

Resistance

The passage of Article XII was not the end of the fight. GLMA and other radical activists launched a nationwide campaign to boycott Cincinnati, hoping to show the city that exclusion had an economic impact. The campaign had mixed success. Some national conferences, like the American Library Association, cancelled plans to come to Cincinnati. Some locals claimed the boycott cost the city less than outdated convention center facilities did.

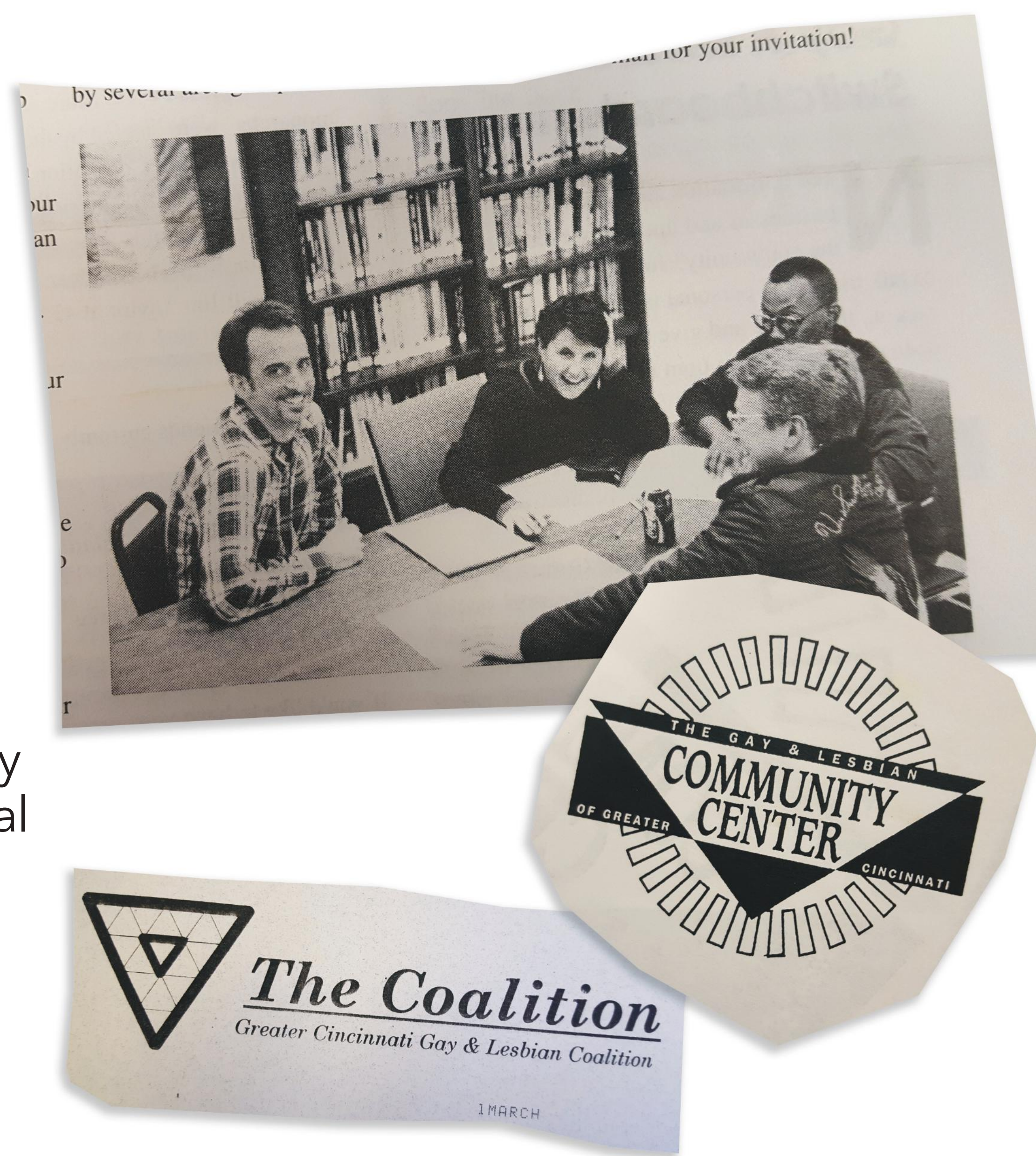


Devastating Loss

Stonewall Cincinnati hired civil rights attorney Alphonse Gerhardstein to fight Article XII in court. After four years of suits and appeals, the initiative was upheld in the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, making Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual people the only group singled out by the city charter. The loss on Article XII was a huge blow for many longtime activists. Much of the LGBTQ community turned away from political activism and toward quietly taking care of each other.

Space for Community

In December 1993, after years of work, a Gay and Lesbian Community Center opened its doors at its first location in Longworth Hall on the Riverfront. Starting with mainstays the Greater Cincinnati Gay and Lesbian Coalition and the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard as members, the Center added new organizations, Movie Nights, a Community Calendar, a lending library, and a Historical Society within its first year. In 1996 it would move to a larger space in downtown Cincinnati.



End of an Era

Despite the success of the Center, the Greater Cincinnati Gay and Lesbian Coalition was unable to find enough board members to keep going after 1994, and disbanded after 16 years of being the largest LGBTQ organization in the city. Pride, which had become a huge parade and a public festival on the riverfront, shrank to a small annual rally. The late 1990s became a quiet period for LGBTQ activism in Cincinnati.

Artifact images top down, left to right: Radical Queer activists GLMA and Lesbian Avengers organized confrontational zap protests to Article XII; GLMA flyer advertising the Boycott; Photo of a small meeting at the Center, Outlooks, 1994; Logo, The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Greater Cincinnati, 1994; Logo, Greater Cincinnati Gay and Lesbian Coalition, 1994.