Podtalk: Gary G. Chichester, on First Chicago Pride March, June 27, 1970

Submitted by PatrickMcD [1] on June 27, 2020 - 11:10am

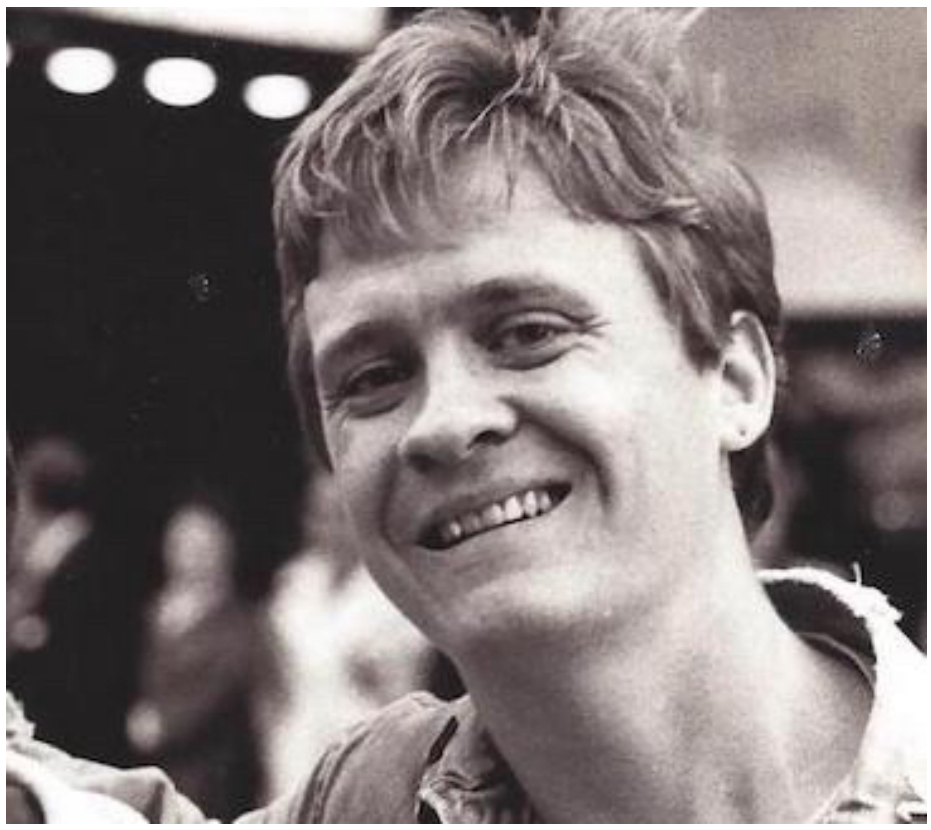
- 1970 [2]
- 2020 [3]
- Bughouse Square [4]
- Chicago [5]
- Chicago Gay Alliance [6]
- Gary G. Chichester [7]
- Gay Liberation March [8]
- Gay Pride Parade [9]
- Hillary Rodham Clinton [10]
- HollywoodChicago.com Content [11]
- LBGTQ+ [12]
- LGBT Hall of Fame [13]
- Patrick McDonald [14]
- Podcast [15]
- Podtalk [16]
- Washington Square Park [17]

CHICAGO – 50 years ago today (June 27th, 2020), a young activist got together with a group of marchers – with no permit – and showed the City of Chicago the actual faces of gay liberation. Gary G. Chichester, board member of the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, was part of that first gay pride march … and 50 years later he remembers the freedom and history of that magic day.



Left: Chicago's First Gay Liberation March, June, 27, 1970. Right: Gary Chichester & the Flag He Created
Photo credit: File Photo/Gary Chichester

The gay scene of 1970 in Chicago was underground, with the riots and uprising of New York City's Stonewall Inn only one year old. To honor that event, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chicago were the first cities to have gay pride marches in 1970. As the march became a parade in 1971, Gary Chichester became involved by co-founding the Chicago Gay Alliance that same year, which created the first gay and lesbian community center in the Windy City. Also on his resume is helping to organize that first Chicago gay pride, and practicing activism through The Chicago Gay Health Project, the Gay Rights National Lobby, the NAMES Project, Strike Against AIDS and the City of Chicago's Advisory Council on Gay and Lesbian Issues, among so much more. He was inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame in 1992.



The Activist: Gary Chichester, Circa 1970
Photo credit: Gary Chichester

Chichester is a native Chicagoan, whose family lived in the Old Town neighborhood when he was born. Eventually he graduated from Maine East High School in suburban Park Ridge, the classmate of Hillary Rodham. He was radicalized early, participating in the Chicago protests in 1968 at the Democratic National Convention, where he was tear-gassed during the police riots.

After helping to launch the Pride March and Parade, Chichester has seen it grow to be the most popular parade event in Chicago, drawing one million people to the Uptown and Boys Town neighborhood in 2019. And despite the postponement of the 2020 parade due to the pandemic, Gary Chichester will be celebrating yet again on the date where he and his fellow marchers made history.

In Part One of a Podtalk with Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, Gary Chichester talks about his personal experience of activism for the first Gay Liberation March in Chicago, 1970, including how he created the Pride Flag that the marchers carried.

In Part Two, Gary talks about the evolution of the march that became a parade, and what he is most proud of on this 50th Anniversary of the day he helped to make history.

Pride Weekend 2020 will be virtual. For more information about those events, click here [18]. ABC7 Chicago will broadcast 'Chicago Celebrates Pride: Fun & Fabulous' on Sunday, June 28th, 2020. For more information, click here [19]. To access the Facebook Page of Gary G. Chichester, click here [20].

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