

Rude Awakening

In April of 1978, police staged a huge crackdown in Cincinnati’s public parks, including Burnet Woods. Plainclothes officers used entrapment to arrest at least 60 gay men in just over a week. In response, the Gay and Lesbian Community rallied together to fight the repression, holding a picnic in Burnet Woods a few days after the crackdown, attempting to meet with the police about the issue, and eventually forming a new umbrella group to represent the many organizations that had sprung up during the 1970s: the Greater Cincinnati Gay Coalition.

Cincinnati Gay and Lesbian Community was formed immediately after the police crackdowns and vandalism of a prominent Lesbian activist's car. Many felt that the crackdown and vandalism were backlash against the Human Rights Ordinance effort.

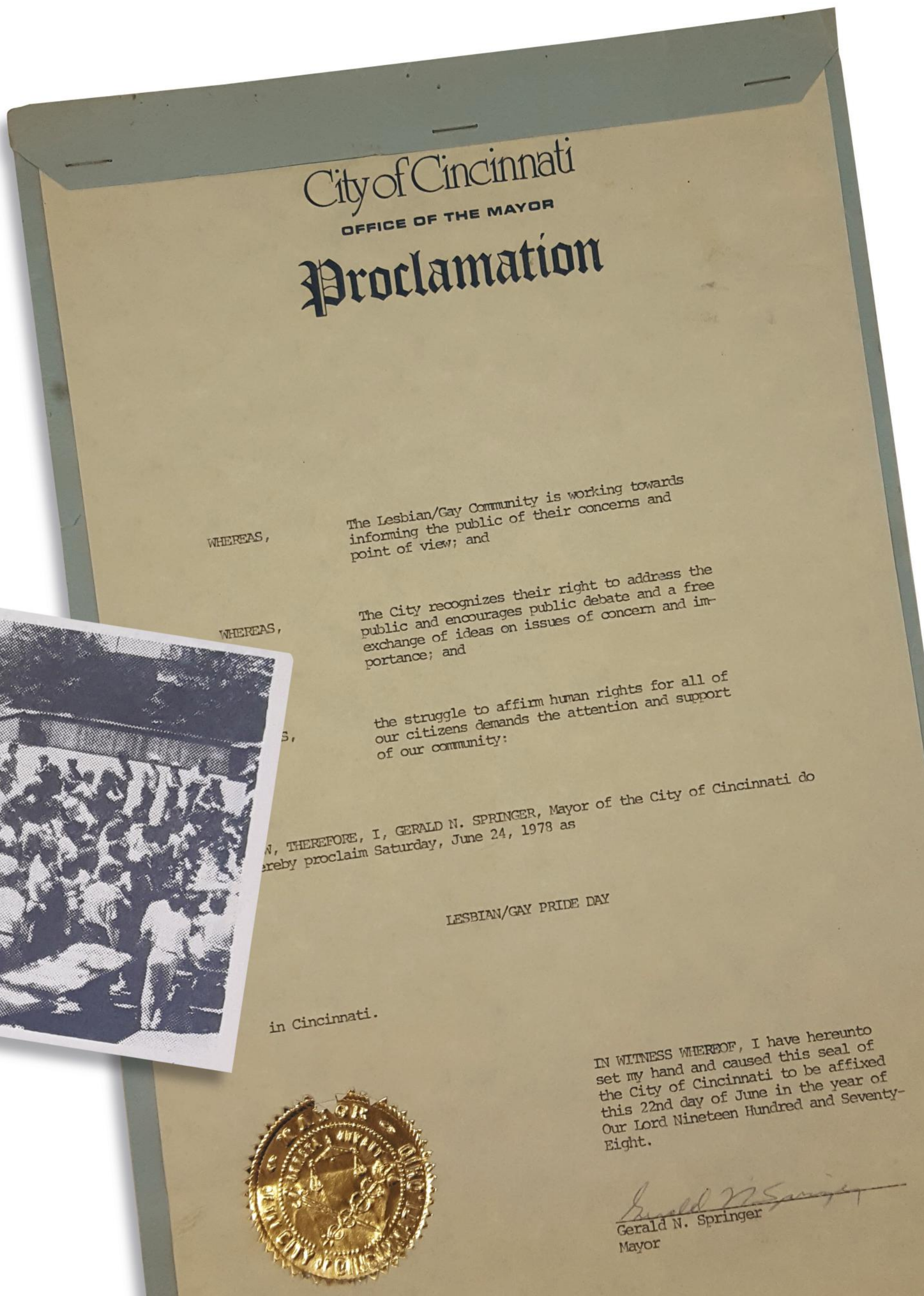


Pride Returns

The GCGC brought back Pride five years after the Cincinnati Gay Community had staged its first event. The new rally was held on Fountain Square and would be held annually for years after that, becoming a public symbol of Gay and Lesbian visibility and persistence. A Human Rights Ordinance was brought before city Council by mayor Jerry Springer but failed to pass.

In the aftermath, LGBT organizations, media, social life, and visibility flourished in Cincinnati. LGBT people began to contemplate forming a community center. They organized in larger numbers for political clout to work for their civil rights. They held large events and gathered in public places: Pride on Fountain Square, Red Shirt Night at Kings Island, and picnics in public parks. But those events still sometimes faced rejection from local government, violent attacks, and repression or apathy from police.

The public rallies on Fountain Square featured local activist speakers on the importance of standing up for rights. Pride gatherings grew in the late 70s and early 80s. Each year, Pride organizers the Greater Cincinnati Gay Coalition asked the city to recognize the day with a formal proclamation. Mayors Jerry Springer and Bobbie Sterne, did so; in 1980 Kenneth Blackwell declined.



Artifact Images left to right:
Wendy Winkler,
Lesbian/Gay Pride Day,
June 24, 1978, from Dinah,
September 1978.

Lesbian and Gay Pride Rally,
June 22, 1980, The Yellow Page.

Proclamation of Lesbian/Gay Pride Day, June 24, 1978. Signed by Mayor Gerald N. Springer