

THE MOMENTS THAT SHAPED CINCINNATI'S LGBTQ HISTORY

Kaileigh Peyton - June 3, 2020



The Gay Pride March in April 1973 at Fountain Square.

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From April 6, 1973, to June 21, 2019, these events transformed Cincinnati from the “most anti-gay” city in the country to a beacon of progress. Together, they shape the city’s LGBTQ history.

April 6–8, 1973

Nearly four years after New York’s pivotal Stonewall Inn riots, the activist-founded Cincinnati Gay Community (CGC) organizes the city’s first public Pride celebration, highlighted by a modest crowd marching from Washington Park to Fountain Square.

June 22, 1978

Mayor Jerry Springer signs a proclamation officially recognizing Lesbian/Gay Pride Day in Cincinnati. Mayor Bobbie Sterne made the same proclamation a year later, despite criticism.

1983

The Dock opens on Pete Rose Way below the Brent Spence Bridge. Cincinnati’s longest continuously operating LGBTQ bar closed in 2018 to make way for infrastructure upgrades.

April 7, 1990

Subversive photographer Robert Mapplethorpe’s posthumous retrospective debuts at the CAC to protests from conservative groups and grand jury indictments for the CAC and its director, Dennis

October 5, 1990

In an overflowing Hamilton County courtroom, a jury acquits the CAC and Barrie on all charges, setting an unprecedented First Amendment standard.

September 15, 1992

Procter & Gamble revises its equal employment opportunity (EEO) policy to include protections for LGBTQ employees following a persistent, years-long push from lab tech Michael Chanak Jr.

November 2, 1993

Voters support Article XII (Issue 3), a charter amendment preventing the city from providing legal protections for gays and lesbians under the Human Rights Ordinance it passed a year earlier. A federal appeals court subsequently debated its constitutionality but ultimately sided with voters.

April 29, 2003

Y'all means all! Covington unanimously passes its own Human Rights Ordinance, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

November 2, 2004

Following a yearlong campaign by gay rights activists to place a repeal of Article XII on the ballot, voters support its rollback, allowing city council to pass laws protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination.

March 22, 2005

A federal appeals court upholds a district court ruling siding with Philecia Barnes, a transgender woman and 24-year Cincinnati Police veteran who sued the City of Cincinnati for discrimination after she was demoted for lacking "command presence."

March 15, 2006

Cincinnati City Council approves an amendment to the city's Human Rights Ordinance, adding LGBTQ individuals to those included in employment and housing protections.

July 2010

Cincinnati Pride, organized by the Greater Cincinnati Gay Chamber of Commerce, returns festivities from Northside's Hoffner Park to Fountain Square, making it more accessible. Attendance skyrockets.

December 1, 2011

Cincinnati's first openly gay city councilmember, Chris Seelbach, is sworn into office.

December 28, 2014

The suicide of transgender Kings Mills teen Leelah Alcorn draws worldwide attention to transgender rights and mobilizes conversion therapy bans after her self-published suicide note goes viral.

June 26, 2015

Cincinnati [Jim Obergefell wins a landmark Supreme Court case](#) (*Obergefell v. Hodges*) that paves the way for federal marriage equality.

December 9, 2015

Inspired by Alcorn, Cincinnati City Council passes a ban on conversion therapy for minors, becoming the second U.S. city (after Washington, D.C.) to do so. Covington passed the same ban in March of 2020.

June 21, 2018