David R. Kessler papers

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2020
Descriptive Summary

Title: David R. Kessler papers

Dates: 1972-1993

Collection Number: 1993-24

Creator/Collector: Kessler, David R.

Extent: 7 cartons (7 linear feet)

Repository: GLBT Historical Society
San Francisco, California 94103

Abstract: This collection documents the professional and political life of David R. Kessler, M.D. The collection contains a small amount of correspondence, speeches and lectures regarding homosexuality and psychiatry, materials relating to Dr. Kessler’s professional and political activities, and numerous subject files on the AIDS epidemic and other topics related to the LGBT community in San Francisco.

Language of Material: English

Access

Collection is open for research. Funding for processing this collection was provided by the National Historical Publications Commission (NHPRC) and the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR).

Preferred Citation

David R. Kessler papers. GLBT Historical Society

Acquisition Information


Biography/Administrative History

David R. Kessler, M.D. was the first elected president of the San Francisco-based gay doctors organization—Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights (BAPHR). After completing his medical degree and residency at Yale, he served on the faculty in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco Medical School. He was also on the staff of the Langley-Porter Institute from 1962 until his retirement in 1986. Dr. Kessler is past president of the Gay and Lesbian Caucus of the American Psychiatric Institute and has served on the board of directors for the NAMES Project and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. In 1992 Dr. Kessler endowed the David R. Kessler Lecture award at the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) at the City University of New York.

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection documents the professional and political life of David R. Kessler, M.D. The collection contains a small amount of correspondence, speeches and lectures regarding homosexuality and psychiatry, materials relating to Dr. Kessler’s professional and political activities, and numerous subject files on the AIDS epidemic and other topics related to the LGBT community in San Francisco. The papers reflect Dr. Kessler’s research on homosexual relationships within the context of psychiatry and include writings by prominent gay authors and also papers by Charles W. Socarides and Harold M. Voth, who fought against the removal of homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association’s DSM-III. The collection contains very little personal material. The collection is divided into six Series: Correspondence; Speeches and Lectures; Professional and Political Activities; AIDS Subject Files; General Subject Files; and Writings by Others.

Indexing Terms

Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights
Psychiatry--United States--History--20th century.
Homosexuality--Psychological aspects.
Homosexuality--United States--Public opinion--History--20th Homosexuality--United States--Public opinion--History--20th century.

Container List for the David R. Kessler Papers