L1992.10 The Bernard "Bernie" Michels Collection

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Descriptive Summary

Title: L1992.10 The Bernard "Bernie" Michels Collection
Dates: 1960-1976
Collection Number: L1992.10
Creator/Collector: Bernard "Bernie" Michels
Extent: 2.5 linear feet
Repository: Lambda Archives of San Diego
San Diego, California 92116

Abstract: Bernie Michels [was] one of The Center’s founders. With Jess Jessop, he called the very first meetings of the Planning Committee in 1972, and later became Executive Director of the committee.

Language of Material: English

Access
Open for research

Preferred Citation
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Biography/Administrative History

From The Center’s Wall of Honor: Bernie Michels [was] one of The Center’s founders. With Jess Jessop, he called the very first meetings of the Planning Committee in 1972, and later became Executive Director of the committee. After college, Michels was Stationed in San Francisco for two years during his time in the army. Although he was still living a heterosexual identity, San Francisco opened his eyes to a much bigger, more exciting world than he had ever known. Around 1967, Bernie slowly began exploring his sexual orientation, coming out fully when he started attending early meetings of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) in Los Angeles. Participating in the GLF was both exhilarating and scary, especially when demonstrating against the L.A. Police and marching in the first Pride parade in 1970. Arrest was a constant threat. Bernie moved to San Diego in 1971 to attend San Diego State University, where he was the first openly LGBT student in the School of Social Work. In 1974, he completed a master’s degree thesis: “Social Scenes of the Male Gay Community of San Diego” (copies available at SDSU, UCSD, and Lambda Archives. He also presented the city’s first LGBT studies course in 1974 at SDSU: “Myths and Realities Concerning Gay People.” Bernie and his partner Thom Carey moved to Boston in 1976 so that Bernie could pursue a doctorate. He graduated with a PhD in Social Policy from Brandeis University in 1987. Since 1988, he has been an adjunct professor of sociology at UMass, Boston, where he focuses on Social Inequality. In Boston, he has demonstrated and lobbied at the Massachusetts State House to both obtain and preserve same sex marriage, has organized an AIDS Walk team each year, and is an active member of Prime Timers. Despite living in Boston, Bernie still considers himself a San Diegan, and says that he is “immensely proud of what LGBT people have accomplished in San Diego.

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection contains materials from Bernard Michels’s personal life, including miscellaneous correspondence, papers, photographs, and education curricula, as well as Thomas Carey photographs and calendars. Contains material from events he’s been involved in such as the May Company Arrests in 1974 and Frank Caprio’s political campaign. Also included extensive material from the Gay Center for Social Services from 1973-1976, which have been folded in to The Center’s collection (L1989.01). Items included: 2 red jumpsuits and Thomas Carey Navy Medals and Ribbon.

Indexing Terms
Gay Center for Social Services
LGBTQ social issues
LGBTQ master’s thesis
LGBTQ military personnel
Robert "Jess" Hall Jessop
San Diego

L1992-10 Inventory