



The Pride of a Movement

Forty years ago, in the early morning of June 28, 1969, gay men and lesbians, drag queens and transgender people in Greenwich Village, New York, rose up and said “No more!” to police brutality, harassment and discrimination. Their rebellion, powerful and historic, is celebrated every year as an inspiring turning point in our movement. People came out into the streets that day to demand equality. Soon after, we went to courts, legislatures and our communities and continued demanding respect and equality under the law. A broad movement emerged, and Lambda Legal opened its doors four years later.

We have made enormous changes in 40 years. In 1969, there were sodomy laws in well over half of all states that made us criminals just for expressing our sexuality; now, after Lambda Legal’s historic U.S. Supreme Court victory in *Lawrence v. Texas*, there are no state sodomy laws. In 1969, there was not a single state law protecting LGBT people against discrimination; now there are 20 states plus the District of Columbia with laws expressly prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, 12 of which also expressly cover gender-identity discrimination. And in 1969, no one even talked about marriage or legal recognition for same-sex couples and their families; today same-sex couples can get married in four states (by the end of the summer, there may be more!) and other laws recognizing and protecting our relationships exist in nine others across the nation.

In April, marriage equality came to the heart of America as a unanimous Iowa Supreme Court struck down the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage in Lambda Legal’s case, *Varnum v. Brien*. Rapid progress followed as Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire passed marriage equality laws within weeks. History is moving forward quickly. But LGBT people and people with

HIV are still excluded from marriage, equal employment, safe schools, decent health care and equal protection under the law in states around the country. That’s not acceptable, and we won’t stop fighting until we achieve full civil rights for everyone.

Pride celebrations are a birthday party for our movement and they give us a chance to look back so we can gain energy and inspiration for the work ahead. Lambda Legal staff and volunteers join hundreds of thousands of others in more than 30 cities and towns around the country to march in parades, distribute information and enjoy the celebration of our movement and our community.

At Lambda Legal, we have the determination to continue winning civil rights and legal protections for gay men and lesbians, bisexual and transgender people and people with HIV — and the pride that goes along with it.

KEVIN M. CATHCART
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR