

## GAYLA Council of Elders

### Five Year Summary 2014 to 2018

The GAYLA Council of Elders offers wisdom of experience and love of GAYLA in support of the GAYLA Coordinators and our larger brotherhood. The Council tends to the long-term growth and vision of GAYLA, freeing the Coordinators to focus on organizing our amazing conference.

The GAYLA Council of Elders, also known as the God Mothers, was established on a five year Sunset term with an approved charter on July 19, 2013 in Town hall meeting. The initial group of five brothers met and decided their own length of stay, with each following year a new brother was appointed for the next five year term. These brothers serve to the long-term growth and vision of GAYLA in a volunteer non compensated leadership position. The following have served:

Tom Lucas	Massachusetts	2013-2014
David Sumner	Massachusetts	2013-2015
Tom Hughes	Ohio	2013-2016
Brad Cohen	Massachusetts	2013-2017
Bob Walker	Ohio	2013-2018
Troy Liston	Massachusetts	2014-2019
Bill Mitchell	Massachusetts	2015-2020
Roger White	Maine	2016
Ron King	Maine	2016-2021
Tom Konkoly	Ohio	2017-2022

Meeting dates/times were established by the council members, meeting every month on phone conference calls, switching to Zoom web base conference calls in 2015. All GAYLA Leadership (Elders, Coordinators and Treasurer) quarterly meetings began in 2016 via Zoom, bringing a virtual check-in and community. Their wisdom and experience of love of GAYLA, along with engagement of all the brothers, creates for a long term forecast of GAYLA.

The many roles and activities of the Council have been narrowed to the following chartered 2013 document:

#### Archives, History and Vision Stewardship

To create and maintain stewardship of GAYLAs past and present with vision development. Brothers pass along materials to this committee where they are documented before being gifted to the University of Southern Maine, Special Library Collection. These materials are cataloged and maintained in USM Library for visitors to view. The GAYLA collection is one of the oldest and longest standing "men loving men" archives.

An Excel Sheet was developed of the last 15 years of attendees, along with a "Love A-Thon phone calls" to reach out to many of those brothers. This group has also provided: recorded interviews, organizing and scanning documents into electronic format, and gifting materials to USM.

Assisting current coordinators and treasurer of any issues for annual conference: marketing, FBPA housing, GAYLA keepsakes, leaders in programming,

#### Leadership Development

To identify, encourage and nurture leadership within GAYLA. Other men's' groups have been researched and attended for Best Practices with continued understanding that GAYLA has many already in place. Annual conferences allow for implementations of new and revised Best Practice models.

Documents have been established to identify different leadership roles, such as “Being a GAYLA Coordinator”; conversation with FBPA about GAYLA 40 and beyond; conversation of ways to bring new energy and activities to GAYLA and the leadership; engaging members to being involved with all levels of leadership (check-in circle leaders, tracks and workshops, etc.); liaison with FBPA leadership for opportunities of development and outside presenters. Open forums

FBPA relations has greatly improved and negotiated compensation packages for GAYLA: newcomer discount, marketing funds, three coordinators, half fees for two Frivs and a Treasurer, and exchange of rooms for off campus leaders; dates set for years forward of GAYLA; coordination of the week musician and chaplain. Our GAYLA liaison and Council of Elders has become a model for FBPA, whom has endorsed the Council continuation beyond Sunset 2018.

### Marketing & Promotion

To retain and reach out for membership of GAYLA.

Current trends of brothers communication is social media and the internet. Old web site was identified, researched and found to be pirated. So a new site was developed, however soon outdated technology was. FBPA offered to host the GAYLA page on their site. This saved monies for GAYLA and provided more current technology and information sharing to brothers. Yahoo Group and Constant Contact merged and moved to CHIMP, a free emailing service. Combined, these two venues saved GAYLA \$700 annually, furthering GAYLA's sustainability.

Small local groups was encouraged for brotherhood and community, along with introducing new prospective brothers and building leaders. These included gatherings for the holiday and season, church functions, social events and beginning of new friendships. Ohio started a GO-GAYLA (Greater Ohio GAYLA group) that marched in the Cleveland Pride march and returned 39.5 reunion to Cleveland.

Marketing expanded participation in Pride Events: Akron, Bangor, Boston, Cleveland, Portland; advertisement and featured articles in several publications (Boston Spirit magazine, NH Gay Men's Choir, NH Seacoast's Men's Group, Ogunquit Playhouse, Mirror Magazine, and South Florida Gay News)

Leading and expanding the Helping Hands programming therefore bringing in increased funds available to encourage and help new and returning brothers.

Designed GAYLA marketing tools and materials for public relations: post cards, palm/business cards, buttons, stickers, advertising, Facebook page established 2010 (GO-GAYLA in 2016) along with ads in 2017.

### Membership and Structure and Guidelines for Selection

Continued established guidance of original 2013 document along with two suggested revisions:

1. Council Sunsets in 2018, to change into an annual report out to the Town Hall Meeting, and
2. Prospective council brothers have at least ten GAYLAs attended including current and previous.

The Council has been a model for FBPA and other conferences, and they have advocated for continuation of this Council. The GAYLA Council and Leadership Team believe that the original founding document along with the few suggested revisions are in the best interest of continuation for GAYLA.