Archives and Records

Finding Aid

COLLECTION NUMBER: Coll.27
TITLE: Papers of the Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator: Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry
Title: Papers of the Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry
Extent: 8 boxes
Repository: The History Project, Archives and Records

Finding aid prepared for The History Project, Archives and Records Department by Amy Kennedy, Volunteer, under the supervision of Libby Bouvier and Andrew Elder, 2008-2009.

SUBJECT TERMS

Subject Names:

Civil Rights
Constitutional Conventions
Constitutional Interpretation
Interfaith
Gay Rights
Gay Marriage
Marriage
Marriage Rights
Religion
Religious Coalitions
Referendums
Same Sex Marriage

Subject Topics:

Civil Rights - Massachusetts
Civil Rights – United States
Constitutional Law – Massachusetts
Constitutional Law – United States
Gay Couples – Legal Status, Laws, etc – Massachusetts
Gay Couples – Legal Status, Laws, etc – United States
Gay Liberation Movement – Massachusetts
Gay Liberation Movement – United States
Gay Rights - Massachusetts
Lesbian Couples – Legal Status, Law, etc. – Massachusetts
Lesbian Couples – Legal Status, Law, etc. – United States
Lesbian Rights – Massachusetts
Marriage - Massachusetts
Marriage – United States
Same Sex Marriage – Law and Legislation – United States

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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HISTORICAL ABSTRACT

Historically in Massachusetts, and in other states, attempts by same-sex couples to apply for and receive marriage licenses were met with refusals by public officials to grant a license to same-sex couples.

As a response to those attempts a lawsuit was filed in Suffolk Superior Court in Massachusetts on April 11, 2001 by lead attorney Mary Bonauto, of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, GLAD.

The case, Goodridge v. Dept. of Public Health, had 7 plaintiff couples who had applied for and were denied marriage licenses in Massachusetts. The court ruled against the plaintiff couples in May 2002. GLAD attorneys immediately appealed the case directly to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC).

Oral Arguments were heard in the case March 4, 2003, and in November, the Court ruled in favor of the plaintiff couples, allowing city and town clerks in the Commonwealth to begin issuing marriage licenses to same sex couples as of May 17, 2004.

The organization, Freedom to Marry Coalition of Massachusetts (FTMC-FreedomtoMarry.org) had been engaged in grassroots education, advocacy and lobbying in support of civil marriage rights for same sex couples since 1993.

The FTMC also played a key role in the founding and growth of the Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry, RCFM. The RCFM was formed by a group of clergy who met informally at a FTMC function in 1997. One of the co-founders was Rabbi Howard Berman, (see also The History Project, MS. COL. 26, Howard Berman Collection).

The RCFM was a group of more than 700 clergy, congregations, and organizations from 23 faith traditions, including the United Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church, the Unitarian Universalist Association and Reform Judaism, Roman Catholics and others. Not many Roman Catholic Priests signed the declaration of support. On the 1000 signer Declaration of
Support there was one Catholic Priest (Apostolic) who signed. There were members of various Roman Catholic parishes who would later sign a statement of support targeted at non-clergy Catholic supporters of same-sex marriage rights.

From 1997, RCFM spanned approximately 8 years, from the period of time preceding the Goodridge Case to after the favorable ruling to the constitutional convention in Sept. 2005, where the anti-gay amendment banning same sex marriage was defeated, until the organization officially disbanded in 2007.

Administrative personnel ran the day to day operation of RCFM. These included Executive Director, Rabbi Devon Lerner; Outreach Coordinator, Alex Hivoltze-Jimenez; Assistant Director, Margaret (Maggie) Crowley; Program Manager and Administrator (part-time), Carlos French; and a loaned intern from the Freedom to Marry Coalition, Katie McDonough. The position of Director of Community Outreach was proposed and created in 2005. Before that time, Alex Hivoltze-Jimenez held the position of political director. All positions were paid positions except the internship. Two clergy acted as executive directors of RCFM, the first, and longtime director, was Rabbi Devon Lerner. Later, The Rev. Anne Fowler, who served as president of the board of directors, would serve as acting executive director.

The RCFM was primarily funded by grants and donations from member organizations and individuals. An example of the 2005-2006 budget included $75,000 in grants and $101,000 in donations. Grants included the Gill Foundation, Mass Equality, and the Unitarian based Fund for a Just Society.

Funding allowed the RCFM coordinators to speak to numerous congregations and other gatherings, organize religious support in the form of signers to the Declaration of Support for the Freedom to Marry, and lobby against attempts to pass a constitutional amendment at constitutional conventions banning gay marriage by those opposed to same sex marriage rights, such as Mass Resistance.

The success of the RCFM was evidenced by the funding, innovation, and grassroots support for same sex marriage in Massachusetts. The RCFM remains today a very successful social justice model not only in the realm of LGBT equal rights in Massachusetts but nationally in the general area of civil rights and liberties.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection, 7 record cartons, includes documents and printed materials, photographs and digital media, and oversized newsprint.

The materials cover topic areas such as administration, lobbying, religious services, constituent information, legislator information, and event planning including statements, press releases, event planning documents, declarations of support, materials on how congregations contact the public on controversial subjects, and administrative documents outlining the day to day administration of the coalition.

Also included were numerous banners and signs used at various functions of the RCFM. These banners portray various congregations support for same sex marriage rights. Banners were used at events at the State House, at various places of worship, press conferences and rallies.

Media and Oversized items in Series I are in two separate boxes, as noted in the finding aid.
DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

Series I: Conferences, Worship Services, Song Lyrics

Series I consists of materials pertaining to the various programs and events of the RCFM. Included in this series were clergy testimonials, highlights of the RCFM’s history and work, Call to Conscience Campaign, RCFM Declaration of Support, grant information and the 2005-2006 budget.

Series I is further divided into 2 subseries:

Mixed Media Box (see Box 7), containing DVDs, CD-ROMS, of advertising materials as well as administrative computer backups.

Oversize Box (see Box 8), containing newsprint clippings and also copies of complete newspapers concerning same sex marriage in Massachusetts.

Series II: Administrative and Operational Materials and Documents

Series II contains items mostly about the administration of the coalition. Included are documents on fundraising, donations, house parties, canvassing, staff information, resumes, the admin. Database, volunteer documents, holiday cards sent out by the coalition, the Goodridge Decision Press Conference materials and general operational information. Also included in this series is the master list and congregational lists of the signers to the Declaration of Religious Support for the Freedom to Marry.

Series III: Partner Organizations, Clergy, Congregations and Lobbying

Series III consists of information and materials on partners and partner organizations, clergy, Roman Catholics, congregations, and lobbying. Included within this series are denomination position statements, such as United Church of Christ, Religious Society of Friends, Dignity Boston (Catholic LGBT organization), Episcopal Church, African American Groups, Temple Israel, and Unitarian Universalists. Items in the series pertaining to the Catholic Church include Cardinal O’Malley’s statement on the Roman Catholic Church’s opposition to same sex marriage rights in MA. Also included are testimonies supporting same-sex marriage rights from Roman Catholics. The materials on lobbying primarily are guidelines for contacting and lobbying legislators.

Series IV: RCFM Program Events

Series IV includes mainly RCFM program event materials. These include the Jason and DeMarco concert information, materials from an interfaith panel about the film, “For the Bible Tells Me So,” “Neither Fair nor Just (2006), and “Stand Up For Marriage Equality” documentation.

Series V: Music and Song Lyrics, Hymns, Press and Other Statements

Series V includes music and song materials, W.O.W – Witness our Welcome Event, Materials on “Stop the Anti-Gay Amendment,” RCFM’s 10th Anniversary Celebration materials, Roman Catholic Launch Statement supporting marriage equality, and
press materials on RCFM’s response to Focus on Family’s “Love Won Out” anti-gay, anti same sex marriage campaign. Also included in this series are numerous RCFM banners and signs of congregational support.

SERIES AND FOLDER LIST

Box 1

Series I: Conferences, Worship Services, Song Lyrics

Folder 1: Interfaith Services
Folder 2: Music
Folder 3: Song Lyrics, Hymns
Folder 4: W.O.W. Witness Our Welcome 2003
Folder 5: Praise Songs for Equal Marriage March
Folder 6: RCFM 7th Anniversary Celebration and Awards Presentation
Folder 7: RCFM 10th Anniversary Celebration and Awards Presentation
Folder 8: Stop the Anti-Gay Amendment
Folder 9: Roman Catholic Launch Statement
Folder 10: Press Statement: Responding to Focus on Family’s “Love Won Out” conference
Folder 11: Mass Equality Packet of Materials and Documents pertaining to administration and operation, includes proposed 2005 budget (marked confidential and left in collection).

Mixed Media SubSeries I: Electronic Media (see Box 7)

Folder: VHS Tape: RCFM Conference 2/6/01
Folder: VHS Tape: “Gays and God: Being LGBT and a Person of Faith” (3 copies)
Folder: DVD Disk: May 17th Video – Same Sex Marriage (2 copies)
Folder: DVD Disk: Saving Marriage (9 Copies)
Folder: CD-ROM: RCFM Computer Backup 9/18/05 (1 copy)
Folder: CD-ROM: Con Con 11/9/06, Constitutional Convention Rally Photos (1 copy)
Folder: CD-ROM: RCFM Photos 04-05 (1 copy)
Folder: CD-ROM: Directory Information (1 copy)
Folder: CD-ROM: RCFM Database 12/28 (1 copy)

Oversize Sub Series II: Newsprint (see Box 8)

Folder: Newsprint, clippings/photos, Freedom to Marry, Same Sex Marriage
Folder: Misc. Clippings/Newsprint, Same Sex Marriage
Folder: Misc. Clippings/Newsprint, Same Sex Marriage
Loose Newspapers: Same Sex Marriage
Box 2

Series II: Administrative and Operational Materials and Documents

Folder 1: Photocopies of checks for Donations for RCFM. (removed from collection)
Folder 2: Online Merchant Data (removed from collection)
Folder 3: Paypal Information for RCFM
Folder 4: Fundraising Requests/Correspondence
Folder 6: Photos of Fundraising Stoles
Folder 7: Fundraising House Parties 4/07
Folder 8: RCFM Fundraising Board/call lists
Folder 9: Materials and Designs: RCFM T-Shirts
Folder 10: RCFM Declaration Forms
Folder 11: RCFM Signatories: Declaration of Religious Support
Folder 12: RCFM Signer Lists (A)
Folder 13: RCFM Signer Lists and Forms (B)
Folder 14: RCFM Signers 2004
Folder 15: Unitarian Universalist Assoc. Signers Dec. 2004
Folder 16: RCFM Signers 2005
Folder 17: RCFM Signers May 2006
Folder 18: Unitarian Universalist Assoc Signers May 2006
Folder 19: RCFM Declaration Signers
Folder 20: RCFM Catholic Signers
Folder 21: RCFM New Signers
Folder 22: RCFM: Over 1000 Signers of the Declaration of Religious Support
Folder 23: RCFM Bank Statements
Folder 24: RCFM Invoices
Folder 26: RCFM Bank Statements 2003
Folder 27: RCFM Resumes/Ads
Folder 28: RCFM Job Descriptions
Folder 29: RCFM Position Proposal: Director of Community Outreach
Folder 30: RCFM Employee Records/Data
Folder 31: RCFM Database 2005 by Region
Folder 32: Travaglini-Lees Amendment (Anti-Marriage Campaign)
Folder 33: RCFM Volunteer Materials
Folder 34: RCFM Fundraising Materials
Folder 35: Press Conference Originals
Folder 36: Press Conference: Pre-Goodridge Decision
Folder 37: RCFM 2003 Historical Papers/Documents
Folder 39: Holiday Cards 2005
Folder 40: Clergy Lists/Press Conferences
Folder 41: Press Release: Prayer Breakfast – Awards
Folder 42: House Party Canvassing Materials (A)
Folder 43: House Party Canvassing Materials (B)
Folder 44: House Party Canvassing Materials (C)
Folder 45: Media Packets – Canvassing
Folder 46: Misc. Materials/Press Release Drafts
Folder 47: Press Release Bishop Gayle Harris, 1000 Signer/Misc Documents
Folder 48: Quincy Zoning Restrictions on Religious Signs/U.U. Church
Box 3

Series III: Partner Organizations, Clergy, Congregations and Lobbying

Folder 1: Partner Organizations: NARAL – National Abortion Rights Action League Information
Folder 2: Partner Organizations: NGLTF – National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
Folder 3: Partner Organizations: HRC – Human Rights Campaign
Folder 4: Draft Statement Senator Marian Walsh
Folder 5: Representative Sr. Fleur – Remarks from the Constitutional Convention in February
Folder 6: United Church of Christ, U.C.C.
Folder 7: Religious Society of Friends
Folder 8: Dignity Boston – LGBT Catholic Organization
Folder 9: African American Organizations (Black Justice Coalition)
Folder 10: Bishop Thomas Shaw – Episcopal Diocese
Folder 11: Rev. Irene Monroe, Curriculum Vitae
Folder 12: Materials: Boston Area Sexuality and Spirituality Institute
Folder 13: Democracy Project
Folder 14: Ray Hammond Testimony on Same Sex Marriage
Folder 15: Temple Israel
Folder 16: “It’s Wrong to Vote On Rights” materials
Folder 17: NGLTF Taskforce – Same Sex Couples
Folder 18: Building Support for Same Sex Marriage—The Bible and Same Sex Marriage
Folder 19: RCFM Sermons
Folder 20: Wedding Kit
Folder 21: Research/Polls from Research-PR Firm
Folder 22: NY Supreme Court Decision 2005
Folder 23: Goodridge Decision (excerpts)
Folder 24: Quotes for Marriage Equality Meeting
Folder 25: Testimony Books
Folder 26: Same Sex Wedding Guide
Folder 27: Denominational Position Papers (A)
Folder 27: Denominational Statements (B)
Folder 28: Misc. Clipping/Article/Open Letter to MLK, Jr.
Folder 29: Biblical Responses
Folder 30: Same Sex Publications: Saints and Sinners Press Kit
Folder 31: U.U.A. – (Unitarian Universalist Assoc)
Folder 32: Clergy Referral Forms
Folder 33: Conservative Keshet Rabbis (gay friendly)
Folder 34: U.U.A. (Universalist) Call List (Lynn, MA)
Folder 35: Clergy Lists
Folder 36: Lawmaker/Clergy Lists
Folder 37: Rabbis List—Signers/non-signers, March 2007
Folder 38: RCFM Clergy Referral Forms (Filled Out)
Folder 39: RCFM Clergy Referral Forms (blank)
Folder 40: “Don’t Let the Catholic Hierarchy Ban Equal Marriage” Stickers
Folder 41: Catholic Priest Responses
Folder 42: Roman Catholic Statement on Civil Same Sex Marriage
Folder 43: Catholic Phone Banking
Folder 44: Catholic Publications/Materials
Folder 45: Catholic Statement of Support
Folder 46: Roman Catholics for the Freedom to Marry (Advertisements 2006)
Folder 47: Letter to Cardinal O’Malley
Folder 48: Catholic Signers to the Declaration who wrote comments
Folder 49: Roman Catholic Newsletters and Information
Folder 50: Roman Catholic Testimonies
Folder 51: RCFM Highlights 2004-2005
Folder 54: Hard Copies: Testimonies: Same Sex Marriage
Folder 55: “Meeting Your Legislator” Materials
Folder 56: Brockton Leaders for Equality
Folder 57: Brockton Lobbying Efforts/documents
Folder 58: Legislators – Materials and Information (note: throughout the lobbying materials, legislators are called “lawmakers” by RCFM personnel)

Box 5

Series IV: RCFM Program Events

Folder 1: EqualMarriage.org – website
Folder 2: Episcopal Diocese of Mass – Bishop Tom Shaw, Letters to Legislators
Folder 3: Misc. Kate’s Legislators (Kate worked at RCFM in an administrative capacity)
Folder 4: Postcard Drive/Initiative (filled out)
Folder 5: Clergy Lobbying 2006 – documents/Advocacy Reports
Folder 6: Legislative Questionnaire – (blank)
Folder 7: RCFM Letters to Legislators 2006
Folder 8: Talking Points, legislator Lists – Guides
Folder 9: Letters to Legislators, delivered 11/9/06
Folder 10: “Call To Conscience” Weekend
Folder 11: Lobbying Materials – “From Soup to Nuts”
Folder 12: Legislative Information and Documents
Folder 13: Letters to Legislators – general
Folder 14: Letters to RCFM from Legislators
Folder 15: Lobbying and Churches – Guidelines 2006
Folder 16: Packet and Legislators Nov 6, 2006
Folder 17: Meeting with Legislators “Soup to Nuts” 2005 Soloman
Folder 18: Contact Your Legislator – Flyers and Postcards
Folder 19: Lobbying Postcards – Blank “Dear Legislator…”
Folder 20: Legislators Contact Information
Folder 21: State House Information
Folder 22: State House Event Form
Folder 23: “Stop the Anti-gay Amendment” Packet
Folder 24: RCFM Response to Focus on Family “Love Won Out” Anti Gay Program
Folder 25: Press Documents Marriage Equality Rally
Folder 26: Misc. Photos, Contact Sheets and 8X10 Photo
Folder 27: Media Releases
Folder 28: Northeast Region of Central Conference of American Rabbis
Folder 29: RCFM Advertisements
Folder 30: Press Release Rabbi Jordan Millstein
Folder 31: RCFM Lobbying Materials and Talking Points
Folder 32: Media Interview Guide/PR
Folder 33: Talking Points
Folder 34: Press Contacts
Folder 35: Clergy Press Statements
Folder 36: Permission for Media Use RCFM
Folder 37: Clergy “Letter to the Editor 2007” Rev. Diane Teichert
Folder 38: RCFM Photos
Folder 39: Newswire Acct/Tax Info
Folder 40: Roman Catholic Statement Press Conference 2005
Folder 41: Signup Forms, Same Sex Couples Married, Clergy – Wedding
Folder 42: RCFM Donor Lists
Folder 43: Couples Forms/Media/Completed Couples Forms
Folder 44: Press Packet, Kits
Folder 45: Declaration of Religious Support
Folder 46: Jason and DeMarco Information, Ceremony and Materials
Folder 47: “For the Bible Tells Me So” Panel Discussion
Folder 48: Constitutional Convention Day, State House, June 14, 2007 (referred to as “con con”)
Folder 49: 2005 Freedom to Marry Valentine Gala
Folder 50: New Hampshire Humanities Symposium, March 2007
Folder 51: RCFM Speaker Program
Folder 52: 1000 Signer, Declaration of Religious Support Certificate
Folder 53: 1000 Signer, State House Event, associated materials, includes some photos
Folder 54: 1000 Signer, Signed Certificate, photos, press kit
Folder 55: Programs, Fall 2003-Fall2004
Folder 56: May 2007 Constitutional Convention, (con con)
Folder 59: RCFM 2006 Awards Ceremony, includes Sen. Diane Wilkerson as the 2006 Award Recipient
Folder 60: “Neither Fair Nor Just” 2006 RCFM Brochure
Folder 61: RCFM Demonstration in Response to Tremont Temple Liberty Sunday Mitt Romney Speech (Oct. 2006)
Folder 62: “Stand Up for Equality” Week (March/April 2006)
Folder 63: “Stop the Hate” Candlelight Vigil – RCFM Co-Sponsor Jan 2007, includes GMDVP
Folder 64: Prayer Vigil Against Violence Materials
Folder 65: Blessings of Joy and Thanksgiving Materials
Folder 66: Interfaith Programs – Same Sex Marriage
Folder 67: Misc Email, “Reclaiming our Values.”
Folder 68: Interfaith Celebration
Folder 69: RCFM Celebration
Folder 70: Feb 2, 2005 Awards Luncheon, Prayer Breakfast, includes Bay Windows Article
Folder 71: RCFM Blessings of Joy and Thanksgiving, Old South Church 5/15/05
Box 6

Series V: Music and Song Lyrics, Hymns, Press and Other Statements

Folder 1: Interfaith Services
Folder 2: Music
Folder 3: Song Lyrics, Gospel, Hymns
Folder 4: "Witness Our Welcome" (W.O.W.) 2003 Event
Folder 5: Praise Songs for Equal Marriage March
Folder 6: RCFM 7th Anniversary Celebration and Awards Presentation
Folder 7: RCFM 10th Anniversary Celebration and Awards Presentation
Folder 8: “Stop the Anti-Gay Amendment” Event/Materials
Folder 9: Roman Catholic Launch Statement, supporting Same Sex Marriage
Folder 10: Press Statement: Responding to Focus on Family’s “Love Won Out” Anti Gay Program

Box 7: Media, removed from Box 1.

Box 8: Oversize materials, removed from Box 1.