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Perrinh Savang April 17, 2013

Making Spaces: Gay and Lesbian Student Activism at Emory University (1972-1988)

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Abstract

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In this project, I explore how gay and lesbian activism changed at Emory University between 1972 and 1988. In 1972, gay activism officially came to the University when students formed the Gay Liberation Committee (GLC), the first gay and lesbian group on campus. A decade later in 1988, Emory passed its first policy that addressed gay and lesbian needs. Known as the Statement on Discriminatory Harassment, the policy included "sexual orientation" among its list of identities that warranted official university protection. These two events reflected the general trend that gay and lesbian activism followed throughout the 1970s and 1980s: activism moved from recognition-based advocacy to one that was more policy-oriented. With the creation of the GLC, students attempted to bring gay and lesbian issues to the forefront in a way that promoted the recognition of sexual minorities on campus. Toward the end of the eighties, activists wanted more than just recognition; they wanted the University to commit fully to gay and lesbian issues by providing them with appropriate protective policies and resources on campus. Both events were milestones that eventually propelled Emory into the 1990s, forming the basis for later major events such as the creation of the Office of LGBT Life in 1991 and the March protesting the Thomas Hall kiss in 1992.

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Introduction

On December 17, 1991, Alfred Hilderbrand and Michael Norris sat nervously in the kitchen of Thomas Hall, a dorm at Emory University, as a group of fellow students passed by shouting, "Die faggots…You'll burn in Hell." [1] In an interview he gave to the *Southern Voice*, Norris noted, "We had been holding hands while we studied…Alfred said something funny, and I leaned over and kissed him. Lightly."[2] The pandemonium of verbal abuse and ridicule that followed eventually led to a campus wide protest on March 2, 1992. Abhorring the maltreatment of gays and lesbians at Emory and the administration's minimal attempts to protect them, students from across the university gathered outside the administration building demanding that President James T. Laney implement stricter policies that would more adequately prevent such discrimination and harassment. Administrators agreed and began actively engaging with the rest of the University community to build a more welcoming environment for gays and lesbians.[3]

Because of the student body's fervent support and the slew of beneficial policies that came from this event, many consider the 1992 march the cornerstone of gay and lesbian activism at Emory.[4] In addition to the creation of the President's Commission on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) Concerns, the protest also led to the hiring of a full time director for the University's Office of LGB Life as well as the inclusion of the term "sexual orientation" in Emory's Equal Opportunity Policy in 1993.[5] With these initial first steps paving the way, LGB success continued with the creation of the safe space program in 1994 and the implementation of

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[1] K.C. Wildmoon, "Emory Students Protest Anti-Gay Harassment," *Southern Voice*, March 12-18, 1992, 1 and 3.
[2] Ibid.
[3] "History," accessed February 14, 2013, http://www.lgbt.emory.edu/about/history.html.
[4] Ibid.
[5] "New Committee Will Follow Up Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Concerns," *The Emory Report,* October 19, 1992, and "Trustees Include Sexual Orientation in EOP Statement," *The Emory Report,* August 27, 1993.

domestic partnership benefits in 1996.[6] Toward the latter end of the 1990s and into the following decade, transgender issues were brought to the forefront, and policies were changed to be more inclusive of non gender-normative identities and expressions. LGB organizations, for example, officially recognized "transgender" and became LGB*T* organizations.[7] By implementing these changes and committing itself to sexual and gender diversity, Emory soon became a safe haven for LGBT people, hosting various queer-friendly activities and fostering queer-related, intellectual pursuits.

Although this narrative of continuous success makes gay and lesbian history visible, it takes attention away from past moments of struggle, which are important in defining a history. Despite its significance, the 1992 march did not mark the beginning of gay and lesbian activism at Emory. Rather, that history began much earlier. In order to complicate the current narrative, I present a history of gay and lesbian activism that extends back two decades before 1990. Specifically, I examine the period between 1972 when the first gay student organization appeared at Emory and 1988 when President Laney implemented the Statement on Discriminatory Harassment, the first policy at Emory to offer any type of protection for gays and lesbians.[8]

Between 1972 and 1988, the gay and lesbian movement at Emory changed drastically partially in response to the national movement and partially to the needs of the University community. In the seventies and early eighties, the movement started as an attempt to reeducate the University about the misconceptions of gay and lesbian identities and to promote them as a legitimate minority group. By the mid-eighties, however, the movement sought more than just

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[6] Saralyn Chesnut, "The Office of LGBT Life Newsletter," *Out of Bounds*, Spring (1994): 1, and "Domestic Partners Get Emory Benefits," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 28, 1995.
[7] Minutes of the President's Commission on LGB(T) Concerns, 1998, box 3, folder 1, Office of LGBT Life Records, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University.

minority recognition. It wanted to eliminate AIDS stigma, which had grown dramatically in the eighties, and to persuade the University to implement policies that would protect gays and lesbians from discrimination and harassment. This move from recognition to policy protections defined activism at Emory during this time and was the basis for the movement's accomplishments in the 1990s and 2000s.

Key Terms

One difficulty with presenting a history on the sexual movement is deciding which set of terms to use when describing the movement as a whole. Because various terms denoting sexual and gender non-conformists exist—including *gay, lesbian, drag queen, fairy, queer, dyke, transgender, bigender, pansexual*, etc—using one term to describe the movement may leave out whole groups of people who also face sexual oppression. In his book, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement,* Marc Stein overcomes this issue by allowing history to determine which terms he should use. When describing the movement between 1970 and 1990, he uses *gay* and *lesbian* as opposed to other words primarily because activists at the time did not constitute themselves as any other type of identity. "In many components of the movement," he notes, "the terms *gay* and *lesbian* have been seen as inclusively incorporating everyone who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex, regardless of whether they also have cross-sex attractions."[9] Although other sexual identities existed in the seventies and eighties, activists often lumped them together with *gay* and *lesbian,* attempting to form a more cohesive movement.

For this project, I take Stein's approach and use the terms *gay* and *lesbian* to describe the movement and the community of non-heteronormative individuals. Although the University has, since the 1990s, adopted *LGBT* as the appropriate acronym to describe this group of non-heteronormative individuals, I use *gay* and *lesbian* specifically to reflect the ways in which the majority of activists defined the movement before the 1990s. However, I do use other identity terms when the records mention them specifically.

Additionally, I only address the gay and lesbian movement as it happened on the University's campus in Atlanta. I mention the involvement of other University colleges such as

[9] Marc Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 7.

the Laney Graduate School to the extent that they impacted the undergraduate college. Furthermore, the bulk of the project focuses on the work of student activists. Although gay faculty and staff were present on campus, many were not comfortable coming out or revealing their gay and lesbian identities to the greater University community. As the archives suggest, faculty and staff feared losing their jobs, and thus were not as willing as students to take part in activist pursuits.

Chapter One
The 1970s: Gay Liberation and Sexual Minorities

Part I: Seventies Activism and The Gay Liberation Committee

At the turn of the 1970s, Emory was coming out of a turbulent decade, one which had been defined by a degree of activism and political unrest.[10] By this time, the university had already experienced an array of political movements that had deeply impacted its student body. Pressured by civil rights activists in 1961, Emory lifted its policy on segregation and became the first private university in Georgia to admit black students.[11] Additionally, throughout the late 1960s, Emory experienced waves of anti-war protests when students actively petitioned and marched against the draft and the Nixon Administration's use of chemical warfare in Vietnam.[12] These movements along with second-wave feminism and black power encouraged students to think more critically about the disparities and discriminations that were inherent within American social structures. Such ideas served as the basis for critical change at Emory and nurtured an environment wrought with activist pursuits and political fervor.

Influenced by the activist-driven environment, the gay and lesbian movement started at Emory in 1972 when a group of 15 students gathered to discuss the realities of gay life within a society that still claimed homosexuality as a pathological state.[13] To reflect the values of the much larger gay and lesbian movement, the group called itself the Gay Liberation Committee

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[10] Kathie D. Williams, "Louisville's Lesbian Feminist Union," in *Carryin' on in the Lesbian and Gay South*, ed. John Howard (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 224.
[11] See Gary S. Hauk, *A Legacy of Heart and Mind: Emory Since 1836*, (Bookhouse Group, Inc, 1999) and William Turner, "The Racial Integration of Emory University: Ben F. Johnson, Jr., and the Humanity of Law," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, August 15, 2007), http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1007261.
[12] For a better sense of the Vietnam War's influence on campus, see *The Emory Wheel* ~1965-1974. Specific articles include "Students Disapprove Vietnam Policy," *The Emory Wheel*, December 8, 1966, 5 and Larry Weisblatt, "Demonstrators Call for Vietnam Peace," *The Emory Wheel*, April, 27, 1967, 3.
[13] "Gay Liberation," *The Emory New Times*, September 29, 1972, 8.

(GLC) after the mainstream organization, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF).[14] Like the GLF and other national gay liberation organizations, the GLC advocated for complete liberation from heteronormativity, masculine men, feminine women, and other oppressive norms that restricted the ways individuals could act. As GLC co-founder Lendon Sadler noted in an interview for *The Emory New Times*, "[Gay Liberation] is talking about a total assault. It's…about getting together with many different forces…to change this society and what this society makes us."[15] Unlike the civil rights movement, which relied on the power of minorities to overcome unequal institutional polices, gay liberation focused instead on challenging conventional heterosexual norms and changing the very attitudes that fostered sexual discrimination.[16] "Gayness and Gay Liberation," according to GLC member John Dale, "Is a level of human consciousness in which people relate to people as people."[17] "Rather than a lack of sexual preference," continued member Alan Handleman, "Gay liberation simply represents a freedom of sexual preference. If people choose to diverge from (what society dictates) they should be perfectly free to diverge."[18] For these students, gay liberation was not necessarily a struggle of minorities, but rather a coalition of all people fighting against society's oppression of sexual freedom. Gay liberation was not a movement for just gays and lesbians, but for every individual restricted by sexual norms.

This understanding of the inherent oppressions found within societal norms was influential for gay liberationists at Emory and aligned them closely with the ideologies of other movements of the sixties and early seventies. Dale noted, "Women's Liberation, Gay Liberation, Blacks are very much alike: chick equals nigger equals queer. And I think that we are all fighting

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[14] "Another Gaze at the Gays," *The Emory New Times*, October, 6, 1972, 3.
[15] "Gay Liberation," 8.
[16] Barry D. Adam, *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995) 84.
[17] "Gay Liberation," 1.
[18] Ibid., 8.

the same kind of oppression and that we all want basically the same thing."[19] Historian John D'Emilio analyzes this idea of shared oppression when he points to the gay liberationist notion of anti-establishment, or the concept that constructed norms needed to be overcome in order to live in a freer, less restrictive society.[20] Like Women's Liberation and the Black Power movement, these gay activists sought to dismantle the normative forces present in society that valued certain types of identities—monogamous heterosexuality in the case of liberationists—over others. For these activists at Emory, other social movements provided an essential framework to conceptualize their purpose in the midst of social change.

The movement, though primarily based on overcoming social structures, was also predicated on the concept of the sexual *other*. Sadler emphasized this point in his response to the question, "Are most of [GLC] members homosexual?"[21] He answered, "Who else realizes the oppression…Who's going to fight for gay people. Nobody but gay people."[22] In his statement, Sadler noted the lack of participation among those who did not identify as gay. These people were part of the heterosexual norm and formed the standard by which gays and lesbians were marginalized as the *other*. Through this marginalization, gays and lesbians were forced to occupy a space apart from heterosexuals and, in the process, became sexual minorities, individuals who did not belong to the straight majority. For gay liberationists, their shared status as sexual minorities led to a sense of community and subsequently enshrouded the movement in identity politics.

Identity politics was the defining factor that interwove gay liberation with other identity-based movements such as feminism and black power. Individuals in these movements turned the

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[19] Ibid., 8.
[20] John D'Emilio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
[21] "Gay Liberation," 8.
[22] Ibid.

personal into the political, forming groups based on a set of shared experiences and an oppressed identity. Gay Liberationist Martha Shelley best exemplified identity politics in *Out of the Closets* when she wrote, "What I do outside of bed may have nothing to do with what I do inside—but my consciousness is branded, is permeated with homosexuality…I have been branded with *your* label for me…When I am observable to the straight world, I become gay."[23] For Shelley, her sexual relationships with women did not inherently determine the type of identity she was required to have; rather, it was society's labeling of her that made Shelly identify as "gay." Only through society's eyes did her personal desires and actions become indicators of her character. These indicators then constructed an identity, which she and other individuals opted to adopt and later form communities around. The activism and political struggles that stemmed from these communities were, therefore, a result of personal endeavors; the personal was the political.

However, identity politics did more than bring identities to the political forefront; it helped individuals form lasting bonds and empowered them to take action. Kimberle Crenshaw elucidates this aspect of identity politics when she describes the movement surrounding violence against women. "Drawing from the strength of shared experience," she notes, "women have recognized that the political demands of millions speak more powerfully than the pleas of a few isolated voices…For all African Americans, other people of color, and gays and lesbians, among others, identity-based politics has been a source of strength, community, and intellectual development."[24] In this quote, Crenshaw demonstrates that being able to interact with other individuals who share similar experiences encourages group members to understand more fully the ways in which their identities can impact their everyday lives. Because individuals no longer

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[23] Martha Shelley, "Gay Is Good," in *Out of the Closets*, eds. Karla Jay and Allen Young (New York: New York University Press, 1992) 31.
[24] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1, 1991): 1241-1242.

feel isolated and are more aware of their oppressions, they become empowered to take charge and create change.

At Emory, the GLC used identity politics as a platform to advocate for social change. Most notably, the organization expressed the notion that "Gay Is Good," a slogan that defined much of the national gay liberation movement throughout the seventies.[25] An offshoot of "Black Is Beautiful," "Gay Is Good" sought to change the image of the deviant and self-deprecating homosexual to one of strength and pride.[26] Dale hinted at this slogan when he noted the goals of the organization: "[GLC] has a three-fold purpose. First of all, to develop gay people themselves: help gay people come together and love themselves more as gay people. Secondly, to re-educate the non-gay community—to tell them what gayness is and how gay people are...And thirdly, to provide a place where gay people can come…where you can go and be openly gay."[27] The goals of the GLC pointed to the type of change gay liberationists at Emory sought. Before any other type of progress could be made, activists wanted gays and lesbians to respect themselves and accept their statuses, first and foremost, as sexual minorities who deserved acceptance from the heteronormative community. Gays and lesbians, they advocated, should embrace their sexual identities and start to explore their sexual desires more openly. Only after they could value themselves as individuals could they then work to spread tolerance and educate the campus. By organizing social activities like dinner parties and gay dances, the GLC created spaces where members could find value in themselves.[28] By allowing members to interact with each other, the group promoted the wellbeing of gays and lesbians and celebrated their unique desires.

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[25] James Darsey, "From 'Gay Is Good' to the Scourge of AIDS: The Evolution of Gay Liberation Rhetoric, 1977-1990," *Communication Studies* 42, no. 1 (1991): 301.
[26] Ibid.
[27] "Gay Liberation," 8.
[28] For list of activities, see "Gay Liberation," 8 and Bob Morris, "Gay Lib Organizes, Requests Charter," *The Emory New Times*, October 27, 1972, 1.

Activism with regard to identity politics, however, can also be challenging because it calls for some degree of visibility. For gays and lesbians, this visibility often means coming out. According to historian Marc Stein, gay activists in the early 1970s changed the meaning of the term coming out to fit a larger, more political cause. Before, coming out merely meant revealing one's gay identity to others within the gay community.[29] In the sixties and seventies, however, the term came to mean much more. Coming out implied not only having an acceptance and appreciation for one's own sexual identity, but also having enough courage to show and tell anyone and everyone who asked.[30] Because sexual identities were not always as obvious as racial or gender identities, liberationists encouraged all gay men and lesbians to come out in order to show the world that people with non-heteronormative sexual desires existed and were willing to fight against sexual oppression.

Student activists at Emory wholeheartedly adopted this strategy of coming out, noting its importance in creating visibility. In the *New Times* article, for example, students mentioned the importance of their own coming out, and how doing so gave them a better understanding of their own identities. With this understanding, they became more motivated to educate others on campus about the dangers of sexual oppression and discrimination.[31] Yet, coming out brought about its own set of challenges and was not necessarily the most effective or practical strategy for students at the time. According to D'Emilio, coming out in the seventies might actually have hindered social progress. On the one hand, coming out presented an image of strength, a visibility that allowed people with similar identities to find each other, come together, and form communities. On the other hand, coming out exposed individuals to serious consequences and

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[29] George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 115.
[30] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 22.
[31] "Another Gaze at the Gays," 1.

discrimination that could have hindered their status within society. At Emory, the necessity to come out pressured students who were not yet comfortable with themselves to reveal an identity that would make them more open and, thus, more prone to harassment.[32] Additionally, many feared being disowned by their parents.[33] Due to these fear, only a small number of individuals (around fifteen) actually joined the GLC, despite its purpose in eliminating oppressive sexual norms.[34] Without students willing to participate, the GLC dissolved after only a year of activity.

A lack of members was not the only cause of the GLC's downfall. In the winter of 1972, GLC members applied for a charter from the University's Student Government Association (SGA).[35] If granted, the charter would recognize the GLC as an official campus group and allow members to use university facilities for meetings and to request funds for activities and programs. Although GLC members took the steps necessary to apply for a charter—even successfully securing philosophy professor William Edwards to serve as their faculty adviser—they nevertheless encountered some opposition from the student body.[36] In a two-part article for *The Emory New Times*, undergraduate student Tim Warfel wrote about the destructive and negative influences that granting a charter to the GLC would bring: "I am opposed to an organization whose chief or only goal is the advancement of homosexuality at Emory…No one should prevent any individuals from performing unnatural acts if they desire them. But an organization which encourages the spread of these acts by seeking to legitimate or normalize them goes beyond noninterference."[37] According to Warfel, homosexuality was tolerable as long as it was not talked about publicly or officially supported by the university. Furthermore,

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[32] D'Emilio, *Making Trouble*, 120.
[33] Ibid.
[34] "Gay Liberation," 1.
[35] Morris, "Gay Lib Organizes, Requests Charter," 1.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Tim Warfel, "Isn't Spring Just Gay," *The Emory New Times*, 1972, 8.

organizations could discuss homosexuality or advocate for sexual freedom, but only when it was not the group's sole focus. Such a focus may "encourage the spread" of homosexuality beyond individual practices. It is unclear whether Warfel's comments led to the GLC's inability to obtain a charter, but as the SGA records show, the group was not on the list of approved chartered organizations in 1972 or 1973.[38] Coupled with the graduation of many of its core members, the GLC's lack of approval from SGA pushed the organization to dissolve by the end of 1973.[39]

Part II: Emory and Atlanta in the Early Seventies

Despite the presence of various social movements on campus and their push to break past constructed norms, the environment at Emory regarding gays and lesbians in the seventies was progressed slowly, and attitudes remained mixed. These mixed sentiments, which fostered the end of the GLC, are better described by Tim Warfel in the second part of his *New Times* article series on gay liberation at Emory. He noted, "There should be no societal intervention to encourage homosexuality. Emory should not charter or fund Gay Liberation before we know what [homosexuality] is."[40] The important notion to take away here is Warfel's confusion over what homosexuality was in context with normative sexuality. Warfel's unwillingness to have a gay organization on campus is perhaps a result of his inability to reconcile the liberationist position on homosexuality with other more prominent viewpoints. Although liberationist conceptions of gays and lesbians as healthy and worthy individuals may have been valid, the idea that homosexuals were deviant was still a prevalent sentiment among community members and professionals alike. Because debate over homosexuality was so widespread, no one knew who

[38] Charters and Constitutions, 1972-1973, box 24, folder 3, Student Government Association Records, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University.
[39] Ray Warner, "Gay Conference Triggers Emory Organization Talks," *The Emory Wheel*, May, 1973.
[40] Warfel, "Charter Rights Questioned," 8.

was right or wrong or what homosexuality really was. Was it moral or immoral? A pathological state or a normal way of being? Would allowing a gay organization on campus promote deviant behavior? Warfel's confusion reflected the mixed attitudes university members shared regarding homosexuality at the time.[41] Despite the radicalism of the sixties and the increasing visibility of sexual minorities on campus, Emory was not completely supportive of gays and lesbians in the seventies nor was it entirely willing to work with gay activists to change institutional practices.[42]

The existence of these mixed attitudes at Emory, though seemingly contradictory to the radically progressive ideologies that characterized much of the seventies, made sense with respect to the short amount of time the University was exposed to mainstream gay liberation. Major events like the 1969 Stonewall protests in New York, and the concomitant formation of vibrant gay spaces in Atlanta, for example, were relatively recent, having occurred only a few years before the GLC appeared at Emory in 1972. Even in 1976, seven years after Stonewall, former graduate student Gerald Lowrey notes how unaware students at Emory were that the event occurred.[43] Considered a historic show of rebellion against institutional oppression, the Stonewall marked what many consider the beginning of the gay liberation movement. Michael Denney writes, "[Stonewall] unleashed a vast reconstitution of gay society: gay bars, baths, bookstores, and restaurants opened. Gay softball teams, newspapers, political organizations, and choruses proliferated [in cities]…a new community came into being in an astonishingly short period of time."[44] Because Stonewall was still relatively recent in the early seventies when gay liberation first appeared at Emory, those who were not affected by the event did not necessarily

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[41] For more information, see "Gay Liberation," "Another Gaze at the Gays," and "Gay Lib Organizes, Requests Charter."
[42] Robert Aldrich, "Gays Ask Acceptance, Not Sympathy," *The Emory New Times,* April, 1974, 4.
[43] Gerald Lowrey, interview by Perrinh Savang, Atlanta, GA, January 28, 2013.
[44] Michael Denneny, "Chasing the Crossover Audience and Other Self-Defeating Strategies," *Outl/look* 1:4 (Winter 1989): 18.

understand its significance. Although today, many see Stonewall as the cornerstone of the modern gay movement, the mainstream public did not begin to understand its significance until much later in the seventies and early eighties when gay and lesbian activists held annual marches commemorating the event.[45] Instead, conceptions of homosexuality as deviant or perverted, which were prominent in the early to mid-twentieth century, continued to influence Emory's campus, especially into the early seventies.

Furthermore, Atlanta's vibrant gay scene, which fostered gay and lesbian communities, had really begun to form only after the Stonewall riots in 1969. Bars like Club Centaur and The Sweet Gum Head, which catered specifically to gay men and lesbians, opened their doors in 1970 and 1971, respectively, and became popular sites for live bands and outrageous drag shows.[46] Commenting on the club's sexually liberated atmosphere, one visitor noted, "The crowds are younger, freakier, louder, hipper and a lot more fun to be with than what you might have imagined—Atlanta's coming out, to say the least!"[47] Moreover, newspapers and magazines that focused on gay issues also began to circulate. Publications like the *Atlanta Barb* and *Cruise* provided readers with up-to-date information on the "changing landscape of gay nightlife" and addressed the activism and political environment of the city.[48] In 1971, gay liberation activism officially came to Atlanta when Berl Boykin and other activists formed a local chapter of the Gay Liberation Front.[49] Soon, activism spread to colleges throughout Georgia including Georgia State University, the University of Georgia, and the Georgia Institute of Technology.[50]

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[45] D'Emilio, "Making Trouble," 115.
[46] Wesley Chenault and Stacy Braukman, *Gay and Lesbian Atlanta* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 62 and 88.
[47] Ibid., 62.
[48] Ibid., 70-71.
[49] Ibid., 52.
[50] Ibid., 61.

Although the late sixties and early seventies saw the rise of numerous spaces for sexual minorities, it also saw the divergence of a lesbian subculture. Stein notes, "For gay men, there was an expanding world of sexual cruising, public sex, and male sociability on city streets and in bars…gyms, parks, and theaters…For lesbians, there was an expanding network of bars, clubs, and coffeehouses, a growing number of community centers and support groups, and a larger range of sports activities."[51] Although lesbians participated in gay spaces as well, many saw the need to maintain a subculture distinct from that of their male counterparts. According to lesbian-feminist Marie Robertson, gay men were part of a male-dominated hierarchy and often overlooked the needs of lesbians who faced both sexual and gender discrimination.[52] Lesbians, in other words, needed to band together and fight the unique oppressions they faced living in a patriarchal, heteronormative society. In Atlanta, lesbians formed multiple organizations that supported lesbian-feminist endeavors. Groups like the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance (ALFA), founded in 1972, and the WomanSong Theater, founded in 1974, sponsored activities that explored the lesbian struggle.[53] Additionally, softball leagues like the Lorelei Ladies and the Atlanta Tomboys helped strengthen lesbian relationships and build lesbian communities.[54]

Yet, despite these organizations' attempts to celebrate gay and lesbian identities, homosexuality was still considered by many at Emory and throughout the country as a type of mental disorder.[55] Even among psychiatrists, the battle over how to classify and treat homosexuality was still up for debate. According to Alfred A. Messer, an Atlanta-based psychiatrist who was also a former professor at Emory's medical school, "We psychiatrists don't

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[51] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 118.
[52] Barry D. Adam, *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement, Revised Edition*, 1st ed. (Twayne Publishers, 1995), 99.
[53] Chenault and Braukman, 65 and 66.
[54] *An Oral History of Atlanta's Early Women's Softball Teams*, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3pVISE1aLY&feature=youtube_gdata_player.
[55] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement,* 108.

have the divine method to decide one year that it is abnormal and then the next year that it is normal by a poll or conclave…[I] prefer the label 'disorder' because it is a circumstance that can be treated."[56] Irwin J. Knopf, another local psychiatrist, disagreed, noting, "[I do not regard] homosexuality as a disease per se. It is a form of behavior and doesn't mean that a person is emotionally unstable, crazy, or maladjusted."[57] This disagreement among psychiatrists contributed to the negative attitudes people had toward gays and lesbians. Because homosexuality had been considered a mental disorder for so long, and because even professional psychiatrists could not reach a consensus on how to address it, the APA's declassification did not have an immediate impact on people's perceptions of gays and lesbians. The notion of mental illness continued to prevail, and so did the discrimination and intolerance that stemmed from it.

Due to the recentness of gay-related events in the early seventies and the persistent conceptions of the deviant homosexual, the environment for gays and lesbians at Emory in the 1970s remained generally negative. The campus as a whole had not yet fully grasped the meaning of Stonewall nor felt the influence of Atlanta's increasingly vibrant and celebratory gay scene. Additionally, older, less positive notions of homosexuality continued to impact campus perceptions and, subsequently, contributed to the university's unwillingness to support a gay liberation organization when one appeared in 1972. As one student noted in *The Emory New Times*, many GLC members had a "fear of being identified."[58] They did not want to be associated with the negative stereotypes that came from notions of deviancy. Although the campus was not necessarily hostile toward gays and lesbians, it was still not exactly sure what

[56] Robert Aldrich, "Atlanta Therapists Discuss—Can Homosexuals Adjust?," *The Emory New Times,* May 10, 1974.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Aldrich, "Gays Ask Acceptance, not Sympathy," 4.

homosexuality was. The University could not yet understand homosexuality outside the context of sexual perversion and immorality.

This unwillingness to support and recognize the GLC also speaks to the sense of apathy students and other community members at Emory had toward gay activism in the early seventies.[59] Because the Emory community as a whole did not completely understand what the goals of the gay and lesbian movement were or why such goals were important, it did not necessarily feel obligated to help the GLC take action. The GLC failed partly because the straight, heterosexual community was not personally affected by gay and lesbian discrimination, and partly because gays and lesbians, fearing discrimination, refused to come out. Neither group felt motivated to participate in activist programs or fight for a cause that could have potentially done more harm than good. By the mid-seventies, the gay and lesbian movement at Emory came to a halt; there was no impetus to push for change.

Part III: The Committee on Gay Education

In 1975, gay activism at Emory finally received the boost it needed to maintain a continuing presence on campus when professor, Dr. Stuart Strenger was fired from his post after publicly coming out as gay in a 1975 interview he gave to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (*AJC*).[60] According to *The Emory Wheel*, Strenger, assistant professor and chief psychologist for the Department of Psychiatry in Emory's School of Medicine "has 'no doubts' that his contract is not being renewed because he publicly announced his homosexuality."[61] Though personally rewarding, his decision to come out was a clear sign of what he felt was discrimination and

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ron Taylor, "Gays Find Giving Up Secrecy a Difficult Choice," *The Atlanta Journal Constitution,* May 10, 1975, 1-A.
[61] "ACLU May Sue University for Homosexual Professor," *The Emory Wheel*, February 10, 1976, 1.

intolerance. Strenger sought the help of organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which agreed to represent him legally if he were to file a lawsuit against the university.[62] Eventually, Strenger's story gained recognition when journals like the *Chronicle on Higher Education* and other national and local news sources picked up his case.[63] Despite the media attention and the ACLU's support, however, Strenger decided against legal action, noting that, given the negative atmosphere regarding homosexuality, he faced a losing battle.[64]

Although legally unsuccessful, Strenger's case "raised the issue of a gay person at Emory, or at least a faculty member being openly gay and at that time, [and] the university simply would not tolerate it."[65] It showed the community that gay people existed at Emory, even at the faculty level; that discrimination against gays and lesbians was pertinent on campus; and that the university was generally unsupportive when faced with gay issues. According to Gerald Lowrey, a graduate student in the Institute for Liberal Arts, "When [Strenger] came out, it was like a clap of thunder on campus. There were gay people at Emory in those days, but very…few openly gay people, no one who would be willing to go that far and be open and authentic."[66] Because of this incident and the influence of local gay communities and liberation organizations, which had existed in Atlanta for a moderate number of years up to this point, some students again saw the need for activism on campus. Due to the exposure Emory had to gay and lesbian identities by this time, the university was not completely unaware of their struggles. The need to fight against discrimination was growing, and in May of 1976, Strenger and a few dedicated

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[62] Ibid.
[63] LGBT Alumni Interview, interview by Michael Shutt, Atlanta, GA, Spring 2009.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

students worked together to organize a new gay and lesbian student group at Emory: the Committee on Gay Education (COGE).[67]

Similar to the Gay Liberation Committee, COGE was also committed to fostering gay and lesbian identities at Emory through community building and educational programs. However, COGE shifted its focus slightly from that of its predecessor. As opposed to the liberation of all people from normative sexual conventions, COGE concentrated more on the development of gays and lesbians as distinct sexual minorities.[68] Stein more effectively describes this change in seventies activism when he notes, "The movement after 1973…was less revolutionary in its goals…movement activists increasingly presented themselves as minority rights advocates who practiced interest group politics rather than participants in a sexual liberation movement that wanted to change society as a whole."[69] Although liberationists in the early seventies also formed groups based on the notion of a sexual *other*, their approach, when compared to that of gay activists in the mid-to-late seventies, focused more on the eradication of traditional sexual attitudes as a whole rather than the promotion of gays and lesbians as sexual minorities. In other words, both groups were against normative constructions of sexuality and gender. However, gay liberationists wanted to break down and reorganize completely the institution that perpetuated these constructions, while later activists merely sought to make existing institutions more accepting of a gay and lesbian minority group. [70]

COGE, having been created in 1976, adopted some of the goals and strategies of late-seventies gay activism. For example, as part of its educational efforts, COGE hosted a variety of activities that helped spread awareness about gay and lesbian minorities. Among other programs,

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[67] Ray Warner, "Gay Conference Triggers Emory Organization" *The Emory Wheel*, 1976.
[68] Gerald Lowrey, interview by Perrinh Savang, Atlanta, GA, January, 28, 2013.
[69] Stein, "Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement," 115.
[70] Ibid.

members organized film screenings, led informal discussions, and spoke to classes about homosexuality. One class in particular, psychology professor David Edward's class on the psychology of love, drew a large crowd of students who were curious about the dynamics of same-sex relationships. Reflecting on his experience presenting to Edward's class, Lowrey states, "The thought never crossed [the students'] minds that there would be a way to show endearment other than stereotypical notions. Who plays the woman? Who plays the man? [There were] misinformed, hilarious questions…Just like what do you do? What do two women do?"[71] Even during the organization's early years when ideas of the perverted homosexual were dominant, COGE members managed to present a positive image of gay and lesbian life, informing the community that they too desired and had healthy relationships.

These activities fell in line with COGE's goal of university inclusion. According to *The Emory Wheel*, "The expressed goals of COGE are not only to help people learn and feel more comfortable about their sexuality, but also to present a more positive image of gays to the Emory community."[72] Through its educational activities, COGE not only fostered a sense of community among gays and lesbians, but also legitimized them as part of the greater Emory community. Unlike the GLC, which used liberation rhetoric to emphasize a complete change of Emory's structural norms, COGE advocated, instead, for the inclusion of gays and lesbians into structures that were already present. By presenting "a more positive image" of gays and lesbians, COGE hoped to create a more accepting university environment; gays and lesbians were not diseased or immoral and, therefore, had every right to exist peacefully within the Emory community.

In addition to educating the straight community, COGE was also dedicated to educating gays and lesbians about serious issues within the movement itself. For example, discussions

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[71] Gerald Lowrey, interview by Perrinh Savang, Atlanta, GA, January, 28, 2013.
[72] Elizabeth Coe, "COGE Meets to Face problems of Sexuality," *The Emory Wheel*, 1979.

focused on different aspects of gay life including coming out and facing stereotypes.[73] Additionally, film screenings touched on various topics like adolescent homosexuality, lesbian families, and same-sex pornography.[74] One film in particular, Penelope Spheeir's film *I Don't Know*, "[Presented] the problems of a lesbian living with a man undergoing a transsexual operation."[75]

COGE's efforts to portray a diverse community of sexual and gender variants went against the trends of larger regional and national groups in the seventies. Major organizations like the National Gay Task Force (founded in 1973), Gay Rights National Lobby (founded in 1976), and Gay Rights Advocates (founded in 1977) "tended to be led by middle-class, urban, and gender-normative whites in their thirties, forties, and fifties, who were sometimes criticized for their class, race, gender, and regional politics."[76] Although these groups fought hard to create a more hospitable atmosphere for gays and lesbians by fighting to repeal sodomy laws and supporting anti-discrimination legislation—among other actions—they often turned a blind eye to the problems of sexual minorities who faced other types of discriminations aside from those resulting from sexuality. Because COGE was located at a university where movements based on race and feminism had a strong presence and where classes encouraged the critical exploration of all ideas and actions, the organization's members were more aware of the variety of issues affecting gays and lesbians and sensitive to the different identities individuals had to navigate. They understood that the gay and lesbian community was made up of people from all types of

[73] Flyer, 1979, box 12, folder 25, Jack Boozer Papers, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University.
[74] Luci Kemp, "Gay Committee to Present Film Series," *The Emory Wheel*, 1978.
[75] Ibid
[76] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 120.

backgrounds and that each had their own set of privileges and struggles that defined their experiences. [77]

Through these educational efforts, COGE was able to emphasize the minority status of gays and lesbians, more so than the GLC had done in the past. COGE wanted gays and lesbians to come out, not so much as a statement of defiance against social norms, but as the first step in creating a visible community based on a recognized identity. As one member noted, "We did pretty much anything and everything to raise visibility for gay people, for being open and demanding that we at least be recognized and have a place at the table. And it was a struggle. It was a major struggle in those days." For COGE members, recognition meant having the university and other students understand that gays and lesbians not only existed on campus, but were also oppressed and wrongly labeled as sexual deviants. By raising visibility of sexual minorities, COGE members hoped to make Emory more aware of how intolerance against gays and lesbians was a problem on campus and how having a group like COGE that was willing to bring attention to these issues was necessary.

However, COGE also faced difficulty gaining recognition as a group from the University. Although it did not face blatant forms of discriminations like heckling or vandalism, COGE did encounter general attitudes of reluctance from administrators and other students, especially in the early stages of its formation. For instance, J. Donald Jones, dean of student activities in 1976, when asked in an interview if he was opposed to having a gay organization on campus, noted, "My responsibility is to work with students, not to establish all policies…The group may run into some problems. I have never seen anything at Emory that would not cause adverse comment from somewhere, and this has the potential for creating a lot of comment."[78] Jones's statement

[77] Voices of Student Activism, interview by Michael Shutt, Atlanta, GA, Spring 2011.
[78] Warner, "Gay Group Holds Meeting," 1976.

reveals a common sentiment administrators had at the time regarding activist-oriented organizations like COGE. Though they supported student endeavors to create groups on campus, administrators were reluctant to back fully any organization that, as one student put it, "rocked the boat."[79] A gay and lesbian organization could set Emory up as a place that welcomed homosexuals, an identity many still associated with deviancy. Such an idea, administrators feared, could incite backlash and controversy that would tarnish the university's image.

In addition to the reluctance of administrators to support a gay and lesbian organization, the reluctance of students themselves was also apparent in COGE's early years, particularly during its attempt to obtain a charter from SGA in 1976. After a few group meetings to establish its constitution, COGE was ready to apply for a charter that would grant members full access to university facilities and resources. Part of the application, unfortunately, required COGE to provide a list of six students willing to participate in the organization. Due to the negativity that surrounded gays and lesbians at the time, COGE was unable to find six students who would publicly acknowledge their membership, though by this time, the group did have at least a dozen members.[80] This incident demonstrates the lack of support COGE received even from its own members. Though students were willing to join the group, recognizing its necessity for creating a better environment for gays and lesbians on campus, they were unwilling to support the group publicly and be recognized themselves as gays and lesbians. Members feared the social rejection and judgment that could potentially occur due to their public association with a gay and lesbian group and, therefore, hesitated to include their names on a list. After some time, however, the group was able to obtain six signatures and was officially chartered on February 7, 1977.[81]

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[79] LGBT Alumni Interview, interview by Michael Shutt, Atlanta, GA, Spring 2009.
[80] Ray, "Gay Group Holds Meeting," 1976.
[81] Minutes, 1977, Student Government Association Records.

After receiving a charter and obtaining the funds necessary to start organizing programs, COGE members finally felt some form of recognition from the university. "[Although] it was like baby steps," according to Lowrey, "Emory was taking ownership of us as a group."[82] At last, the university was willing to allow a gay and lesbian group on campus and accept it as an official student organization. Furthermore, the university's recognition of COGE was also significant for the recognition of sexual minorities at Emory more generally. Lowrey notes that COGE "was just an attempt to get some toe-hold in the university as a legitimate part of the university, a recognized part which would get published in the list of new student organizations…Gay and lesbian students might see [this publication] and would maybe…feel more accepted, more acknowledged as a legitimate part of the university.[83] Because Emory recognized COGE by granting it a charter, gays and lesbians began to see themselves more as a visible and legitimate part of the community. Though the environment remained relatively intolerant into the early eighties, COGE members were assured that lesbian and gay voices would continue to be heard on campus.

[82] Gerald Lowrey, interview by Perrinh Savang, Atlanta, GA, January 28, 2013.
[83] Ibid.

Chapter Two
The 1980s: Sexual Conservatism, AIDS, and the Fight for Policy Change

In the 1980s, the gay and lesbian movement faced two major challenges that redefined its goals and overall trajectory: "(1) the increased power of sexual conservatives in the Christian Right, the New Right…and (2) the AIDS epidemic, which had…dire implications for men who had sex with men."[84] Throughout the decade, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) wrecked havoc among the gay community, fatally infecting thousands of gay men. Because of its devastating effect, conservatives saw AIDS as a justification that all gay people were immoral and deviant homosexuals. The increased homophobia that stemmed from these interpretations by conservatives forced gay activists, including those at Emory, to kick-start educational efforts that would not only increase sexual health awareness, but also debunk misconceptions about AIDS. Unlike gay activists in the mid-seventies, activists in the eighties pushed for more than just institutional recognition of gay and lesbian identities: they fought for policies that would change institutional practices and ensure the protection of all gays and lesbians from discrimination, stigma, and prejudice.

Part I: The Early Eighties and the Rise of Sexual Conservatism

As early as the mid-1970s, the U.S. began to see an upsurge of conservative values, mainly from right-wing Christian moralists who saw the increase in sexual freedoms as a sign of moral degradation.[85] According to Philip Jenkins, the relaxed attitudes toward sexuality in the early seventies, though revolutionary, opened the door for more explicit and pornographic

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[84] Stein, "Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement," 143.
[85] Philip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2008), 31.

displays of sexual relationships.[86] "In 1972," he notes, "*The Bob Newhart Show* was considered daring for regularly depicting a married couple sharing a double bed…[while, by the mid-1970s] the spread of video technology…brought sex films into the home…[and] highly sexualized images of children and young teenagers proliferated in mainstream popular culture."[87] As sexuality became more explicit, individuals who advocated for sexual freedom or diverged from heteronormative identities, like gays and lesbians, faced backlash from the Christian Right, who saw their advocacy as support for immorality and perversion. By the late 1970s, the Christian Right movement had grown in both number and fervor.

One major example that contributed to this conservative growth and affected gays and lesbians specifically was Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" Campaign. In 1977, Dade County, Florida issued an ordinance that prohibited discrimination on the grounds of "affectional or sexual preferences in areas of housing, employment, and public accommodations."[88] Angered by the ordinance's tolerant stance on homosexuality, Bryant organized a protest that would repeal the law. She claimed, "Homosexuals aren't born; they recruit, and recruitment took the form of child molestation and abuse."[89] After her success in Dade County, Bryant continued her campaign to other states, where she advocated for the rejection of all laws that legitimized homosexual relationships. In 1978, Bryant made a stop in Atlanta to speak on behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention. Her appearance sparked major protests from Atlanta's gay and lesbian community, which drew in various activist groups, including Emory's Committee on Gay Education.[90] COGE members, along with students from Georgia State and Georgia Tech, picketed the building where Bryant would make her speech. Although they did not prevent her

[86] Ibid., 32.
[87] Ibid., 32-33.
[88] Ibid., 120.
[89] Ibid., 120.
[90] LGBT Alumni Interview, interview by Michael Shutt, Atlanta, GA, Spring 2009.

from speaking, they were able to vocalize their opposition to Bryant's campaign, refusing to tolerate what they felt was injustice.[91] Despite the extremity of Bryant's views, her campaign did reflect the growing conservatism that would eventually define U.S. social and political values in the 1980s.

At Emory, attitudes regarding sexuality also began to take a more conservative twist. Unlike in the seventies, discussions in the eighties focused less on the freedom of being sexually open and more on the consequences. This change at Emory is best exemplified in *The Emory Wheel,* which was comparatively less explicit in the eighties than in the seventies. In 1974, for example, the *Wheel* published a variety of nude and semi-nude photographs that accompanied reviews of experimental films and sex-related articles.[92] Additionally, it ran several stories that detailed Emory's sexually liberated atmosphere.[93] In the late seventies and eighties, however, the *Wheel* began to focus more on the negative outcomes of promiscuity. Instead of stories that celebrated sexual liberation, the *Wheel* published articles that explored the rising number of sexually transmitted diseases and reported rapes on campus.[94] By pointing out the dangers of sexuality instead its pleasures, the *Wheel* implicitly rejected the sexual openness of the seventies and adopted a more conservative position. Like the U.S. in general, the University's sexual conservatism in the eighties was most likely a backlash to the excessive, extreme, and sometimes damaging displays of sexuality in the seventies.[95]

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[91] Ibid.
[92] For examples, see "Summer Wind," *The Emory Wheel,* 1976 & "1001 Danish Delights: Adults Only," *The Emory Wheel,* 1974, and "Mass Streakers," *The Emory Wheel,* March 12, 1974, 6.
[93] For examples, see "Sex at Emory," *The Emory Wheel*, October 7, 1975, 10 and Alan Sverdlick, "Masters and Johnson Explore Sexual Revolution," *The Emory Wheel*, April 6, 1976, 10.
[94] For examples, see "EOP Office Explains How to Deal with Harassment" *The Emory Wheel,* October 24, 1983, and "Employee Victim of Sexual Assault," *The Emory Wheel*, September 7, 1984, 1.
[95] Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares*, 205.

This rise in sexual conservatism also negatively influenced Emory's tolerance for gays and lesbians in the 1980s. Despite COGE's efforts to educate the campus about sexual identities in the mid to late seventies, many students were not yet willing to accept the image of a non-deviant homosexual. For instance, in a 1981 *Wheel* review of *Caligula,* a movie that contained male nudity, Emory psychology professor Fred Crawford, noted, "The film's showing of male frontal nudity turns off females and heterosexuals and stimulates homosexuals to hurt others."[96] Although gay and lesbian students condemned Crawford for his analysis, other students supported his statement and instead criticized gays and lesbians for making negative allegations solely to defend their own legitimacy.[97] As Student Paul Escamilla noted, "It appeared to me that the substance of [the gay community's argument] was given to defending the legitimacy of [their] particular lifestyle…Crawford was only stating a fact…[Homosexuals] need to have the truth spoken to them, honestly and sensitively."[98] Escamilla's quote shows that general attitudes regarding gay and lesbian identities in the eighties remained more or less the same as those in the seventies; both relied on the notion that homosexuals were deviant and criminal. Although COGE had attempted to demystify these misconceptions, sexual conservatism continued to promote them. Because many community members now saw sexual liberation as damaging, particularly in the 1980s, they were skeptical of any type of sexual expression that deviated from conservative norms, including homosexuality.[99]

To make matters worse, between 1980 and 1981, COGE took a two-year hiatus, halting educational efforts and programs that were instrumental in spreading awareness of gay and

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[96] Michelle Gilbert, "Caligula Trial Sparks Debate," *The Emory Wheel*, 1981.
[97] Kathryn Quigley, "Homosexuals Face Oppression," *The Emory Wheel*, May 12, 1981, 6A.
[98] Paul Escamilla, "Homosexuality Accepted, Not Approved by Christians," *The Emory Wheel*, May 12, 1981, 6A.
[99] Ibid.

lesbian identities.[100] According to Lowrey, many of the core members had graduated by this time, and there was no one willing to continue organizing the group.[101] Without the group's influence, attitudes regarding homosexuality on campus remained stagnant and mixed. Because no group was present or willing to educate the entire university about gay and lesbian issues, ideas of the deviant homosexual continued. Yet, even when COGE resurfaced in 1982, most of its activities were social; educational efforts took a back seat to community building events such as going out to concerts, dinner parties, and plays.[102] In 1984, COGE officially changed its name to Student Action for Human Rights (SAHR) in order to emphasize the importance of human rights in the gay and lesbian movement. But the organization still focused primarily on organizing social events rather than educational programs through the early 1980s.[103] Little effort was made to actually change community perceptions.

Without educational attempts to spread awareness of gay and lesbian issues in the early eighties, the environment at Emory remained unwelcoming of sexual minorities. As SAHR member Rodney Wright noted, "[SAHR] was indicative of the climate at the time because it didn't even have the word *gay* in it. People were afraid of the word *gay*. Overall, the atmosphere [at Emory] was not open or accepting in any way…People were afraid to be out."[104] For gays and lesbians, this fear of coming out was the norm in the early eighties. By the mid-eighties, however, this fear heightened even more dramatically with the proliferation of AIDS. Because of the stigma associated with the disease, AIDS pushed lesbians and (especially) gay men back further into the closet.

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[100] COGE Poster, 1982, box 7, Ed Stansell Papers, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University.
[101] Gerald Lowrey, interview by Perrinh Savang, Atlanta, GA, January 28, 2013.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Memo, 1984, Ed Stansell Papers.
[104] Rodney Wright, interview by Perrinh Savang, Skype, January 9, 2013.

Part II: AIDS and Sexual Health Education

In 1981, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) discovered and identified a deadly virus it would later name the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Little did the Center know, AIDS, the disease caused by HIV infection, would fatally affect thirteen hundred gay men and drug users in the U.S. by 1983.[105] However, the negative impact of AIDS on gay men was far more extensive than its death toll. Because, initially, the disease was most prevalent in the gay community, society began to equate AIDS solely with gay men. For example, specialists had originally referred to AIDS as Gay-Related Immunodeficiency Disorder (GRID).[106] Though the American Psychiatric Association had removed homosexuality from the *DSM* in 1973, conservatives, by using AIDS as a justification for illness, brought back the stigma that had rendered homosexuality or any type of non-heteronormative sexual behavior as a disease. In essence, conservative interpretations of AIDS repathologized gay identities and gave anti-gay activists another reason to condemn gay sexual practices.[107]

As a deadly disease, transmitted primarily through sexual encounters, the fear around AIDS contributed greatly to the sexual conservatism that had begun in the late seventies. According to Philip Jenkins, "[Because of] the devastating penalties it imposed on irresponsible sexual behavior, AIDS declared a sudden end to the sexual revolution."[108] Although sexual attitudes started to become more conservative before the discovery of AIDS, the disease strengthened the conservative antagonism that already existed toward "irresponsible sexual behavior," as some called homosexuality. For instance, prominent New Right and Christian Right leaders from groups such as the Christian Coalition, Family Research Council, and Family

[105] Marlene Targ Brill, *America in the 1980s* (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2009), 62.
[106] Jenkins, "Decade of Nightmares," 205-206.
[107] Gregory M. Herek and John P. Capitanio, "AIDS Stigma and Sexual Prejudice," *American Behavioral Scientist* 42, no. 7 (April 1, 1999): 1132.
[108] Jenkins, "Decade of Nightmares," 205.

Research Institute "depicted AIDS as divine retribution for the sins of homosexuality."[109] Because of its large infection rate among gay men, AIDS affirmed anti-gay activists' beliefs that homosexuality would more than likely lead to an untimely death, and thus required "quarantining, segregating, [and/or] tattooing people with HIV/AIDS."[110] Even in Atlanta, where gay and lesbian communities were proliferating, multiple churches perpetuated the idea that AIDS was God's punishment for homosexuality. One infamous pastor, Charles Stanley from the First Baptist Church of Atlanta, for example, was a founding member of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and was notorious for his God-fearing sermons against homosexuality.[111]

At Emory, AIDS also had an impact on the student body. Not only did students become more cautious of risky sexual behaviors, but they also developed a stigma toward people with AIDS. In a survey conducted by *The Emory Wheel* in 1986, seventy-one students were asked, "Do you think an AIDS carrier should be allowed to attend Emory?"[112] Responses varied. Though a majority, 68% of students, responded "yes" to the survey question, they did so with reservation. A common response was "I do have a fear about AIDS and I wish I knew more about the disease."[113] Other responses were overly negative. One student, for instance, responded, "Not enough research has been done to prove that AIDS cannot be transmitted through casual, day to day human contact. Letting students with AIDS come to Emory would be like signing out a death warrant."[114] Another student "suggested that all carriers be quarantined until medical researchers find a cure for AIDS."[115]

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[109] Stein, "Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement," 146.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Chenault and Braukman, 100.
[112] Ronit Alon, "Should AIDS Carriers Be Allowed at Emory," *The Emory Wheel*, April 15, 1986, 14.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

Because of their association with AIDS, gay men were often the objects of stigma. AIDS fueled homophobic discourse at Emory and became a justification for discrimination. In an anonymous letter sent to Emory's gay and lesbian student organization, a student wrote, "I'd love to see you all lying in bed suffering in agony with AIDS. Hitler had the right 'solution' for you faggots: Extermination!"[116] Such death threats were not uncommon. Another letter signed by "a concerned moral citizen," stated, "It is obvious that all fags should be killed… AIDS has fortunately come along as God's punishment to rid society of these disgusting subhumans."[117] In these cases, AIDS provided a venue through which bigotry and intolerance could manifest. The virus made discrimination justifiable because, according to some, the disease was an undeniable sign from God that homosexuality would not be tolerated. For others, AIDS proved that homosexuality itself was a disease and potentially contagious.

Despite gay men being the prime targets of AIDS stigma, the disease also impacted the lives of lesbians, though more by association with homosexuality as a whole rather than by actual infection. According to Gregory Herek and John Capitanio, AIDS intensified right-wing condemnation of all homosexual practices, not just those of gay men.[118] Although AIDS-based discrimination was mainly a response to gay men, the rhetoric used by Christian fundamentalists and other conservatives often addressed homosexuality more generally. All homosexuals, they noted, were sinful. Gay men with AIDS merely exemplified the consequences of this sin. This is not to say, however, that lesbians faced the same amount of discrimination from AIDS as gay men did; rather the discriminations lesbians faced were, to some extent, informed by AIDS stigma.

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[116] "Statement of Position: For the Inclusion of 'Sexual Orientation' in Emory University's Equal Opportunity Statement," December 9, 1987.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Herek and Capitanio, "AIDS Stigma and Sexual Prejudice," 1131.

At Emory and around the U.S., AIDS stigma for some developed largely from a lack of education and knowledge about how the disease was spread and whom the virus could infect. In response to a *Wheel* article that claimed AIDS could be spread through skin-to-skin contact, Stosh Ostrow, vice president of AID Atlanta declared in 1986, "We desperately need to…spread the facts about AIDS, rather than myths, speculation and deliberate misinformation. It is particularly important on a college campus where young people are beginning to explore issues of sexuality, sexual activity and drug use."[119] Ostrow's statement indicates an interesting dilemma Emory faced with regard to AIDS education in the mid-eighties. Despite its proximity to the CDC and Atlanta, two places where information about AIDS was readily available, Emory as an institution was still largely ignorant of the disease itself. Many community members still believed in the misconceptions that fueled AIDS discrimination.[120] As a whole, the University did not educate itself about AIDS to the extent that it could have. Only toward the end of 1986 did Emory administrators begin to realize the necessity of addressing the AIDS epidemic. In the fall of 1986, University President James T. Laney formed the Committee on the Prevention of Infectious Diseases, which he worked with to establish an official AIDS policy in January 1987. Based on the policy developed by the American College Health Association (ACHA), Emory's new policy informed students how to prevent HIV infection and respectfully treat others with the disease.[121]

Nationally, media attention surrounding AIDS began to increase only in 1984 when teenager Ryan White contracted the disease after a blood transfusion.[122] Before then, AIDS was

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[119] Stosh Ostrow, "AIDS Expert Denounces Chatkowski's Article," *The Emory Wheel*, April 4, 1986, 5.
[120] Ibid.
[121] "General University Guidelines for the Prevention of the Spread of HTLV-III Infection" *Campus Report,* January 26, 1987, 4 and 9.
[122] Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares*, 206.

seen purely as a "homosexual disease," an illness that infected sexual deviants and drug users.[123] Even President Ronald Reagan refused to acknowledge the epidemic until later in his presidency in 1987.[124] Emory Student Scott Segal wrote in *The Emory Wheel* in 1985, "Because AIDS primarily affected homosexuals, [the epidemic] was promptly placed on the back burner to boil away."[125] The government was not motivated to take action and support AIDS research. Without enough support, scientists were slow to find more information about the disease, and thus information was limited.

Outraged by the Reagan administration's silence, gay and lesbian activists came together throughout the 1980s to spread AIDS awareness, raise funds for AIDS research, and provide support groups for people living with the disease.[126] Early groups like the Gay Men's Health Crisis (founded in 1982), AID Atlanta (founded in 1982), and the Kaposi's Sarcoma Research and Education Foundation (founded in 1983) formed in major cities like New York, Atlanta, and San Francisco, respectively. Over the years, more organizations developed including the National AIDS Network and Project Inform. Through health projects and periodicals, these organizations "criticized business, government, media, religious, and scientific responses to AIDS, [while also] challenging AIDS-related discrimination by [developing] educational programs."[127] In 1987, gay activism saw an upsurge of militancy when New York activists formed the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACTUP). Heavily critical of Reagan's position on AIDS, ACTUP used the slogan "Silence = Death" to emphasize the dire need for more AIDS funding and research. Compared to other organizations, ACTUP was more "defiant, disruptive, and dramatic" in its tactics, staging protests and speeches outside the White House and the CDC

[123] Ibid.
[124] Scott Segal, "AIDS Epidemic Threatens the United States," *The Emory Wheel*, September 17, 1985, 7.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 155.
[127] Ibid., 155.

in Atlanta."[128] They broke the windows of government buildings and medical centers, challenged police authority, and invaded the private property of conservatives in order to get their message across.[129]

Echoing the national gay movement's fight for AIDS awareness, the movement at Emory also became more active in promoting sexual health and AIDS education. In 1986, Student Action for Human Rights (SAHR) changed its name to Emory's Lesbian and Gay Organization (ELGO) in an attempt to represent more accurately its advocacy for gay and lesbian identities.[130] Revitalized by the AIDS epidemic and the actions of national gay rights groups, ELGO decided to reorient its goals and focus more on engaging the university as a whole rather than just on building and fostering gay and lesbian communities. As the president of ELGO from 1986 to 1988, undergraduate student Rodney Wright initiated a Speaker's Bureau program that would "[go] to freshmen dorms and [talk] about being gay, HIV/AIDS and safer sex."[131] Because Emory did not have many resources about AIDS and AIDS prevention before 1987, Wright and other members of ELGO worked with AID Atlanta and the CDC to distribute information to the student body. The group even mailed major organizations in New York for more resources. Additionally, in March of 1986, ELGO sponsored a symposium on AIDS, which brought speakers from across Georgia to talk about safe sex, the current research being done around AIDS, the types of treatment available for patients, and the various legislation proposed to the Georgia Senate regarding AIDS patients.[132]

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[128] Ibid., 159.
[129] *After Stonewall from the Riots to the Millennium*, DVD, produced by John Scagliotti, et al. (2005: First Run Features).
[130] Yasho Lahiri, "SAHR about to Change Name to ELGO," *The Emory Wheel*, January 21, 1986, 14.
[131] Rodney Wright, interview by Perrinh Savang, Skype, January 9, 2013.
[132] Alumni Weekend Newsletter, 1986, Ed Stansell Papers.

Despite ELGO's efforts to reduce AIDS stigma and promote tolerance for gay and lesbian identities, students still did not feel comfortable enough to come out. According to ELGO member Sara Luce Look who came to Emory as an undergraduate in 1988, "When I went to my first ELGO meeting, you had to call a number to find out where the meeting was. It was not public."[133] ELGO meetings continued to stay underground mainly because students feared harassment.[134] The situation was even worse for students who were HIV positive. Wright notes, "I only knew of two…gay people [at Emory]…who were positive, in addition to [my friend] Larry who died from AIDS between my freshmen and sophomore years...[AIDS] definitely was not something anybody wanted to talk about at all."[135] Afraid of stigma and potential harassment, students remained closeted not only about their sexuality, but also about their HIV status.

Although the militancy of the national gay movement encouraged many ELGO members to become more active in addressing discrimination and AIDS stigma on campus, other members wanted the group to continue focusing on community building events and social activities. Not everyone, they claimed, wanted to speak publicly about their orientation or advocate for AIDS education; some students were still finding themselves and looking for a community that would accept their identities as gays and lesbians.[136] This disagreement over goals in 1986 created tension among group members and threatened to tear ELGO apart. However, group members reached a compromise.[137] While the overall group would focus on fostering gay and lesbian identities and organizing social events like film screenings, dinners, and campus-wide programs,

[133] Voices of Student Activism, interview by Michael Shutt, Atlanta, GA, Spring 2011.
[134] "Wheel Editorial on Campus Homosexuals Biased, Unfair," *The Emory Wheel*, December 5, 1986.
[135] Rodney Wright, interview by Perrinh Savang, Skype, January 9, 2013.
[136] Voices of Student Activism, interview by Michael Shutt, Atlanta, GA, Spring 2011.
[137] Ibid.

a subgroup calling itself the Task Force on Equal Opportunity would focus specifically on public advocacy.[138]

Because of its attack on the gay community, the AIDS crisis greatly contributed to this newfound sense of advocacy among ELGO members. According to D'Emilio, "[The disease] stimulated a return to tactics of direct action and civil disobedience on a scale not seen since the early 1970s."[139] The gay and lesbian movement throughout the mid-seventies and early eighties lacked a sense of militancy and urgency that had defined gay liberation in the early seventies. However, by the mid-eighties, AIDS had turned the movement into a discussion about living or dying.[140] Without activists bringing attention to this disease devastating the gay community, institutions like the U.S. government—not to mention universities like Emory—would not have taken actions fast enough or at all. The lack of adequate responses from institutions eventually motivated activists to fight for legal protections and rights that would ensure the safety and wellbeing of gays and lesbians. By the late 1980s, activists had become more vocal about their issues and demanded anti-discrimination policies and rights.[141] Following this trend in national activism, the Task Force on Equal Opportunity at Emory, energized by AIDS activism, faced its biggest challenge in 1987 when it demanded the University include "sexual orientation" in its equal opportunity policy.

Part III: The Policy Statement on Discriminatory Harassment

When students came together to create the Task Force on Equal Opportunity in 1987, they had one goal in mind: to revise Emory's Equal Opportunity policy (EOP) to include "sexual

[138] Ibid.
[139] D'Emilio, *Making Trouble*, 267.
[140] LGBT Alumni Interview, interview by Michael Shutt, Atlanta, GA, Spring 2009.
[141] D'Emilio, *Making Trouble*, 267.

orientation." If changed, the new policy, they believed, would ensure the University's protection of gays and lesbians from discrimination and harassment by providing a forum through which victims could seek justice. Already, the policy included the categories minimally required by law such as race, color, national origin, religion, and sex. According to the Task Force, "[Sexual orientation is also] an equally integral aspect of identity… lack of explicit protection for gays and lesbians in the Statement places a fundamental issue—equal rights for gay people—at the mercy of individual interpretation."[142] Unless Emory explicitly stated that it would not tolerate discrimination based on sexual orientation, members of the University community could continue to harass individuals without facing any consequences. By advocating for such a change, the Task Force had diverged from the goals of previous activists at Emory. They no longer felt that fighting for the recognition of sexual minorities and the existence of gay and lesbian groups was enough. Instead, activists wanted the administration to take action and stand up against discrimination by implementing protective policies.

Before the Task Force could even ask for a policy revision, however, it first had to prove that discrimination was, in fact, occurring on campus.[143] In a study conducted by the Task Force in 1987, in which fifty-one gay and lesbian students, faculty, and staff members were surveyed, the Task Force found that over seventy percent of respondents had experienced some form of harassment or discrimination while at Emory.[144] According to the survey, harassment ranged from homophobic comments to verbal threats. But as Task Force member Rodney Wright noted, "I don't remember anything major [happening], just a lot of taunting [and] bullying."[145] Unfortunately, because many students, faculty, and staff feared the consequences of coming out,

[142] Task Force, "Emory Needs 'Sexual Orientation' Clause," *The Emory Wheel*, November 6, 1987, 9.
[143] Rodney Wright, interview by Perrinh Savang, Skype, January 9, 2013.
[144] "Statement of Position," 1987.
[145] Rodney Wright, interview by Perrinh Savang, Skype, January 9, 2013.

they left many incidences of harassment unreported. Additionally, the administration did not consider the reported incidences frequent or serious enough to elicit a response. Wright goes on to recount one particular event in which he could not seek justice: "For Dooley's week [one year]… [a fraternity] house put on a skit where one of the performers dressed up as me. He…had on a thick afro and had dark makeup on his face and acted really feminine."[146] But, as Wright goes on to say, "Nothing was actually done to another person—it was just making fun of [ELGO] and… gay people at Emory." Because the incident did not involve physical harm, nor was it intentionally aimed at a minority group, the administration did not intervene.[147] Although considered minor when looked at individually, these incidences, together, pointed to an unwelcoming atmosphere for gays and lesbians at Emory.

Despite the information they were able to gather, Task Force and other ELGO members were still unsure how to proceed. They had never taken on such an endeavor before and were not sure whether there would be enough support for their cause. However, on October 11, 1987, ELGO's mission for inclusion was reaffirmed when the group participated in the Second Annual March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights in Washington D.C. Bringing together thousands of activists and allies from across the country, the March had two purposes. The first was to protest the Supreme Court's ruling in *Bowers vs. Hardwick,* in which the Court upheld anti-sodomy laws, and the second was to protest President Reagan's silence regarding the AIDS epidemic. However, the historic march was more than just a series of protests. ELGO member Ted Field recalled the overwhelming sense of joy he felt while participating in the March: "I was able to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue, arm and arm, with the man that I love…can you

[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.

imagine the thrill of such a simple pleasure given to you for the first time?"[148] For Field and other participants, the March was the first time they could openly express their sexuality without fearing backlash from the people around them. The March was a safe space and fostered a community of sexual and gender nonconformists who celebrated difference and advocated for fair and equal treatment.

While at the March, ELGO members took advantage of the vast network of organizations that were present. Wright, for example, notes specifically the significant impact the gay and lesbian group at Yale, which had just successfully fought for the inclusion of "sexual orientation" in their equal opportunity policy, had on the Task Force: "Their advice was just not to give up…Things don't happen right away, and it just takes time. They really gave us the support and mentorship that we needed."[149] Additionally, ELGO members received more information about AIDS and a briefing of what was happening with the Movement in other parts of the country. Coming back to Emory, Task Force members were ready to continue the fight for inclusion, no matter how long it would take. They were motivated not only by the accomplishments of other organizations, but also by the vision of what society could look like: a place of tolerance and acceptance. Getting protections for sexual minorities on campus, they felt, was the first step toward this vision.[150]

Upon their return to Emory, the Task Force and other ELGO members sought support from multiple administrators and faculty. Despite the campus atmosphere at the time, activists did find help from various deans throughout the college. Chief among these supporters were William Fox, Dean of Campus Life; Edward Stansell, Assistant Dean of Campus Life; and

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[148] David Cornelius, "ELGO Joins Historic March on Washington," *The Emory Wheel*, October 20, 1987, 9.
[149] Rodney Wright, interview by Perrinh Savang, Skype, January 9, 2013.
[150] Voices of Student Activism, interview by Michael Shutt, Atlanta, GA, Spring 2011.

Barbara "Bobbi" Patterson, the University Chaplain and Dean of Students. These deans were instrumental in pushing for inclusion mainly because they provided an authoritative voice that backed up the Task Force's position. Students were not alone in their struggle. Instead, there were people in the administration who were willing to advocate on their behalf. Additionally, one of the Task Force's biggest and most surprising supporters was the University President himself: James T. Laney. Early in the process, however, Laney was not vocal about his support. "President Laney wouldn't talk to us back then," cited Task Force member Michael Sanseviro, "We always kept constantly being referred back to Dean Fox."[151] It was not until after the Task Force presented itself in front of the Board of Trustees that Laney would come out as a clear advocate.

In December 1987, the Task Force submitted to President Laney and the Board of Trustees a lengthy sixty-page "Statement of Position." The document examined the various incidences of harassment affecting gays and lesbians at Emory and argued for the inclusion of "sexual orientation" in Emory's Equal Opportunity Policy. Later that month, Task Force members stood before the President and the Board to defend the contents of their statement. According to Wright, who was one of the presenters, the meeting turned into a heated discussion about the legitimacy of the Task Force's findings and whether the discrimination of a small population warranted any protections at all.[152] The Board argued that because there were not many gay people at Emory, to include "sexual orientation" would be pointless. Many trustees also pointed to Emory's association with the Methodist Church. Including "sexual orientation" would be in direct opposition to the Church's stance on homosexuality.

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[151] Ibid.
[152] Rodney Wright, interview by Perrinh Savang, Skype, January 9, 2013.

In the end, the Board voted not to revise the Equal Opportunity Policy. Though it recognized that discrimination against gays and lesbians was happening on campus, the Board insisted that the university continue to protect only those groups required by federal law.[153] Wright stated, "the Board of Trustees wasn't ready yet. I think they were kind of waiting to see if more institutions would change their policies. They didn't want to be a leader."[154] Indeed, most schools that included "sexual orientation" in their discrimination policies in the late eighties were located in the Northeast.[155] The trustees were hesitant to take the first step in the South, partially because of their own prejudices toward gays and lesbians and partially because they feared backlash from the outside community.[156] The issue of inclusion, they felt, was too controversial in the South and could potentially place Emory in a negative light.

Despite the Board's decision, President Laney was still concerned about the harassment and discrimination gays and lesbians experienced on campus. Though official inclusion of "sexual orientation" in the EOP failed, the university could still protect its students and faculty through other less controversial means. In August 1988, Laney created a separate Policy Statement on Discriminatory Harassment, which prohibited discrimination based on all categories required by law as well as sexual orientation. By implementing this new policy, Laney made it known that Emory as a whole would not tolerate homophobia or any kind of discrimination against sexual minorities. As *The Emory Wheel* noted in October 1988, "By going further than the law to ensure our community's freedom from discrimination, Emory has proven once again to be a forward thinking, progressive University."[157] Though the new Policy Statement on Harassment finally provided institutional protections for gays and lesbians, it only

[153] "A History of Changing Emory's Equal Opportunity Policy," 1993, Ed Stansell Papers.
[154] Rodney Wright, interview by Perrinh Savang, Skype, January 9, 2013.
[155] "Statement of Position," 1987.
[156] "A History of Changing Emory's Equal Opportunity Policy," 1993, Ed Stansell Papers.
[157] "New Anti-Harassment Policy Revolutionary," October 11, 1988, 8.

applied to those who were already a part of the Emory community. The Policy would not govern any procedures surrounding hiring and firing, admissions, and educational programs; these were procedures covered by the EOP. Therefore, though the University had officially adopted a stance against sexual discrimination, gays and lesbians in certain areas of Emory still risked harassment.

Activists soon realized that the Statement was not enough to ensure a discrimination-free campus. In order to create a more tolerant atmosphere, Emory as an institution would need to enforce stronger policies and provide resources to protect gay and lesbian people. Only when the University became more active in promoting acceptance could overall attitudes begin to change. As sexual minorities at Emory continued to face other forms of harassment and discrimination, activists revamped their efforts and continued to demand the administration for more support. Such demands defined gay and lesbian activism at Emory throughout the next decade and into the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

Due to the activist fervor that had developed in the 1980s, the 1990s saw a massive rise in support for sexual minorities. In 1991, Emory created the Office of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Student Life under the division of Campus Life. Finally, there was a permanent space at the University dedicated to providing support for LGB students.[158] By March 2, 1992, students had enough resources, experience, and support to stage a campus-wide protest against the harassment of Alfred Hilderbrand and Michael Norris. Their actions would lead to more institutional protections for sexual minorities throughout the rest of the decade.

These significant events, however, would not have been possible without the struggles and accomplishments of activists in the past. Since the early 1970s, activists at Emory have worked tirelessly to create a more welcoming space for gays and lesbians on campus. In 1972, students formed the Gay Liberation Committee and sought to break down completely the heteronormative structures that oppressed all sexual desires. In the process, they advocated for the recognition of gays and lesbians as legitimate, non-perverted sexual minorities who were just as valuable as their heterosexual counterparts. Additionally, the GLC itself sought recognition from the University as an official, chartered organization. Although the group never received its charter, the next gay and lesbian organization, COGE, was successful in its attempt to gain official recognition. COGE received its charter and funds from the Student Government Association in 1977 and continued to bring awareness of gay and lesbian issues to the University.

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[158] Office of LBG Life Yearly Report, 1991, box 1, folder 14, Office of LGBT Life Records, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University.

In the 1980s, gay and lesbian activism changed dramatically with the rise of sexual conservatism and the AIDS epidemic, both of which strengthened negative perceptions of homosexuality. At Emory, representations of sexuality became more restrictive, focusing less on sexual freedom and more on the destructive nature of sexual promiscuity and perversion. The AIDS crisis contributed to this prevailing sense of sexual conservatism. Right wing activists saw the disease as a consequence of participating in "perverted" and "deviant" behaviors like homosexuality. Although AIDS further marginalized gay and lesbian identities, the disease also motivated activists to take more urgent steps in demanding institutional protections and policies for sexual minorities. Students at Emory were also influenced by AIDS activism and pushed the University to pass policies that would protect gays and lesbians from discrimination and harassment. Although their first demand to include "sexual orientation" in Emory's Equal Opportunity Policy was unsuccessful, activists were able to persuade the administration that some protective measure was necessary. The University President, therefore, created the Policy Statement on Discriminatory Harassment and included 'sexual orientation' among its many lists of protections.

Although the gay and lesbian movement at Emory has faced numerous challenges and setbacks, its efforts to create a more accepting environment on campus for all non-heteronormative identities have been more or less successful. Not only is the University more aware of LGBT issues, but it is also devoted to fostering LGBT people by providing resources and support. However, despite these accomplishments, discrimination still exists at Emory. In order to move forward, Emory needs to understand where this intolerance stems from. What issues has the University yet to address, and how might they continue to affect LGBT people

today? Only by addressing the issues of the past and fully appreciating the struggles of gays and lesbians can the University truly become a more accepting and progressive campus in the future.

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