

Check-in Circles at Gayla 41 are named in honor of activists and organizations representing us before and during the Stonewall Riots in 1969.

### **The Jolly 12**

The Jolly 12 was an informal social club of black gay men in the early 1960s. They met in a house on Wabash Avenue in Atlanta each Sunday, and walked to a club each dressed in white shirt and blue pants lined up by height. Residents would banter with them from porches and windows. A younger member, Freddie Styles, later reflected that he learned from the other men's "quick defensive wit." In an oral history interview with the Atlanta History Center, he said the beautiful home they gathered in "...said to me was that gay people don't have to live diminished, second-class lives." The story of the Jolly 12 demonstrates how gay men lived authentic lives even before Stonewall, supporting one another and shaping attitudes of those around them. Theirs story shows how the personal is political.

### **Marsha P. Johnson**

Marsha P. Johnson was a gay liberation activist and self-identified drag queen. Johnson was a founding member of the Gay Liberation Front and co-founded the gay and transvestite advocacy organization S.T.A.R. (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries) which later founded the STAR House, a shelter for gay and trans street kids. Popular figure in New York's gay and art scenes, Johnson modeled for Andy Warhol and performed with the drag troupe, Hot Peaches. Known for decades as a welcoming presence in the streets of Greenwich Village, Johnson was called "mayor of Christopher Street." Later Johnson was an AIDS activist with ACT UP.

### **Silvia Rivera**

Silvia Rivera was a Latina American gay liberation and transgender rights activist. A founding member of the Gay Liberation Front in 1969, Rivera worked for the rights of people of color and low-income LGBT people. Resisting moves toward gay assimilation into mainstream society, and as someone who suffered from systematic poverty and racism, Rivera sought to amplify the voices of the most vulnerable members of the gay community: drag queens, homeless youth, gay inmates in prison and jail, and transgender people.

### **Gay Liberation Front**

The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was a coalition of gay liberation groups formed in New York in 1969 immediately after the Stonewall rebellion. The GLF advocated for sexual liberation for all people and sought to transforming the idea of the nuclear family. GLF also included opposition to militarism, racism, and sexism. GLF members organized the first gay rights march in New York shortly after Stonewall. GLF dissolved in 1973.

### **Gay Activists Alliance**

The Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) was founded in New York six months after Stonewall by dissident members of the Gay Liberation Front to focus solely on gay and lesbian rights, declaring themselves politically neutral with desires to work within the political system. GAA formed sub-committees for focus on political projects, police power, fair municipal employment law, fair tax, municipal government, state government, legal issues, news, leaflets

and graphics, fundraising, social affairs, orientations, and agitprop. GAA co-organized Christopher Street Liberation Day events and New York's first gay pride parade on June 28, 1970 celebrating the anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion.

### **Mattachine Society**

The Mattachine Society, founded in 1950, was one of the earliest LGBT rights organizations in the U.S. Labor activist Harry Hay formed the group with a collection of male friends in Los Angeles to protect and improve the rights of gay men. Branches formed in other cities and by 1961 the Society had splintered into regional groups. Mattachine organized protests at the U.N. and the White House in 1965 to protest prison work camps for homosexuals in Cuba. Mattachine Midwest has been inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame.

### **Oscar Wilde Bookshop**

The Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, founded November 24, 1967, was the first bookstore devoted to gay and lesbian authors. Its founder, Craig Rodwell, was an active member of the Mattachine Society and the bookshop was the site of planning and organizing for the New York's first gay pride. Frequent visitors to the bookshop included Harvey Milk, with whom Rodwell had an affair in 1962.

### **Bayard Rustin**

Bayard Rustin was an African American gay man who was a prominent figure in social movements for civil rights, socialism, nonviolence, and gay rights. After the civil rights legislation of 1964–65, Rustin became the head of the AFL–CIO's A Philip Randolph Institute, promoting the integration of formerly all-white unions and the unionization of African Americans. Due to criticism over his sexuality, he usually acted as an influential behind-the-scenes adviser to civil-rights leaders. He was an advisor to Martin Luther King, 1960-68, during which time he was out to Dr. King. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously by President Obama.

### **Harry Hay**

Harry Hay was a gay rights activist and labor advocate who founded the Mattachine Society in 1950. He held a belief in the cultural minority status of homosexuals which led him to take a stand against the move toward assimilation advocated by other gay rights campaigners. He was a co-founder of the Los Angeles chapter of the Gay Liberation Front in 1969. Hay has been described as "the Founder of the Modern Gay Movement" and "the father of gay liberation." He co-founded the Radical Faeries.

### **Frank Kameny**

Frank Kameny was among the most significant figures in the struggles for gay rights. After he was fired from his civilian job with the U.S. Army in 1957 due to his homosexuality, he appealed his firing and became the first known gay civil rights claim pursued in a U.S. court. He co-founded the Washington, D.C. chapter of Mattachine in 1961 and in 1965 organized the first group to picket the White House on gay rights issues. In 1963, he launched a campaign to overturn D.C. sodomy laws, personally drafting a bill that finally passed in 1993. He also worked

to remove the classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder from the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

**Randy Wicker**

Randy Wicker was an author, activist, blogger and eyewitness to the Stonewall rebellion on June 28, 1969. He joined the New York chapter of Mattachine in 1958 and founded the Homosexual League of New York in 1962. He was the first openly gay person to appear on East Coast television (1964) and is credited with organizing the first known gay rights demonstration in New York in 1964 when he and others picketed the Whitehall Street Induction Center in New York City after the confidentiality of gay men's draft records was violated.

**Stephen Donaldson**

Stephen Donaldson (born Robert Anthony Martin, Jr., aka Donny the Punk) was a bisexual political activist best known as founder of the first gay student organization, the Student Homophile League at Columbia University, and as the first person to fight a discharge from the U.S. military for homosexuality. He was also active in prison reform and is known for his writing about punk rock and subculture. In 1966 he met Frank Kameny, who greatly shaped his ideology and activism.