where he served as the organizations board co-chair. In 2009, James joined the board of directors for the San Francisco LGBT Community Center where he serves as co-chair.

James' service to the community includes serving as treasurer for a number of candidates for public office, volunteering on numerous campaigns and supporting candidates and organizations who believe in full equality and justice.

The Spirit of Stonewall Community Service Award recognizes an individual, couple or organization within the LGBT community that has made a noticeable and positive impact on the community. The 2011 recipients are Dana Adkins and George Zander.

Dana Adkins is a multi-talented performer who has been singing, dancing, acting and hosting shows internationally for over twenty years and is one of the Coachella Valley's most recognizable, tireless and generous contributors to the local charitable benefits circuit, donating her time and talents to an impressive array of fundraising endeavors including AIDS-related causes, animal rights activism and women's issues.



Dana Adkins

Perhaps most recognized as the host and producer of the Palm Springs entertainment magazine television show *The Yellow Brick Road*, Dana has been generous providing her talent for many charities including: AIDS Assistance Program, Desert AIDS Project, Save-A-Pet, Palm Springs Animal Shelter, Alzheimer's Organizations, The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, and San Francisco AIDS Emergency Fund.

She now lives in the Palm Springs area and continues to share her love of the performing arts as a permanent fixture on the local cabaret scene.

George Zander, sits on the Palm Springs Police Department's LGBT Outreach Committee and serves on staff at Equality California as the Field Manager for Palm Springs. He has been actively involved in the Democratic Party for many years. After moving to the desert in 1997 he helped found the Desert Stonewall Democratic Club in 1999 and became its chair in 2004.



George Zander

Like many other political junkies, his community activism started in his school days. He was involved in the student body government council in high school and in student politics in college. After graduation, he joined the Peace Corps and worked in Micronesia for five years where his community organizing skills were toned.

George has worked on many campaigns that range from save an inner city wilderness area from being turned into a golf course to serving as the organizer of one of the few campaigns in the nation to defeat Anita Bryant's campaign against the LGBT community's anti-discrimination laws already on the books. George was also involved in the Dorian Group, a very early LGBT political organization, and he ran the coordinated campaign for Clinton-Gore in Seattle.

ABOUT GREATER PALM SPRINGS PRIDE

The Greater Palm Springs Pride organization (pspride.org) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community enhancement organization founded to promote the public education and public awareness of individual rights and civil liberties of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and to promote the history, diversity and future prosperity of the Greater Palm Springs LGBT community.

For 25 years, Palm Springs Pride has been a tireless advocate for equality and diversity. This year's Pride celebration theme is: "Justice Today. Equality Forever!" For information about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities visit the web site at: PSPride.org.

The 2011 Palm Springs Pride Celebration is November 1 - 6.

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