

SAN FRANCISCO PRIDE®

SAN FRANCISCO LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER
PRIDE CELEBRATION COMMITTEE, INC.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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SAN FRANCISCO PRIDE TO FEATURE BRYANT/BRIGGS “WE FOUGHT BACK!” CONTINGENT

Organizers of 1977 and 1978 Pride Marches to Join the 47th Annual SF Pride Parade and March

San Francisco, CA – SF Pride is pleased to announce veteran organizers of the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade will be highlighted in this year’s Pride Parade and March. 1977 and 1978 were turning points in the struggle for equal rights for LGBT people, when they fought back against attacks from political forces, personified by Anita Bryant and John Briggs. Thousands of people responded to the threat of Bryant/Briggs, resulting in historic demonstrations of solidarity and strength.

In June 1977, Dade County, Florida repealed an ordinance, instituted six months prior, which outlawed discrimination based on sexual orientation. The campaign to repeal the ordinance, which garnered national attention, was led by Anita Bryant, an entertainer and former beauty queen. In San Francisco, hundreds of LGBT people immediately gathered to react and organize against Anita Bryant and her regressive messages. These gatherings included members of the Gay Freedom Day Committee, the organizers of the San Francisco Pride Parade of its time. As a result, an estimated 250,000 people marched in the June 26, 1977 parade, the largest LGBT demonstration in San Francisco to that point in history.

1978 brought a new challenge to LGBT organizers: aided partly by Bryant’s success, then-California State Senator John Briggs introduced to the statewide ballot an initiative to prohibit employing homosexual teachers and allies, also allowing for their termination. Proposition 6, which became known as the Briggs Initiative, was a rallying call for the 1978 Pride Parade, and it was decisively defeated by the voters in November, 1978.

“The actions of the current administration in Washington D.C. are a stark reminder that we cannot take any of our hard-won advances in visibility and equality for granted,” said George F. Ridgely, Jr., SF Pride Executive Director. “The passion that we see in today’s resistance movement is reminiscent of the hard work that these pioneer activists put in forty years ago, fighting back against Bryant and Briggs. As we reflect on our past battles, it is important to remain focused against the forces of oppression that want to erase our victories. We encourage everyone who marches with us this year to send a strong message against regression and exclusion and to embrace the inclusive intent of our theme, A Celebration of Diversity.”

Glenne McElhinney, a former co-chair of the Gay Freedom Day Committee and an organizer of this year’s “WE FOUGHT BACK!” contingent, agrees. “As an historian, I feel it is a worthwhile time to look back and honor the 1977 and 1978 parades and the people that planned them. Those parades were instrumental as gatherings, and we organized and we fought back. We kept Anita Bryant and her influence out of California and we soundly defeated the anti-gay Briggs Initiative after a collaborative grassroots campaign. The significance of those battles is very current today as we now find ourselves under attack again. Like in ’77 and ’78, every action counts, every protest march counts, every vote counts”.

If you were involved in either of the 1977 or 1978 Gay Freedom Day Parades, as an organizer or as a marcher, and would like to join the Bryant/Briggs “WE FOUGHT BACK!” contingent please contact Glenne McElhinney via glenne@impactstories.org or visit www.impactstories.org/briggs.htm.

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CALENDAR INFORMATION

San Francisco LGBT Pride Celebration and Parade A Celebration of Diversity | June 24-25, 2017

Celebration and Rally

Civic Center Plaza

Saturday, June 24 | Noon to 6:00 PM

Sunday, June 25 | 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM

47th Annual SF Pride Parade and March

Sunday, June 25 | Starting at 10:30 AM

Along Market Street, from Beale to 8th Street

To register for the parade/march visit register.sfpride.org. For information on event tickets, as well as sponsor, exhibitor, advertising, membership and donor opportunities visit sfpride.org or call (415) 864-0831.

ABOUT SF PRIDE

The San Francisco Pride Celebration Committee is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded to produce the SF Pride Celebration and Parade. The mission of the organization is to educate the world on LGBTQ issues, as well as commemorate the heritage, celebrate the culture, and liberate the people of all LGBTQ communities. A world leader in the Pride movement, SF Pride is also a grant-giving organization through its Community Partners Program. Since 1997, SF Pride has granted over \$2.5 million dollars in proceeds to local nonprofit LGBTQIA organizations and organizations working on issues related to HIV/AIDS, cancer, homelessness, housing rights, and animal welfare.

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