



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

ADDRESSING LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE



March 30, 2026



MY STORY:

ALARM IN THE FIREHOUSE













Alarm in the Firehouse

A Memoir of
America's First Openly Gay Professional Firefighter

2nd Edition



R. Kevin Mallinson







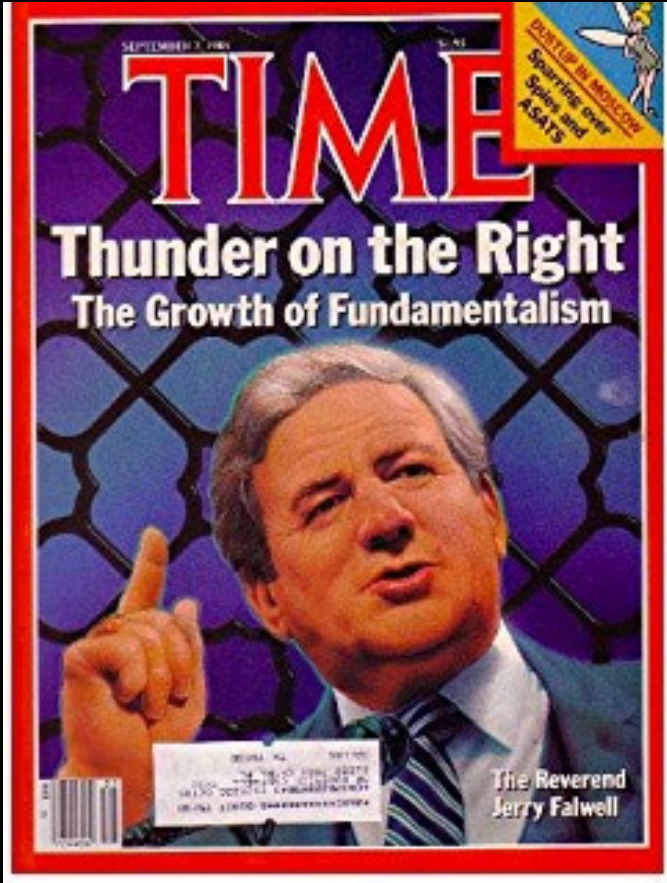












Shows
Variable circulation with 48 per cent change of subscribers. Lists in the mid-70s and high around \$6. (Details, Page 2A)
TODAY'S TEMPERATURES
75° 72° 70° 68° 65°

Final Edition
Newsstand price higher in air delivery cities
87th Year - No. 100

The Miami Herald

Wednesday, June 8, 1987
Florida's Complete Newspaper
78 Pages

Outcome an Expression Of Fears and Emotions

It was a stunning "flip." Except for a few isolated precincts, the message was the same from the sprawling suburbs of Coral Gables to the beach areas of Liberty City to Little Havana and white suburbs of South Dade.

There the most significant of the Save Our Children leaders could not have anticipated to joust a mandate.

Dade County voters, confronted with one of the most hearse tours ever to face a community at the ballot box, made it loud and clear Tuesday.

Hundreds Were Interviewed
To find out why Dade residents voted the way they did on the gay-rights amendment, nine Herald reporters interviewed experts as well as hundreds of voters at precincts representative of different segments of the county's voters.

High School, put it this way: "I have nothing against what people do in their own homes, but other people shouldn't be forced to accept it."

Martin Fishman, 66, stepped out of a Miami Beach precinct and said: "The issue isn't buses rights, it's a general human-rights issue to be matter of trying to make something right that's wrong."

Others, interviewed at random by Miami Herald reporters as they cast their ballots, were expressing the conviction that:

"Sexual perversion is not a legitimate human-rights issue to be spelled out by county ordinance. Open acknowledgment of homosexuality is not accepted as a normal part of community life, especially among school teachers who might serve as role models for children."

There should be no further expression of the climate of most precincts.

There were some of the thoughtful in the midst of about 294,000 Dade citizens who delivered a landslide rejection of the so-called gay rights ordinance.

WAS IT WANT'? Not, and personal decisions weren't always

Turn to Page 18A Col. 1

Gay-Rights Law Is Crushed

'Decency' Is Winner, Anita Says

Praises Vote for 'Normal Majority'

By CARL HAAAMAN
Special to The Herald

An apple-cheeked Anita Bryant danced a jig and emerged from her Miami Beach villa Tuesday night to proclaim with fundamentalist fervor a victory for "God and decency" in America.

"The normal majority has said 'Enough, enough, enough,'" she said in a statement to reporters at the Ziegler Room, 11 S.W. 15th St. in Miami Beach.

"ALL AMERICA and all the world have heard what the people have said."

Bryant, her husband, Bob Green, and the couple's four children arrived at the hotel at 8:15 p.m. and posed briefly for a family portrait.

Green leaned over, put his arm around his wife, kissed her on the mouth and said: "This is what heterosexuals do, friends."

Wearing a pale-blue dress and a sparkling fishbone pendant around her neck, Bryant beamed, thanked the voters of Dade County and declared that "this is the day when the ordinance that led the country through nearly five months of fear is repealed."

Gay Campaign leaders, who had mounted an exhaustive, \$250,000 campaign to win voters, were deeply disappointed with the outcome but still professed hope their cause eventually will prevail.

"We've taken one step backward and two steps forward," said minority leader Jack Campbell, head of the Dade County Coalition for Human Rights. "It did bring the issue gay rights to the attention of the public. I fear some individuals will take this as a victory, it's a step toward better

Gay Leaders: We Shall Not Be Mired
...Leonard Matlofsky, Arlie Stout, G. Michael McKay

Margin of Victory Greater Than 2-1

OB Renovation, Other Votes

By THOMAS STANGER
Special to The Herald

Dade County voters barred the gay-rights ordinance by more than a 2-1 margin Tuesday after an emotional campaign-crucial vote that had the whole nation watching.

Today the laws of God and the cultural values of man have been vindicated," proclaimed singer Anita Bryant in a victory appearance with her husband and other leaders of Save Our Children, the group that forced the issue on the ballot and into the national spotlight with a petition drive launched in Dade's churches.

About 45 per cent of Dade's voters, who underwent a blitz of advertising from both pro- and anti-repeal forces for the last two weeks, turned out, voting 69 per cent for repeal — a lopsided margin that surpassed both sides.

The final vote was 202,219 for repeal and 88,263 against.

Asked by the Herald's Save Our Children official, and they would never "go national," to reveal gay-rights laws in cities around the country, including San Francisco and Washington, D.C.

GAY CAMPAIGN leaders, who had mounted an exhaustive, \$250,000 campaign to win voters, were deeply disappointed with the outcome but still professed hope their cause eventually will prevail.

"We've taken one step backward and two steps forward," said minority leader Jack Campbell, head of the Dade County Coalition for Human Rights. "It did bring the issue gay rights to the attention of the public. I fear some individuals will take this as a victory, it's a step toward better

Turn to Page 18A Col. 2

Homophobia...stereotyping...stigmatization...discrimination...gay-bashing



STATION No 1

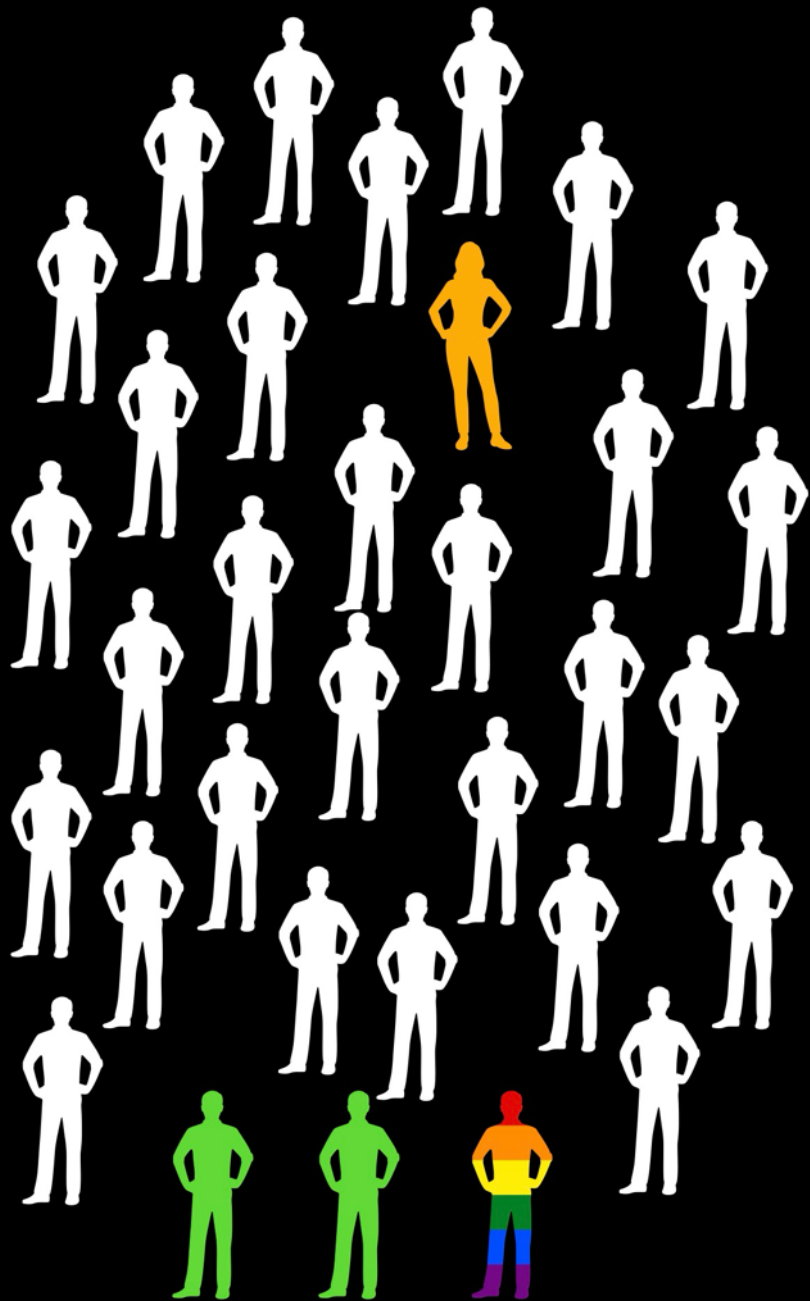


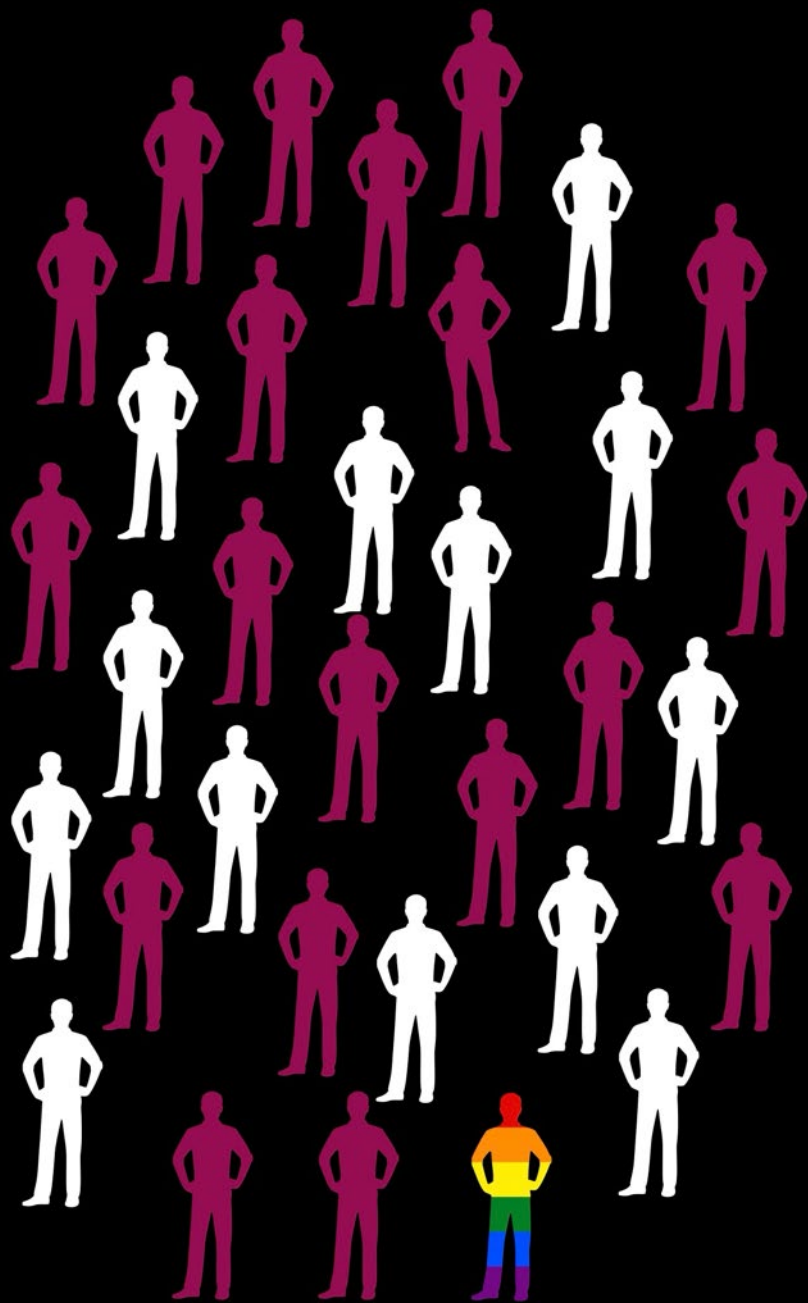






















Al Rahming

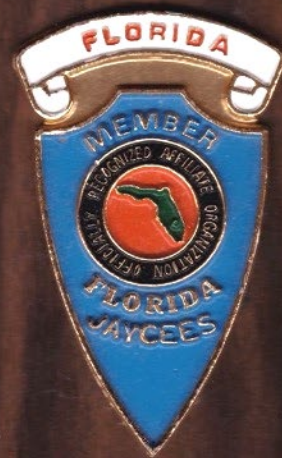
2nd Black firefighter hired into the KW Fire Department

Conch of Bahamian descent

**Gay Related Immune Deficiency
G.R.I.D.**



AIDS	Faggots
500	0



Kevin Mallinson



*In recognition of your service
to our community and selection as*

**OUTSTANDING YOUNG
FIREFIGHTER**

Key West Jaycees

1983





forgot

forgot





Winners of the recent twelve hour dance-a-thon held to raise money for Helpline, are, left to right, Billy Russell, third place, Kevin Mallinson, first place, and Lazaro Cordales, second place. The winners were determined by whoever brought most sponsorship money. A total of \$6,000 was raised. (KWC/Naent)

Life March 13, 1985 SunLife Editor Page 1

Helpline raises \$6,000

Larry Such, executive director of Key West HELPLINE, Inc., has announced that the twelve-hour Dance-A-Thon that was held on Tuesday, Jan. 29, was a "wonderful success, and we raised almost \$6,000 this time, half of the \$12,000 goal."

HELPLINE" he stated. First-prize winner was Kevin Mallinson of Key Haven, who will fly round-trip with a friend via Delta Airlines to New York City for three days and two nights at the Roosevelt Hotel. Such added, "the ready response from area residents to our call for help is a real credit to the Key West community. It is just his kind of support that reassures us that the commitment that HELPLINE has made to the Key West community is being recognized."





Heat put on gay fireman

Oh no! Not a vegetarian!

It may have been almost as difficult for the boys at the Key West Fire Station to accept that he was vegetarian as it was that their station had one of the first openly gay firefighters in the country, joked Kevin Mallison with his typical good humor.

Mallison said a sense of humor is what got him through his nearly four years on the Key West Fire Department, while his fellow workers tried to get him to leave the job.

"I was too strong. I had too good a sense of humor," Mallison said.

With his curly hair showing glints of red, and matching eyes of sienna, Mallison sometimes has an almost "impish" look about him, while at the same time being able to become quite serious.

Mallison said he wanted to be a fireman since he was "a little kid."

Mallison explained that his grandfather and his grandmother had been fire chiefs in England. He said that his grandfather had been fire chief of an English town and when in World War II all of the men in the town went to war, his grandmother took over his grandfather's position as fire chief.

"I've seen a picture of them both together in fire department uniforms," Mallison said. He said that when he told his parents he

had decided to become a firefighter his mother was "real excited," and his father "thought it was a good idea."

Mallison said that being a fireman was a "fantasy" for him ever since he was young, like the fantasies of hundreds of boys. The difference is Mallison is gay, and not the type to "hide in the closet," he said. And to top it off, he was applying for a job at the southernmost point of the United States in a department filled with local "Conchs."

"It's a close knit group where many are related to each other either by family or marriage and it's almost as if you're going into a family there," Mallison said.

However Mallison's entry into the department met with more than the usual family bickering.

"The first six months was real hell. They really wanted to humiliate me," Mallison. He explained that his "toughness" was tested by comments made by some of the other firefighters when he would enter the room, such as "I think they should take all the faggots and shoot them...stuff like that."

"They would tell 'faggot jokes' in front of me," Mallison said. I dealt with it with humor. I would kind of throw it back at them," he laughed.

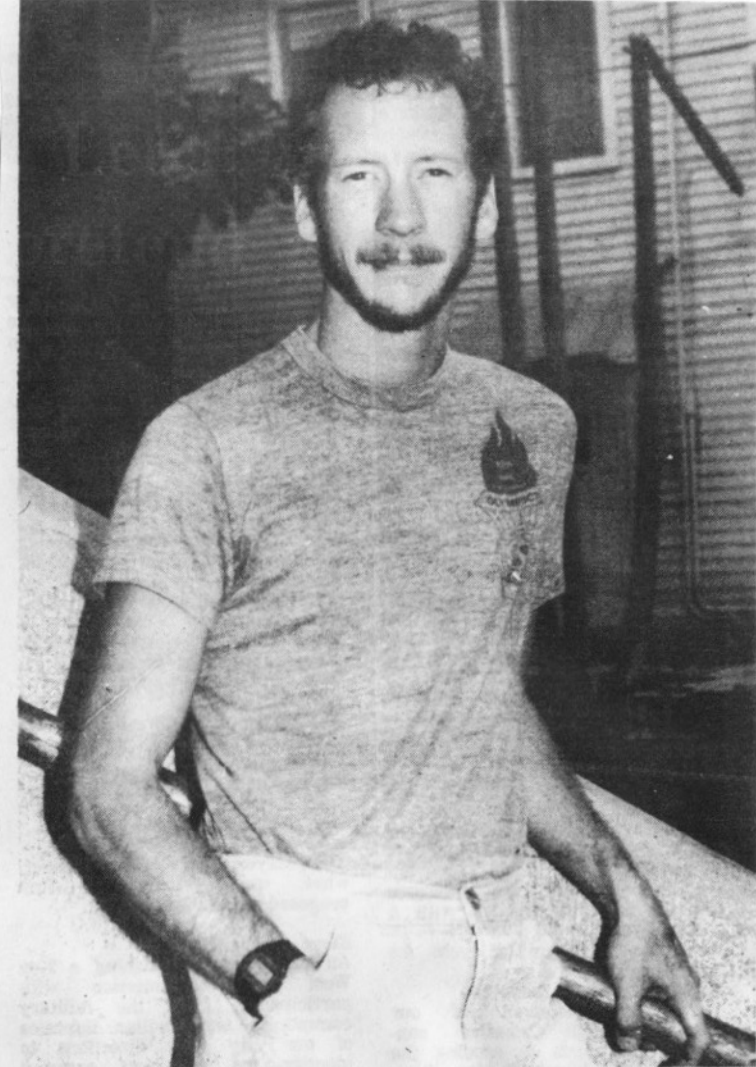
Mallison said that at one point he did, however, make a formal

request to have certain attempts at humiliation come to an end, and that was when someone began hanging articles about AIDS on the bulletin board everyday. "Some of them would have real derogatory remarks made about gay men dying of AIDS," he said.

"Most of time I could avoid it, but the more people that got sick, the harder it got," he says. "Finally I made a formal request to have it be brought to an end, and it did," he said.

"The Chief, Assistant Chief, Fire Marshall and Captains have always been super.

"I think he did his job very well. I found him to be...a very



Kevin Mallison

Local 1424 Annual Yearbook





Alarm in the Firehouse

A Memoir of
America's First Openly Gay Professional Firefighter

2nd Edition

R. Kevin Mallinson



Alarminthefirehouse.com

Alarm in the Firehouse

A Memoir of
America's First Openly Gay Professional Firefighter

2nd Edition



R. Kevin Mallinson



CHAPTER 6: Rear-End Man

The more I came to appreciate the unique aspects of life in the firehouse, the better I understood why my presence was such a disruption for some of the firemen. First, the fire service is based on a paramilitary structure, replete with ranks (Chief, Captains, Lieutenants, etc.) and a chain of command that adheres to relatively strict guidelines for behavior. This is intended to keep firefighters from arbitrarily deciding what they want to do at a fire scene; they must rely on orders from the officers who appreciated tactics, available resources, and personnel constraints. Above all, the command structure is designed to assure the safety of everyone at the fire scene. Each time I donned my KWFD uniform, I realized that I may have to follow orders without knowing their purpose. In other words, there is a surrendering of some individuality when joining a fire team. This was unlike any other job I had ever held. Nonetheless, I was the rookie with a lot to learn.

Each morning, the commanding officer at each of the three firehouses reported on their manpower status. If a fireman called in sick, for example, personnel would be readjusted by transferring an extra man from one station to another. Of course, temporary reassignments were also due to vacations and other foreseeable circumstances. So, a firehouse may need to 'borrow' a captain, lieutenant, or firefighter for a day or more. As a rookie firefighter, I was more likely to be temporarily transferred to fill in for a frontline firefighter at another station. One morning, I overheard Capt. Stephenson talking to his counterpart at another station.



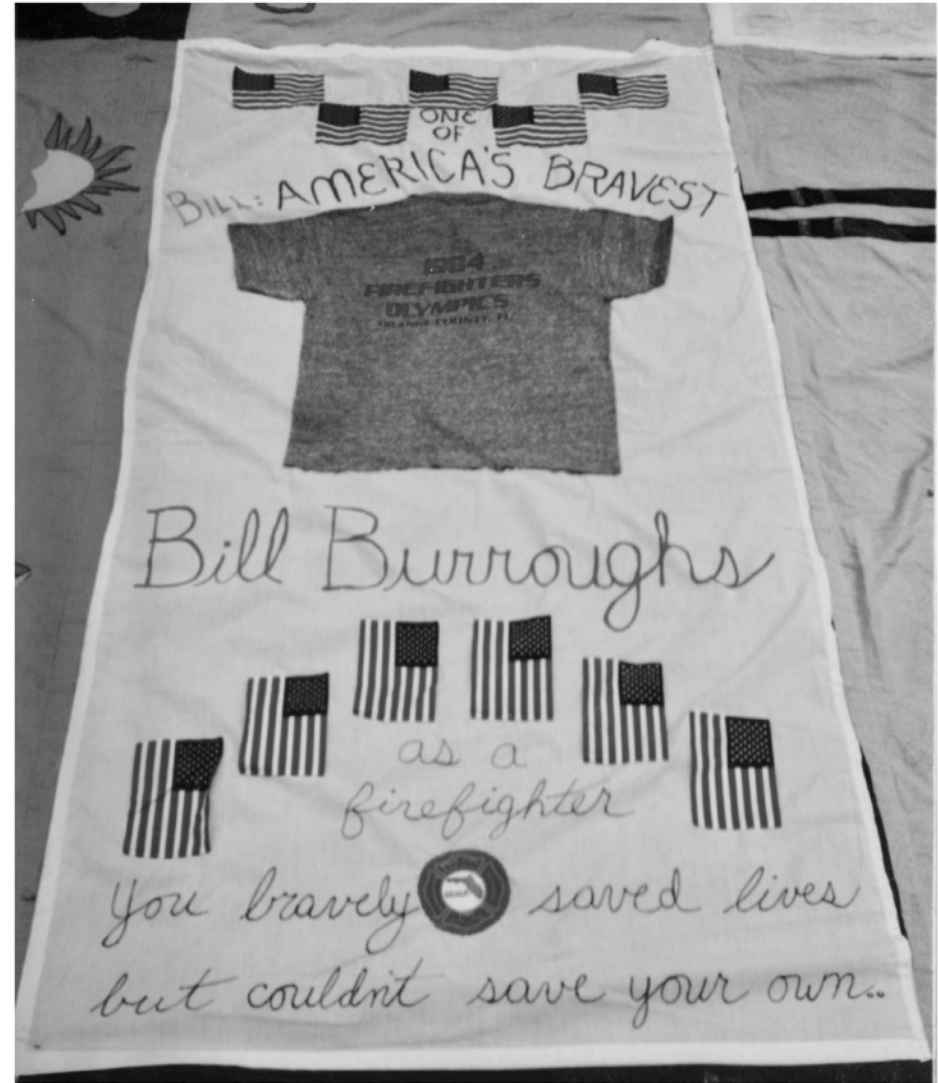
Kevin (1982)

CHAPTER 11: Fire College

There were three of us rookie firefighters that needed to complete the State of Florida Minimum Standards Training Course to earn our certification. Known as “Fire College”, the 6-week training was provided by the State Fire Marshal’s Office. Johnny, John, and I were to travel to Ocala, Florida in mid-March, staying at a motel for the training period. Johnny and John shared a room, and I had a room to myself. The rooming arrangement was no surprise. I am sure neither one of them would have felt comfortable sharing a motel room with ‘the gay guy’ for the next month and a half.

I barely knew John and Johnny, as we each worked on a different watch. Neither one talked with me about his plans for getting to Ocala. I think they traveled together. My partner and I stacked my motorcycle with everything I thought I would need for Fire College. I took a notebook and pencils, a variety of clothes, my personal grooming supplies, and a camera. I was quite nervous about the coming challenges. Joe, on the other hand, was excited for me and expressed complete faith in my abilities. On a rainy morning in March, I set out for the 8-hour drive. It rained the entire distance and I prayed that this was not an omen for the coming weeks.

I characterize Fire College as six weeks of ‘boot camp’ with burning buildings. The first thing Monday morning, 33 recruits from around the state met in the classroom for program orientation. The State Fire Marshall made a cameo appearance to welcome us to the facility. He highlighted

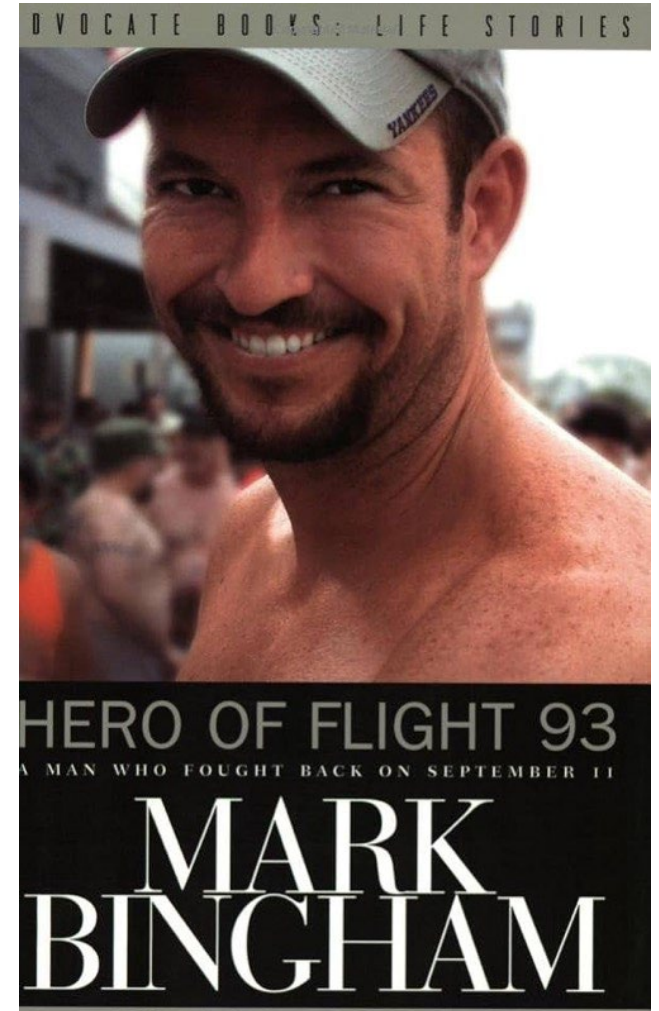
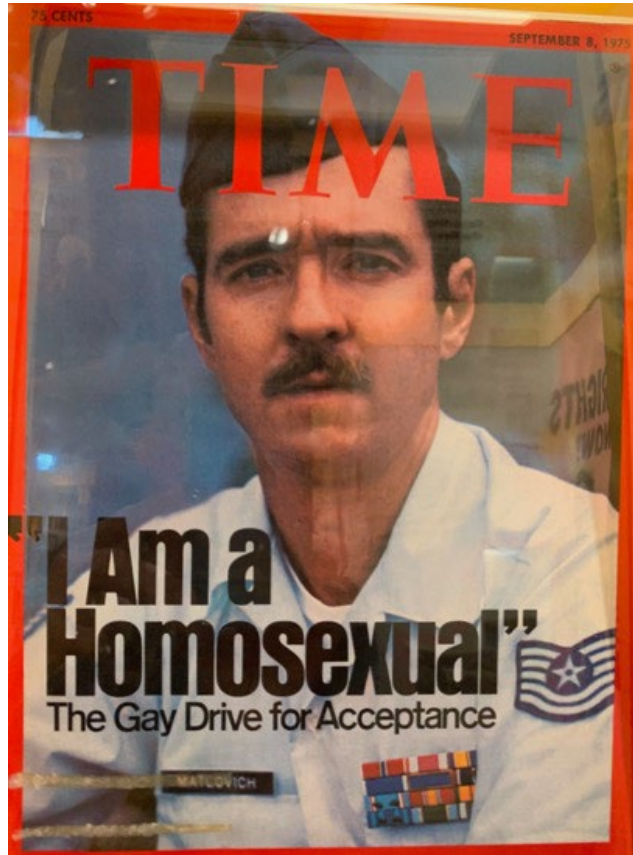
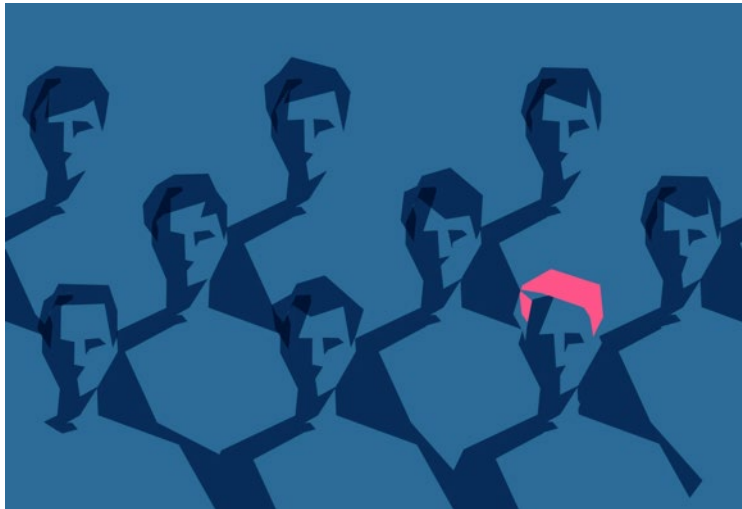


AIDS Quilt panel for Bill Burroughs



DISCUSSION

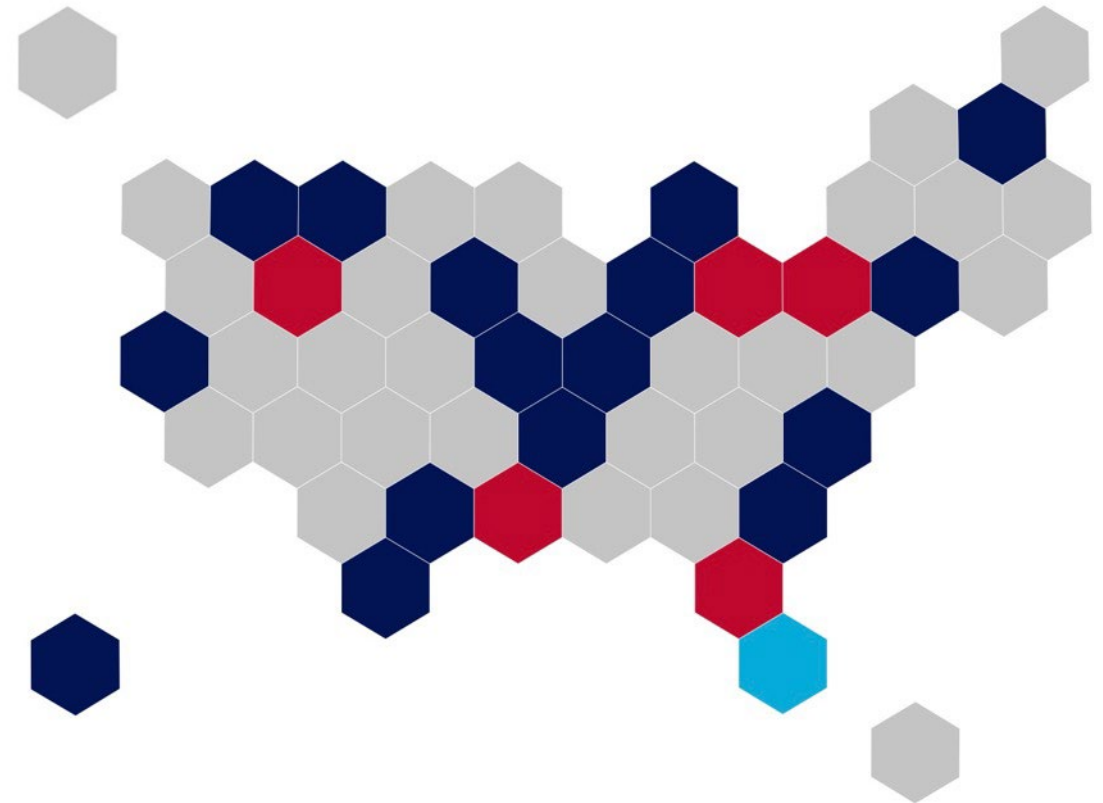
LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION: SHAME



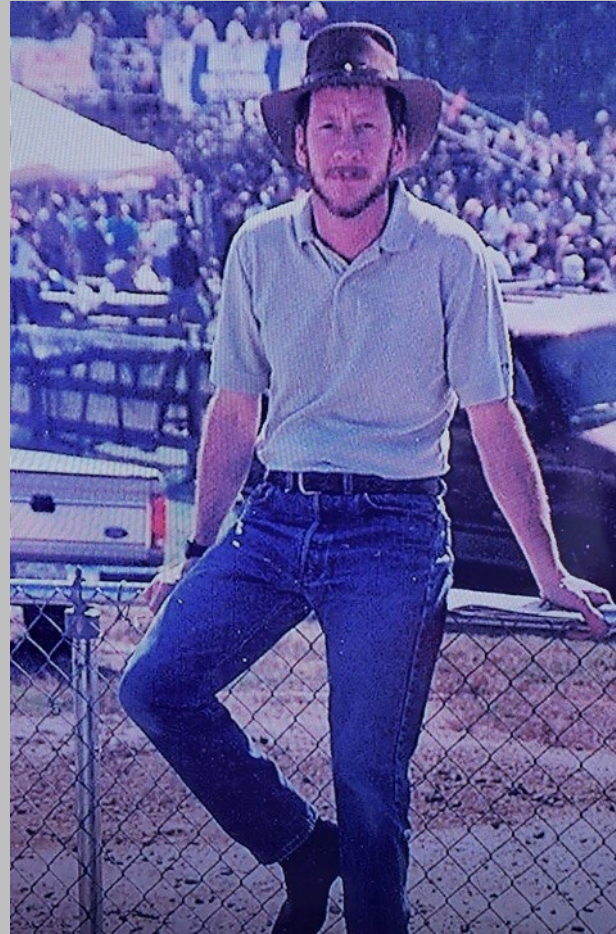
LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION: SHAME



VILIFICATION



Purposeful distortion of truth – ‘Lifestyle’



Purposeful distortion of truth - Relationships



***WHY TAKE LGBTQ+
DISCRIMINATION
SERIOUSLY?***



LGBTQ+ Discrimination is costly

Gay firefighter sues city for racial, sexual orientation discrimination
(San Francisco)

Gay firefighter sues, claims abusive work environment (Chicago)

Fireman claims he was removed from elite unit after colleagues branded him 'gay,' harassed him (New York City)

Gay Firefighter Files Lawsuit Alleging Boss Outed Him (White Plains)

BUDGET AND FUNDING

Equipment

Staffing

Maintenance



**Lewes Fire Chief Resigns amid “Derogatory
Comment” Investigation**

**COMMUNITIES YOU
SERVE**

**STAFFING AND
RECRUITMENT**



“Alarm in the Firehouse” is a must-read for fire service leaders to understand the experiences and pressures that “non-traditional” employees will face in your organization and their motivations for joining the fire service. For me, the interesting lesson in this book is the examples of company leadership that created an accepting work environment.”

John A. Donnelly Sr.
Fire and EMS Chief
District of Columbia Fire and EMS



COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS AND PUBLIC EDUCATION



10 WAYS TO ADDRESS LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION

How to Address LGBTQ+ Discrimination in the Workplace

1. **Establish a Non-Discrimination Policy:** Develop and clearly communicate a comprehensive non-discrimination policy that explicitly includes sexual orientation and gender identity as protected categories. Ensure all employees understand this policy and the consequences of violating it.
2. **Anti-Discrimination Training:** Provide regular training sessions on diversity, inclusion, and anti-discrimination, specifically addressing LGBTQ+ issues. This education can help create awareness and sensitivity among employees.
3. **Reporting Mechanisms:** Establish a confidential and accessible reporting system for employees to report instances of discrimination or harassment. Ensure that employees know how to use this system and feel safe doing so.
4. **Promptly Investigate Complaints:** Take all complaints seriously and conduct thorough and impartial investigations when allegations of discrimination arise. Promptly address any wrongdoing and provide support to the victim.
5. **Consequences for Perpetrators:** Enforce consequences for employees found guilty of discrimination, up to and including termination if necessary. Make it clear that such behavior will not be tolerated.
6. **Support Employee Resource Groups:** Encourage and support the creation of LGBTQ+ employee resource groups (ERGs) to provide a safe space for employees to share experiences, offer support, and contribute to a more inclusive workplace culture.
7. **Leadership Commitment:** Demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion from top leadership. Leaders should set an example by actively promoting inclusivity and holding themselves accountable for fostering a discrimination-free environment.
8. **External Resources:** Partner with external LGBTQ+ organizations or consultants who specialize in diversity and inclusion to provide guidance and support in addressing discrimination.
9. **Promote Allyship:** Encourage allyship programs to involve and educate employees who may not identify as LGBTQ+ but are willing to support their LGBTQ+ colleagues and help combat discrimination.
10. **Regular Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuously assess the workplace environment through surveys, feedback sessions, and diversity metrics to track progress and identify areas where improvement is needed.

Creating an inclusive workplace is an ongoing process that requires commitment, education, and active involvement from employers at all levels. It's essential to foster a culture of respect, acceptance, and equal opportunity for all employees, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Alarminthefirehouse@gmail.com



THANK YOU!
ANY QUESTIONS?



R. Kevin Mallinson, PhD

mallinson.kevin@gmail.com

EVALUATION AND WIN AN IPAD!

- **Submit your workshop and overall evaluations to be automatically entered in two drawings for a new iPad!**
- **Complete your evaluations using the IAFF app:**
 1. Download the IAFF app and sign in with your iaff.org username
 2. Tap the 2026 Strive for Excellence Summit event image to enter the event's dashboard
 3. Tap "Sessions" and tap on the workshops you attended
 4. Tap "Evaluation" and complete the evaluation
 5. Tap "Submit"

For the event's overall evaluation, follow steps 1 and 2, then tap "Event Evaluation" located in the event's Dashboard.

