
Accession number: 1988-01

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

San Francisco, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Leonard Matlovich Papers,
Accession number: 1988-01
Creator: Matlovich, Leonard
Extent: 4 Cubic Feet
San Francisco, California.
Physical location: Housed at the GLBT Historical Society.
Language: English.

Acquisition
Before moving to Hollywood in April 1988, Leonard Matlovich transferred ownership of his personal papers to the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Historical Society. Archivist Bill Walker went through Matlovich’s papers with him and helped select which materials would be transferred.

Access
Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights
Copyright to unpublished manuscript materials has been transferred to the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California.

Preferred Citation

Biographical Note
Leonard Matlovich was a decorated member of the United States Air Force. During his three tours of duty in Vietnam, he received a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. Like his father, he was a career military man and was considered an outstanding technical sergeant when, on March 8, 1975, he wrote a letter to his commanding officer at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia, in which acknowledged his homosexuality but requested that he be allowed to remain in the Air Force. The Air Force responded by expelling Matlovich with a general discharge. He took the Air Force to court to contest this decision and
in November 1980, U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gessell in Washington, D.C. ordered the Air Force to reinstate Matlovich with back pay and the rank and salary that he would have obtained if he had not been discharged.

In an out-of-court settlement with the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, he agreed to drop his case in return for a settlement of $162,000, which included $98,000 compensation in addition to the $62,000 in back pay as well as having his discharge upgraded from a general to an honorable rating.

This series of actions set him on a path that transformed him into a symbol for the gay community throughout the United States. He appeared on the cover of Time magazine and his story was translated into a television documentary entitled "Sgt. Matlovich vs. the Air Force."

After the settlement, Matlovich continued to fight for gay rights. He ran for public office, lectured, counseled gay men and women on their rights, and founded organizations such as the Matlovich Foundation and the Never Forget Foundation to fight for the rights of gays and lesbians. He was also deeply committed to the fight against racism. In fact, his experiences in the military as a lecturer about equal rights had spurred him into making his decision to come out.

Matlovich was a very devout man. During his tour of duty in Vietnam, Matlovich converted from Catholicism to Mormonism and eventually became a minister. When he publicly came out, the Church of Latter Day Saints took him to an ecclesiastical court and eventually expelled him from the church.

With the money that he received in the settlement, Matlovich started a small restaurant whose specialty was pizza in Guerneville, Ca., but he quickly tired of being a restaurateur and sold it “as soon as I could make some money on my investment”.

In September 1986, he was diagnosed with AIDS. Though he had been a long-term San Francisco resident, he finally decided to move to Hollywood in April 1988 because the hills of San Francisco were too much for him to navigate in his deteriorating condition. Less than two months later, on Wednesday, June 22, 1988, he died of AIDS in the home of a friend who was caring for him.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of correspondence, subject files, legal documents, photographs and personal mementos. The bulk of the collection is comprised of correspondence. The first series, for example, is correspondence from 1975 which he received after his story hit the national media. He arranged this incoming mail by the state or country of origin. His replies are filed with the letter to which he was responding.

The second series is general correspondence in from 1961-1987. The arrangement is chronological. It should be noted that Matlovich had imposed no order on the vast majority of his personal papers. Therefore, the order found here has been imposed by the GLHS staff member who arranged the collection.

The third series is also correspondence, but this series has been arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and thereunder chronologically. Again, the arrangement was imposed by the staff member who processed the collection. The fourth series relates to his legal battle with the Air Force and includes copies of the various motions, briefs, orders, etc. The fifth series is a subject series. Again, the order found here was imposed, as Matlovich had kept these materials in no discernible order.

The sixth series is comprised of photographs of Matlovich, his friends, and his family.

The seventh series contains audiotapes as well as videotapes, including a copy of the made for television movie Sgt. Matlovich vs. the United States Air Force.

Series eight consists of newspaper clippings arranged chronologically. The bulk of these are from October through December 1975.

The final series is comprised of mementos, including the shrapnel removed from him after a land mine explosion in Vietnam, various military medals and awards, t-shirts, buttons, etc.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Gay men
Veterans

Series I : Correspondence 1975

Box 1, Folder 1  
Correspondence 1975 [Alabama]
Folder 2  
______, [Arizona]
Folder 3  
______, California [1 of 2]
Folder 4  
______, California [2 of 2]
Series I : Correspondence 1975

Folder 5 ______, Colorado
Folder 6 ______, Connecticut
Folder 7 ______, Delaware
Folder 8 ______, Florida
Folder 9 ______, Georgia
Folder 10 ______, Hawaii
Folder 11 ______, Idaho
Folder 12 ______, Illinois
Folder 13 ______, Indiana
Folder 14 ______, Iowa
Folder 15 ______, Kansas
Folder 16 ______, Kentucky
Folder 17 ______, Louisiana
Folder 18 ______, Maine
Folder 19 ______, Maryland
Folder 20 ______, Massachusetts
Folder 21 ______, Michigan
Folder 22 ______, Minnesota
Folder 23 ______, Mississippi
Folder 24 ______, Missouri
Folder 25 ______, Nebraska
Folder 26 ______, Nevada
Folder 27 ______, New Hampshire
Folder 28 ______, New Jersey
Folder 29 ______, New Mexico
Folder 30 ______, New York [1 of 2]
Folder 31 ______, New York [2 of 2]
Folder 32 ______, North Carolina
Folder 33 ______, North Dakota
Folder 34 ______, Ohio
Folder 35 ______, Oklahoma
Folder 36 ______, Oregon
Folder 37 ______, Pennsylvania
Folder 38 ______, Rhode Island
Folder 39 ______, South Carolina
Folder 40 ______, South Dakota
Folder 41 ______, Tennessee
Folder 42 ______, Texas
Folder 43 ______, Vermont
Folder 44 ______, Virginia
Folder 45 ______, Washington [State]
Folder 46 ______, Washington, D.C.
Folder 47 ______, West Virginia
Folder 48 ______, Wisconsin
Folder 49 ______, Canada
Folder 50 ______, Germany and Foreign
Folder 51 ______, [Address]

Series II : Correspondence In, 1961-1987

Box 1, Folder 52 Correspondence In, 1961-1974
Folder 53 ______, 1975
Folder 54 ______, 1976
Folder 55 ______, 1977
Folder 56 ______, January 1978 - July 1978
Folder 57 ______, August 1978
Folder 58 ______, September 1978
Folder 59 ______, October 1978
Folder 60 ______, November 1978
Folder 61  , 1 December 1978-15 December 1978
Folder 62  , 16 December 1978-31 December 1978
Folder 63  , January 1979 - February 1979
Folder 64  , March 1979 - April 1979
Folder 65  , May 1979 - November 1979
Folder 66  , December 1979
Folder 67  , January 1980 - September 1980
Folder 68  , October 1980
Folder 69  , November 1980
Folder 70  , 1 December 1980-15 December 1980
Folder 71  , 16 December 1980-31 December 1980

Folder 72  , 1981
Folder 73  , 1982-1987
Folder 74  , Undated and/or Unidentified, A-M
Folder 75  , Undated and/or Unidentified, N-Z

Box 2, Folder 1  Correspondence In, 1981
Folder 2  , 1982-1987
Folder 3  , Undated and/or Unidentified, A-M
Folder 4  , Undated and/or Unidentified, N-Z

Box 2, Folder 5  Correspondence In, Allen, Joseph
Folder 6  , Alvarez, Manuel
Folder 7  , Anelli, Joe G.
Folder 8  , Betty (Aunt)
Folder 9  , Biggs, Tim R.
Folder 10  , Bill and Roger
Folder 11  , Blair, Fred
Folder 12  , Boley, Gary
Folder 13  , Comer, Jack
Folder 14  , Harvey, Patrick
Folder 15  , Kameny, Franklin E.
Folder 16  , LeBeau, Lee
Folder 17  , Meek, Ardolt
Folder 18  , Montana, Lee
Folder 19  , Page, Joe
Folder 20  , Peterson, Alan
Folder 21  , Platt-Rayfield, McLellan (aka Maqu4es)
Folder 22  , Puryear, Mike
Folder 23  , Rappoport, Stephen S.
Folder 24  , Rivenberg, Russ
Folder 25  , Rumbarger, Jim
Folder 26  , Sevier, Al
Folder 27  , Smith, C.R. (Joe)
Folder 28  , Sullivan, Norman
Folder 29  , Timmie, Dave and Matthew
Folder 30  , Van Hook, Steve

Box 2, Folder 31  Air Force Case, Your Letter 6 Mar 75, Capt Collins 10 Mar 75
Folder 32  , [Your Letter 6 March 75 Lt. Col. Ritchie 13 March 75]
Folder 33  , [Your Letter 6 Mar 75 Col. Thorgersen 14 Mar 75]
Folder 34  , [Your Letter 6 Mar 75 Gen. Dixon 14 Mar 75]
Folder 35  , [Letter of Notification Lt. Col. Ritchie 20 May 75 Discharge]
Folder 36  , Request for Delay in Commenting on Referral Airman Performance. Reploy to Lt. Col. Schofield 3 June 75
Folder 37  , Rebuttal to Referral Airman's Performance Report 10 Jun 75
Folder 38  , 1st Endorsing Official Referral Airman Performance Report Lt. Col. Schofield
Folder 39  , Rebuttal to 1st Endorsing Official Referral Airman Performance Report 20 June 75
Folder 40  , Answer to Request for Delay AFM 39-12 Board Proceedings 21 July 75
Folder 41  , Message from Secretary of Air Force 21 Oct 75
| Folder 42 | ______, Request for Delay in Discharge 21 Oct 75 |
| Folder 43 | ______, Consideration for Promotion Lt. Col. Ritchie 1 Apr 75 |
| Folder 44 | ______, Notice of Amended Hearing Date Lt. Col. Applegate 16 Jul 75 |
| Folder 45 | ______, [Discharge Orders] |
| Folder 46 | ______, [Air Force Board of Corrections] |
| Folder 47 | ______, [Letter of Notification] |
| Folder 48 | ______, [Boggan Letters] |
| Folder 49 | ______, [Commander's Report, Addendum to Letter of Notification] |
| Folder 50 | ______, [Airman Performance Report] |
| Folder 51 | ______, [Sgt. Performance Report] |
| Folder 52 | ______, [Declaration, Defendants, Submission] |
| Folder 53 | ______, [Military Leave] |
| Folder 54 | ______, letter [August 6, 1975] |
| Folder 55 | ______, letter 22 October 1975 |
| Folder 56 | ______, [Brief] |
| Folder 57 | ______, [Briefs, Statements, Memoranda] |
| Folder 58 | ______, [Opinion] |
| Folder 59 | Air Force Case, [Appeals, Correspondence, Reports] |
| Folder 60 | ______, [Denial of Promotion] |
| Folder 61 | ______, [Appendix] |
| Folder 62 | ______, [National Veterans Law Center 1979] |
| Folder 63 | ______, [September 9, 1980 Hearing] |
| Folder 64 | ______, [Settlement] |
| Folder 65 | ______, Misc. 1980 |
| Folder 66 | ______, [Federal Register] |

Series V : Subject Files

| Box 2, Folder 67 | A.C.L.U. |
| Folder 68 | "Airboy" Comic Book, Signed |
| Folder 69 | Air Force - Early Documents and Materials |
| Folder 70 | ______, Certificate from U.S.A.F. extension class correspondence |
| Folder 71 | ______, Security Clearance |
| Folder 72 | Anti-gay Religious Pamphlets and Flyers |
| Folder 73 | Awards, Honors, etc. |
| Folder 74 | Bartending Certificate and Union Card |
| Folder 75 | Birth Certificate |
| Folder 76 | Boggan and Thom : Attorneys |
| Folder 77 | Coming Home Hospice - Certificate of Appreciation |
| Folder 78 | Complaints re: Al Sevier |
| Folder 79 | Coors |
| Folder 80 | Dade County - Anti-gay Materials |
| Folder 81 | ______, "Pro-Homo" |
| Folder 82 | ______, Notes for Speeches |
| Folder 83 | ______, Defense Race Relations Institute Signs and Symbols : Reference Book |
| Folder 84 | Diplomas |
| Folder 85 | Directories - San Francisco 1978 [Golden Gate Business Association, New Directions] |
| Folder 86 | Enlisted Times, clippings, etc. |
| Folder 87 | Genealogy |
| Folder 88 | Greater San Diego Business Association Luncheon |
| Folder 89 | Higher Ground, Inc. - Bylaws, Proposed Activities |
| Folder 90 | "Homosexuality in the Military : A Workshop" |
| Folder 91 | Horoscopes |
| Folder 92 | International Star Registry |
| Folder 93 | Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund |
| Folder 94 | Latter Day Saints |
| Folder 95 | ______, Trial 1979 |
| Folder 96 | ______, Affirmation |
| Folder 97 | ______, Pamphlets |
Series V : Subject Files

Folder 98 Matlovich Foundation
Folder 99 _____, Yellow Star and Pink Triangle
Folder 100 Memorabilia - Miscellaneous
Folder 101 Miller, Merle
Folder 102 Misc. Gay Leaflets and Pamphlets
Folder 103 Never Forget
Folder 104 New Line Presentations [1 of 2]
Folder 105 _____, [2 of 2]
Folder 106 New York (Troy) - Anti-Discrimination Law
Folder 107 New York Times : Abstracts of Articles
Folder 108 News Releases
Folder 109 No on Prop. 6 - Texas Fundraising
Folder 110 Passport
Folder 111 Pizza Recipe
Folder 112 Property - Okaloosa County, Florida
Folder 113 Purple Heart Certificate
Folder 114 Race Relations Materials
Folder 115 Release - Henry Walker, Inc. 1977
Folder 116 Resume Materials

Box 3, Folder 1 Right Wing Letters : Kennedy Assasination, addressed to Hubert Humphrey
Folder 2 Ring-Ting-A-Ling Productions, Inc.
Folder 3 Russian River Property [Guerneville, Calif.]
Folder 4 _____, Advertisments
Folder 6 Scrapbook (Military Career)
Folder 7 Sevier, Al
Folder 8 Sodomy Case : U.S. vs. Reginald S. Scoby, Private, U.S. Army
Folder 9 Sonoma County - Human Service Commission
Folder 10 _____, Revenue Sharing 1982
Folder 11 Speaking Engagements
Folder 12 _____, Philadelphia
Folder 13 Supervisors Race [San Francisco]
Folder 14 The Times Magazine, February 20, 1978
Folder 15 Time, September 8, 1975 - Cover Story
Folder 16 Tommorow Entertainment, Inc.
Folder 17 Tommorow Entertainment, Inc. Sergeant Matlovich vs. the U.S. Air Force (Script)
  9/10/76
Folder 18 _____, 1/10/77
Folder 19 Tommorow Entertainment, Inc. Sergeant Matlovich vs. the U.S. Air Force (Script)
  2/16/77
Folder 20 Veterans Administration

Series VI: Photographs

Box 3, Folder 21 Photographs of LM
Folder 22 _____, LM's Family Members
Folder 23 _____, LM with Family Members
Folder 24 _____, LM's Friends
Folder 25 _____, LM with Friends
Folder 26 _____, High School
Folder 27 _____, Military
Folder 28 _____, Pets
Folder 29 _____, Political Speeches
Folder 30 _____, Residences
Folder 31 _____, Scrapbooks
Folder 32 _____, Vacation
Folder 33 _____, Negatives
Folder 34 _____, Slides

Series VII: Audiotapes and Videotapes
Box 3, Folder 35

* The Tommorrow Show, 1 Dec. 80
* Sergeant Matlovich vs. the U.S. Air Force

Folder 36

Tapes:

- 3-3 mm reel-to-reel audiotapes
- 1 cassette: "History of Racism"
- 2 cassettes: BACABI May 12, Rally, Parts 1 & 2
- 1 cassette: unidentified
- 1 cassette: Matlovich Notes, 4/28/88

Series VIII: Newspaper Clippings

Additional Note

* Files hold oversized items from other parts of the collection

Box 4, Folder 1

Newspaper Clippings, pre-1975

Folder 2

_____ , January - September 1975
Folder 3

_____ , October - December 1975
Folder 4

_____ , 1976
Folder 5

_____ , 1977
Folder 6

_____ , 1978
Folder 7

_____ , 1979
Folder 8

_____ , 1980
Folder 9

_____ , 1981
Folder 10

_____ , 1982-1988
Folder 11

_____ , Date Unknown

Box *4, Folder 12

Air Force Case [Briefs, Statements, Memoranda] [1 of 2]
Folder 13

_____ , [2 of 2]
Folder 14

_____ , Photocopy of Settlement Check
Folder 15

Awards, Honors, etc.
Folder 16

U.S. Civil Service Commission : Personal Qualifications Statement
Folder 17

Hawthorn Books Contract

Series IX : Mementos, etc.

Additional Note

Because of the odd size and shape of these items, they are housed in two separate locations: Boxes 3 and 4.

Box 3

AC 66 Leaders Patch
Bronze Star
Dog Tags
Pendants
34 Patch
Rosary Beads
Buddha Figurine
Bracelet: "Mat"
Bracelet: "Len Matlovich"
Political Buttons
T-shirt: *Time Cover*
T-shirt: Fighting for Our Lives!
Shrapnel

Box 4

Tambourine