



The 2000's Collection - ©Tucson LGBTQ Museum - All Rights Reserved (Text Format)

'To Hide Our Past Insures That We Will Repeat It'..... Tucson Gay Activist 2000's

Tucson excitedly began the new millennium of the year 2000 without any real Y2K problems and a population of 486,699 within its 195.4 square mile city limits which by the end of 2009 would rise to 543,986 residents living in the 227.8 square mile city. In national news in 2000 the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case, and thus upheld the right of health insurance companies to put separate & un-equal limits (a.k.a. payout caps...which were later changed in 2010) on the amount of payouts and the coverage for those with AIDS/HIV, at the Whitehouse then President William Jefferson Clinton became the first president in United States history to officially recognize LGBT Pride Month on June 2, 2000. The 'Tucson Commission On GLBT Issues' which had been made a permanent city commission in July of 1999 (see 1990's) met regularly on a variety of subjects, and set up Tucson's Domestic Partner Registry.



2000 Tucson, Arizona

Around Tucson in the 2000's the University of Arizona's BGALA LGBTQ group had changed its name to UA Pride Alliance and on campus the Gay Fraternity 'Colony' of Delta Lambda Phi was recognized by the national chapter in May of 2006, the Water of Life Metropolitan Community Church at 3269 N. Mountain Avenue hosted dances, provided services, made sack lunches for the needy, and sometimes provided the main courses for Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network's (T.I.H.A.N.) the POZ Cafe which served its 10,000th meal on April 17, 2008 at St. Francis In the Foothills Church at 4625 E. River Road in Pima County.

Throughout the time of human history Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals had been through countless wars, rulers, religions and mindsets. The world had gone from a social mindset that condoned, encouraged, and fostered homosexuality or any sex, then all the way to the opposite extreme of the complete hatred of homosexuality. The pendulum had swung more times than could be counted. In the past humans had worshipped transgendered deities and thought nothing of those who gender-blended. Later in history however, largely due to the politics and religion of the specific time periods and whose opinion happened to matter most at the time, society grew to despise homosexuality, inciting an all-out holocaust on those who maybe were something other than heterosexual...a.k.a. straight. Again, in the decade of the 2000's the pendulum was swinging to the side of reason, and some of the world was at least tolerating or accepting homosexuals in some way, but others still did not.



2001 Comic In Rolling Stone Magazine

But, hate crimes against LGBTQ persons such as on January 12, 2000 when a Gay man in his 20's, Mark Fontes was assaulted after leaving the Gay bar It's 'Bout Time (I.B.T.'s) located at 616 N. 4th Ave through the rear entrance with another man were still occurring. A candle light vigil attended by more than 300 people was held for Mark Fontes a few days later in front of the bar, and the City of Tucson installed \$54,000.00 worth of additional street lighting in the area. Then just a few weeks later on Sunday February 6, 2000 the stabbing of a 20 year old Gay University of Arizona student on the popular 4th Avenue outside on the back patio of the Gay owned Rainbow Planet Coffee House at 606 N. 4th Avenue by a transient out of work waiter from San Diego, Gary Grayson, as he reportedly was shouting "Jesus Hates Fags, And This Is What All Fags Deserve" and "Let This Be A Warning To The Gay Community" over and over again shocked the community once again. Fortunately, the victim's knife wounds proved to have just narrowly missed his lungs but still required a weekend in a hospital bed at the University Of Arizona Medical Center, and the attacker Grayson was quickly apprehended a few hours later by Tucson Police. In support of the LGBTQ victim a Rally and March down 4th Avenue to the Mall at the University of Arizona was held by a very vocal crowd of over 2,000 people from all walks of life on February 13, 2000.



2000 Outrage March – 4th Avenue – Tucson, Arizona

Elsewhere, around the United States the use of the world wide web - internet by LGBTQ users steadily gained as a means of finding information, dating, making online purchases of products, socially interacting with others of their own and other LGBTQ Communities, and as a new medium for political activism. The festive evening of Sunday February 20, 2000 saw the Holiday Inn Palo Verde located at 4550 S. Palo Verde Road host the Miss Tucson America 2001 Pageant (see ad....page #6) to a fun loving crowd of 483 people that night staring four (4) contenders for the crown who were Veronica Lake, Faith Michaels, Bunny FuFu, Deora Le Blanc and from those very talented performers Bunny FuFu walked away with the Crown. As fall's cooler change in weather came to the Old Pueblo it brought the 2000 OUToberFEST Pride Festival on Saturday October 14, 2000 held at the Reid Park section that utilized its DeMeester Performance Main Stage area to just over 8,000 attendees that day marking the end of a week of both National Coming Out Day hosted by the University of Arizona Pride Alliance group and LGBT Pride Activities around the city produced by the Tucson Lesbian/Gay Alliance group. Crowned King & Queen of 2000 Gay and Lesbian Pride in Tucson at the OUToberFEST event were Rodney Shanks (King) and local performer-businesses owner Ajia Simone (Queen) who had edged out all the other contestants after a festive and fun filled campaign by them all. Local music group Rare Breed, the Desert Voices a Women's Chorus, Cat Trap, Reveille Men's Chorus, and many other fine acts performed on stage.



September 11, 2001 – Terrorist Attack
In New York City

The Tucson LGBTQ Community & its Allies were yet again shocked on Wednesday June 19, 2002 by the Armed Robbery and Murder with a Baseball Bat of a twenty-four (24) year old Tucson Gay man, Philip Arthur Walsted an American Airlines reservation agent in the 900 block of the North 4th Avenue area in Tucson by the twenty-two (22) year old convicted local burglar and self-confessed Nazi Skinhead David Augustine Higdon living with his father in the 1500 block of S. Carolina Avenue who had just been released on parole from prison two (2) months before on April 10th, 2002.

Higdon's former girlfriend reportedly acted as the lookout during the entire Hate Crime first involving the Armed Robbery & then the Murder and did nothing to stop Higdon while he was committing the murder. Higdon was convicted of First Degree Murder and before sentencing Philip Walsted's family asked the public to write letters to Judge Frank Dawley asking for a life sentence without the possibility of parole which is what the judge gave the convicted murderer during sentencing after being flooded by mail from all across the United States. Philip's Life Partner Jonathan also wrote a letter to the Judge in the case asking for consideration of 'Life Without Parole' in the sentencing phase.



A Candlelight Vigil organized by Wingspan was held on June 19, 2004 where one of Walsted's favorite songs 'The Best Is Yet To Come' by Frank Sinatra was played, and a later Memorial for Philip Arthur Walsted brought about by the joint effort of the Tucson LGBTQ Community, by Philip Walsted's Family, by his Life Partner Jonathan who personally paid the money for the memorial that was placed that day, the Wingspan Community Center & its Anti Violence Project, and Tucson's Park & Recreation Department made possible the dedication at the city's Catalina City Park in the 4th Avenue & 1st Street area on June 18, 2005 along with a memorial service attended by his mother and other family members, and members of the LGBTQ Community along with their Allies. Tucson City Officials stated according to Philip's Life Partner, "You Can Do What You Want Within Reason, As Long As We Don't Have To Pay For It." Curiously, both Wingspan located at 600 East 6th Street and the adjoining business next door Desert Pride (a LGBTQ merchandise store which later moved to 4th Avenue) were the targets of vandalism during that same June - July 2002 time period.

In the 2000's it was a very simple fact that in the United States the LGBTQ Community was still fighting for the United States Congress to grant them their basic equal rights, while at the same time workplace related benefits and rights for LGBTQ employers were improving. The group Southern Arizona Gender Alliance (S.A.G.A.) carried out their programs and projects for the Transgender & Gendered Diverse in the community and memorializing the annual 'Transgendered Day Of Remembrance' each year.



2000 AIDSWALK Tucson – Tucson, Arizona

For the first time for a local AIDS walk, the AIDS Walk 2000 with 1,582 people in attendance held that year at the Rillito Downs Race Track located at 13477 N. Heritage Gateway did not hold a walk when a torrential rainstorm suddenly hit the Tucson area on the morning of Sunday October 22, 2000 causing the city streets and the grounds of the race track to flood. Undaunted, the 1,582 people who showed up for the event all moved inside the 'Rillito Down's Clubhouse' and held a very memorable high energy AIDS Rally inside out of the rainy weather instead. Saturday September 20, 2003 saw the 8th Annual Miss Gay Hispanidad Pageant held including a full course dinner at the Inn Suites Ballroom at 475 N. Granada Avenue produced by the Salud es Poder Organization with an AIDS/HIV prevention and awareness focus.

Around Tucson during the 2000's the Men's Social Network (a.k.a. M.S.N.) along with its fun, warm, and friendly 1st of the Month Free Potluck Dinners - \$5.00 Friday Pizza Nights - Thanksgiving & Christmas Holiday Potluck's continued to flourish and at times dominate the men's non-bar (no alcohol no drugs) social scene in Tucson under the influences of founders Jerry Curl the groups Ambassador, his partner Les Elliot who wrote its monthly newsletter, and their friend Ray Evans with his original idea of such a group (see 1990's) along with a host of others in the all men's non-alcohol & non-political activities and support group originally started up during March of 1995 (see 1990's). The Men's Social Network later moved its monthly meeting location from the old Scottish Rite Temple located downtown at 160 S. Scott Avenue due to being constantly bumped out of their 1st of the month reservation of the very spacious basement area with full kitchen facilities by the Tucson Scottish Rite Temple itself.



Men's Social Network – Tucson, Arizona

Each time the groups reserved space was bumped with very short notice it required the Men's Social Network leaders to suddenly scramble to find another suitable monthly potluck meeting area that would seat 150+ people with often less than 24 hours' notice. The final solution came after a few of the monthly potluck dinners held at various rented facilities around town lead to the Casa Adobe Church located at 6801 N. Oracle Road in Pima County that welcomed the group with open arms at a reliable smaller and more cozy space for the group. The group quickly adjusted to its new location and went through a transition period once again in 2004 after the death of one of the charismatic co-founders Gerald (Jerry) Allen Curl, an always incredibly loving communicative people friendly man, former World War 2 Army Sergeant in the Pacific Theatre Campaign, father, and retired professor & director of admissions of a large eastern University who opened his home to everyone, died on March 3, 2004 of complications of skin cancer.

The socialization, camaraderie, and events continued as newcomers discovered the equivalent of the Gay Men's Welcome Wagon there for all who entered in a Non-Alcohol No Drugs atmosphere. A memorial service for Jerry Curl as he always preferred to be called, was organized by his partner Les Elliot along with others and was held Sunday April 18, 2004 at St. Philips In The Foothills Episcopal Church where a large crowd slowly walked past a table filled with photos of different time periods in Jerry's life, enjoyed a moving heartfelt memorial service, along with a memorial feast shared by Jerry's family, his LGBTQ family, and other friends following the service. The Jerry Curl MSN Scholarship ran for a few years presented through the local Parents and Friends of Gays & Lesbians group (P.F.L.A.G.) and a memorial near what had been his home was placed.

The GLBT Services Committee of the Tucson-Pima Public Library founded in 1997 (see 1990's), hosted LGBT related book reviews, authors, displays, and speakers, Desert Voices presented numerous lively concerts and other events, the Community Business Association operated as the largest of its kind in Arizona later renaming itself the Tucson GLBT Chamber of Commerce during a transition period started in January and formulating between February 9th and February 16th in 2005, the group Desert Dominion for those interested in the BDSM lifestyle met monthly for various events and its Men's Kink Discussion Group, TIHAN continued its 'CareTeams' structure working with those with HIV/AIDS during the decade.



2007 Flood On 4th Avenue - Tucson, Arizona

GLSEN Education Network met monthly, Tucson Greater Softball Association kept players and their fans very active, Southern Arizona Aids Foundation (S.A.A.F.) continued very actively providing programs-getting government funding grants-organizing fundraisers related to prevention and those infected or living with HIV/AIDS, the Gay Young Men's Health Project remained very active with their in safe sex projects around town, Tucson Prime Timers with its motto Growing Old Is Mandatory - Growing Up Is Optional met regularly around town for weekly lunches, activities, area sites outings and tours including out of town trips. In the latter part of January 2007 the Gay Men's Health Project (G.M.P.H.) funded by government funds was renamed and evolved into the Men's Sexual Health And Personal Empowerment (M.S.H.A.P.E.) program with its lounge meeting place within the Southern Arizona Aids Foundation (S.A.A.F.) facility at 375 S. Euclid Avenue.

The annual Aids Walk in Tucson, which had originally been started by the Tucson Aids Project a.k.a. T.A.P. in 1988 (see 1980's), had by 2008 expanded to just over 5,500 walkers with that year's event held on Sunday October 19, 2008 bringing in right around One Quarter Million Dollars (\$225,000.00) for the Southern Arizona Aids Foundation (S.A.A.F.) whose original Executive Director Anne Maley had resigned on Friday January 5, 2007 to start her own consulting business and was replaced by Wendell Hicks by the organizations Board of Directors. Reveille Gay Men's Chorus kept Tucson and at times far beyond entertained with their many exciting concerts and performances at many events around Tucson.



2001 Gay West – Old Tucson Studios

The Tucson Lesbian & Gay Alliance (T.L.G.A.) continued the production of the Gay West Event out at Old Tucson Studios which had originally started in 1997 (see 1990's) as a Pride Event fundraiser. However, between 2003 and 2006 the Gay West event was not held. By 2002 the Tucson Lesbian Gay Alliance had again changed its name and was operating as Tucson Pride, Incorporated an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The First Annual Tucson LGBT Pride Parade/March was produced by the group and held at 7:00PM on June 25, 2000 starting at the municipal Catalina Park and Marching Southbound down 4th Avenue toward the downtown area.

The year 2006 saw the Tucson Lesbian/Gay Alliance group to again change the name of the annual Gay Pride Festival held out at Reid Park from 'OUToberFEST' to 'Pride In The Desert' and continued producing many fine well attended Gay Pride Related events including the annual 'Pride On Parade' during the decade of the 2000's.



2006 Gay Marriage
Support Protest – Tucson, Arizona

Statewide LGBTQ Marriage was on the minds of many, and on November 4, 2006 Arizona's voters rejected a referendum only allowing marriages by opposite sex couples, after a heated campaign by both sides of the Arizona Proposition #107 issue that year which saw an ever growing Tucson LGBTQ Community hold voter campaigns at area events, and demonstrations in front of the Tucson City Hall, Wingspan, and other venues. However, on November 4, 2008 with Arizona Proposition #102 voters in the state were asked to add an amendment to the Arizona State Constitution that would ban same sex marriages which passed and sparked a call to boycott those Anti-Gay Businesses and the people who had supported it.

In the 2000's Tucson's active bar scene later in the decade started to include offering Wi-Fi Connections and would be yet another item offered to patrons, the historically on and off again LGBTQ Friendly Hotel Congress/Club Congress at 311 E. Congress Street offered a unique atmosphere along with a mixed crowd but had gone out of favor as a Gay Venue by the middle of the decade, the Hollywood bar billing itself as "Where Dreams & Fantasies Come To Life" located at 1601 N. Oracle Road opened on October 14, 2006 offering Drag Shows and a \$1.75 happy hour special every day and served as the home bar of the University of Arizona group the Delta Lambda Phi Gay Fraternity, Colors Food & Spirits (a.k.a. Colors) bar under ownership of Johnny DJ & Ric at 5305 E. Broadway Boulevard opened in July 5, 2004 presenting various very well produced Dinner & A Drag Show, Champagne Brunch's, and other events.



2004 Pride On Parade – Tucson, Arizona

Ain't Nobody's Business (a.k.a. The Biz) bar under ownership of Melinda Mae Brown at 2900 E. Broadway Boulevard (Melinda Mae Brown also owned the Ain't Nobody's Business bar located at 3031 E. Indian School Road in Phoenix at the time) a unique mix of a Trendy & Friendly Lesbian oriented bar was openly friendly to the entire LGBTQ community along with its "G Spot Dance Floor" and Hip-Hop & Latino styled music catering to its patrons, Howl At The Moon bar at 915 W. Prince Road opened on December 1, 2003 offering Poker Tournaments, Chuck Wagon Breakfasts, and good food anytime from the kitchen along with Western Music-Dance & Latino Nights Themes later changing the business name to the Coyote Moon Pub bar (not to be confused with the Gay owned Coyote Moon Heath Resort and Spa in mid-December with much the same fun format at the end of the decade, It's Bout Time (I.B.T.'s) bar at 616 N. 4th Avenue offered cutting edge Drag Shows and other entertainment, fund raising events, BBQ's, and lots more to both locals and an ever increasing mixed trendy college crowd.

By 2007, the November Bar & Grill at 4001 N. Romero Road catered to the after work crowd with drink specials and food. Its Latino & other themed Nights and popular Drag Shows brought in crowds, but after a short run as a Gay Bar which ended in 2004 it tried making it as a Straight Stripper Bar but that business closed not long after, Stonewall, LTD bar at the both infamous & famous 2921 N. Stone Avenue location which had years before been the site of the Heakin Anti-Gay Hate Crime Murder (see 1970's) presented BBQ's, Drag Shows, Latino Nights, dancing and offered cheap drinks in the early 2000's, Valentina's bar at 3455 E. Grant Road catered to the Lesbian crowd hosting many shows and events, Colors Food & Spirits bar located at 5305 E. Speedway Boulevard opened at 11:00AM on Monday August 9, 2004 with a computerized techno atmosphere.



2000 Woody's Bar – Tucson, Arizona

Woody's bar at 3710 N. Oracle Road, billing itself as "Tucson's-Video-Sports-Cruise Bar," and presenting monthly birthday parties, televised sports events, fundraisers, Drag & other shows, held the Grand Opening of its Patio Bar on Saturday July 1, 2000, and hosted some of the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundations Annual Reno-Ganon Jell-O Wrestling AIDS Fundraisers events, was the home bar of the Bears Of The Old Pueblo, and the bar's weekend early afternoon Brunches, Shows, & BBQ's could often make it a very fun place to be.

At 9:00 PM on November 17, 2008 bar employee Jeffrey Fulgham was cited by the Tucson Police Department and Woody's bar was issued a 'Red Tag' by police who never went inside for having an 'Unruly Gathering' which was brought on by the complaint of next door Laurence Court Apartment complex manager Linda Howeth at 3710 N. Oracle Road. The legal matter was challenged by Woody's corporate officials and subsequently all charges were dropped during a trial later in January 2010 (see 2010's) amidst legal inconsistencies found in both the police actions and earlier courts actions. Ironically on Monday May 18, 2009 a 'Meet The Chief' party was held at Woody's bar with the Tucson Police Chief Roberto Villaseñor as the honored guest of the event.



Yard Dog Saloon T-Shirt

The Yard Dog Saloon under the ownership of Ray Gregg at 2449 N. Stone Avenue became the home of the Tucson Knight Owls (T.K.O.) and later in 2009 the Bears Of The Old Pueblo (B.O.P.) had also made it their home bar which offered a 'Doggie Related Theme' and local bar atmosphere serving popcorn out of Dog Bowls, offering regular BBQ's and Themed Events along with games, karaoke, and contests. The Venture-N a Men's bar at 1239 N. 6th Avenue presented its Jungle Party's, Bucky Lucarelli's Omelets a.k.a. Ralph "Bucky" Harry Lucarelli, and its popular Steak Nite's for \$6.00 often promoting it with the phrase "You Can't Beat Our Meat." Most of the bars offered the LGBTQ community of the time period differing versions of live shows, themed events, contests, benefit shows, and other fun activities.



Orasure Test Items

The newest test at the time for HIV was an oral one called Orasure that was a simple quick swab of a collection instrument in the mouth. Additionally, 1990 (see 1990's) had been the very first full year that HIV tests were allowed by the United States Government to be done anonymously. Cornerstone Fellowship Church at 2902 N. Geronimo Avenue offered a wide variety of church services for both youth & adults along with weekly Wednesday Dinners. Around town, Desert Coyotes Bowling League provided LGBTQ & Straight Bowler's a fun & supportive atmosphere, the City of Tucson passed the Domestic Partnership Ordinance setting up a Domestic Partner Registry on September 15, 2003 which became effective December 1, 2003 and was celebrated in front of City Hall from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM on December 2, 2003, KXCI 91.3 FM Radio hosted numerous LGBTQ guests on its "OUTLOUD Lesbian & Gay Radio Show" and gave air time to issues affecting them, the Cronies met at various places and venues for shared meals, meetings, and events as a men's social group.

T-Squares a Western style Gay dancing group held group dances and taught square dancing, the LGBT Jewish Inclusion Project offered fellowship, events, and activities, Wingspan along with the QueerVoice youth group (a collaborative program funded by the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation, Pima County, and Wingspan) under guidance of facilitator Ruben Grace the 3rd began the decade at their 300 E. 6th Avenue location. On Thursday November 20, 2003 the QueerVoice youth group had changed its name to EON and the program moved quickly into its own spacious high ceiling storefront facility located directly across from the Ronstadt Bus Center downtown at 31 S. 6th Avenue, and later in the decade relocated into the building directly across the street from Wingspan located at 425 E. 7th Street.



2000 OUToberFEST Pride Festival "Queer Voice"
Youth Group – Tucson, Arizona

In 2005 as the government grants, public funds, and usage of the community center by groups-programs increased, the volunteers and staff under the leadership of Executive Director Kent Burbank, moved the entire operation over a nine (9) day period into a very spacious 2 story office building (a former communications center) complete with three (3) meeting rooms, an expanded library area, larger cyber area for six computers including a printer and scanner, separate offices for all of Wingspan's programs, offices for all the program's administrative staff overseer's, and a very sizeable fenced parking area to 425 E. 7th Street completing the move on Monday July 11, 2005.

The building required costly sizeable interior remodeling by staff, volunteers, and hired contractors prior to its new use. It was Wingspan's fourth (4th) location during its years in operation up to that time. Announcements were made around Tucson of its Grand Opening that was held on Saturday August 6, 2005 from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM with light refreshments served, live music performed by local band Too Much Information (T.M.I.), and attended by many in the community. Wingspan's 2005 Annual Dinner Fundraiser saw more than 900 attendees and was reported to have raised over one hundred seventy thousand dollars (\$170,000.00) on the night of Saturday September 24, 2005 at the Tucson Convention Center.



2006 Rillito River Flood – Tucson, Arizona

Performing around in Tucson during the 2000's were names such as Bunny FuFu, Lucinda Holliday, Ajia Simone, Heather Boa, Miss Leading, Janee Starr, Tempest DuJour, Amanda Bury, Tori Steele, Teri Aki, Patch-U-Down, Aidin N. Abeddin, Veronica Holliwel, Phaedra, Flexx, Alotta Whoremooan's, Chi Chi Larue, China Collins, Unique, Vivika D' Angelo, Venecia, Haw A/C, Misstiqueee, Miss Honey, and Ellas De Noche, to name but just a few, entertained and raised funds for LGBTQ related programs as well as local charities.



2002 Treasures For TIHAN Event – Tucson, Arizona

On February 4, 2004 the social networking site Facebook (which had originally been named “Facemash” in 2003) was launched amid fanfare, and soon went worldwide, the Alliance Fund's local philanthropic works made an impact around the Old Pueblo, in Tucson on Tuesday June 6, 2006 a Memorial Day was observed for Richard ‘Dickie’ J. Heakin Jr. who had been murdered on that day in 1976 while leaving the Stonewall Tavern Inn Disco Gay bar located at 2921 N. Stone Avenue (see 1970's) with a ceremony at Sunset Park located at 255 W. Alameda Street, in the early morning hours at 1:00 AM on June 4, 2006 a Gay man was lured out of IBT's Gay bar on 4th Avenue then kidnapped at gunpoint, gang raped, robbed and later had to be hospitalized being just one of four (4) other known Gay male victims of the same criminals during the same time period with the cases not being solved, also in June of 2006 the United States Military was still classifying Homosexuality as a Mental Disorder.

In the fall of 2008 in Tucson the start of the First Annual Tucson Latino Gay Pride Festival of events began at different venues around town spearheaded by Oscar Jimenez of Wingspan. In the entertainment world Pop Superstar Lady Gaga came out as being a Bisexual in 2009 with seemingly no noticeable cost to her career. Forming on Wednesday February 2, 2005 the Rainbow Build Coalition set its goal to build 60 homes around Tucson in connection with Habitat For Humanity. The Rainbow Build Coalition consisted of the local groups: Arizona Human Rights Fund (A.H.R.F.), Cornerstone Fellowship Church, City of Tucson GLBT Commission, Desert Voices, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (G.L.S.E.N.), LGBT&S Alliance Fund, Men’s Social Network, Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P.F.L.A.G.), Rainbow Families, Rainbow Interfaith Coalition, Raytheon GLBT Alliance, Rubyfruit Journal, St. Philips Episcopal Church LGBT Phamily, Southern Arizona Gender Alliance (S.A.G.A.), Stonewall Democrats, Tucson GLBT Chamber of Commerce, Tucson Pima Public Library GLBT Committee, Tucson Pride Incorporated, Water of Life MCC Church, White Space Design, and Wingspan.



2008 Pride On Parade – Tucson, Arizona

Toward the end of the 2000's, both nationally and in the community of Tucson saw many changes as the economy tanked from the rampant financial excesses of the decade (and before) in the United States, coming back to haunt many local groups, homeowners, banks, borrowers, investors, businesses, programs, and organizations. Items like Cell Phones a.k.a. Mobile Phones along with DVD's took over or were in the process of taking over their previous incarnations.

Pagers, Answering Machines, VHS tapes, Fax Machines, Reasons To Use A Postage Stamp, Gas Prices Under \$2.50 a gallon, along with many other items, organizations, businesses, and products became obsolete, fell out of mainstream use, or were drastically curtailed.

Among those changes in Tucson was the sudden closure of the Rainbow Planet Coffee House at 606 N. 4th Avenue, the cut back and delays of government funds to the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (a.k.a. S.A.A.F.) and many other LGBTQ related groups including the *Tucson Observer* publication were asking for the community's financial donations to keep them going, and the financial problems would also greatly impact the Wingspan organization.

Wingspan continued staffing cuts in 2008 with employee layoffs and the layoffs of employees began once again on May 13, 2009. At the same time the Wingspan organization was strategically partnering with the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation's Financial Team to oversee "Wingspan's Financial Systems." As the United States economy continued on its downward spiral, the Wingspan organization wisely made the needed deep downsizing move into the EON Youth Groups (a collaborative program funded by the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation, Pima County, and Wingspan) smaller building it was renting across the street at 430 E. 7th Street in just over a week's time period that began Friday July 17, 2009 and ended the afternoon of July 26, 2009 with a number of the Tucson LGBTQ Community stepping up as volunteers to help in any way they could with the move partially under leadership of executive director Jason Cianciotto who had already resigned on July 12, 2008 but stayed until the end of the month to help for the token amount of \$1.00.



2008 Jason Cianciotto – Wingspan Director
Tucson, Arizona

The Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (S.A.A.F.) organization posted on its website on January 5, 2009 its 2007-2008 fiscal year figures of just over Five (5) Million Dollars in revenue (\$5,039,312.00) for their preceding fiscal period. At Wingspan all non-grant funded positions were eliminated and despite the financial stumble in the latter part of the 2000's, Wingspan made the hard decisions required for the organization to survive as did many other organizations in Tucson and around the entire United States, as most all experienced the same scenario in varying degrees. Along the way Wingspan had set up, funded, sponsored, been a part of, provided, and or planted the seeds of ideas of numerous beneficial LGBTQ related programs, television commercials, conventions, fundraisers, events, and varied services to Tucson's expanding LGBTQ Community as more people moved in from other states and countries that would continue on into the next decade of the 2010's (see 2010's).



Colors Bar – Tucson, Arizona

Around town in the last days of 2009, the Colors Food & Spirits and the show productions there by Lucinda Holliday - "Tucson's Queen Of Comedy" packed the house with her very special comedy laced performances, the Log Cabin Republicans national organization announced it was One Hundred Thousand Dollars \$100,000.00 in debt, Desert Coyotes the city's LGBTQ and straight supportive bowling league bowled at 7:00 PM on Wednesdays at the Santa Cruz Lanes located at 3665 S. 16th Avenue which sometimes hosted the Chuzapalooza (C.H.U.Z.A.) Annual LGBTQ bowling tournament that began in 2007, the Tucson M2M Social Network group founded as a Gentlemen's Fraternal Organization by retired reclusive multi-millionaire Jonathan Marks attracted a mix of highly motivated university students and mature professional men. The founder, who never met or socialized with the general membership, and a small inner circle of the mature members confidentially each donated five (5) thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) as part of their initiation & membership, however for the college-university students and most other members no donation was ever mentioned. The group then provided annual college scholarships to a number of its younger members, held prize contests for members & auctions for charity at its meetings, offered free death-funeral benefits to all members, and secretly donated heavily to various Tucson based LGBTQ related groups and charitable LGBTQ organizations around Tucson.



2000 Miss Gay Tucson Pageant
Tucson, Arizona

Upon the untimely death of the group's founder, the trustee of the estate in following the founder's last wishes reportedly held a final wake & meeting of members for the deceased Marks at which twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00) in \$100 bills were thrown up in the air over the heads of blindfolded members in a game the group called 'Catch It & You Keep It.' The balance of the group's funds in cash were put into numerous sealed envelopes and anonymously donated to LGBTQ related groups and organizations all over the city, its website was shut down, and all its records burned in a final ceremony. Not long after rumors surfaced that a core group of senior members and university students merely morphed into an even more secret Fraternal Gay Organization operating both on campus at the University of Arizona and around Tucson.

By the closing of the decade Club Congress had once again faded as a LGBTQ venue, the Welcome To OZ LGBT and straight allies bowling league was hitting the pins at Tucson Bowl 7020 E. 21st Street, The Coyote Moon Pub bar had replaced the Howl At The Moon bar at 915 W. Prince Road, and gone forever were the bars Valentina's, Stars bar, Emerald City bar, Stonewall, LTD bar, Yard Dog bar, and the November Bar & Grill. Also passing into history in the 2000's were former University of Arizona English Professor activist and founding member and later executive director of the Tucson Aids Project (T.A.P.S.) Craig Bradford Snow who died at his home of cancer on Wednesday May 17, 2006, the Coyote Moon Health Resort after a 13 month run closed due to financial problems after hosting over four hundred (400) LGBTQ guests, the popular businesswomen Melinda Mae Brown owner of the bars Ain't Nobody's Business in both Tucson at 2900 E. Broadway Boulevard and Phoenix at 3031 E. Indian School Road died at her home on October 5, 2003, world traveler and adventurer James E. Dawson affectionately called the 'Scooter Bitch' who died at his home of Cirrhosis on Saturday March 15, 2003, former latter 1990's Club 2520 owner who remodeled the building and changed the name to Plug Tucson a.k.a. The Plug bar (see 1990's) owner Brian Morris Kruger died of Leukemia on Monday August 18, 2008, and Native Tucsonan and founder of the original LGBTQ annual drive for the Arizona Children's Home in the 1970's Rudolph (Rudi) Riesgo died on Thursday January 27, 2000 of cancer.

Gone forever were former Gay Heartthrob and Actor Charles Van Dell Johnson died on Friday December 12, 2008, the Television Sitcom Will & Grace had ended after its eight (8) year run, pop icon Michael Joseph Jackson who died in his bed on June 25, 2009 after either being given or self-injecting the medications Propofol, Lorazepam, and Midazolam at a rented mansion located at 100 N. Carolwood Drive in Los Angeles, the Color Barrier at the Whitehouse fell as Barrack Obama was elected President of the United States on November 4, 2008 for the top job at the Whitehouse. Also passing were former president Ronald Regan, the N.A.S.A. space shuttle Columbia, musician Ray Charles, and rubber stamped housing loans during the time period.



2009 Christmas Dinner At IBT's Bar – Tucson, Arizona

Along the way some of the local LGBTQ groups, organizations, businesses had faltered, stumbled, or were gone forever. But, the ones that survived and entered into the next decade of the 2010's (see 2010's) did so a lot more lean & mean and were once again dedicatedly ready to serve Tucson's LGBTQ Community in the new decade coming just over the horizon. On December 31, 2009 as the clock struck midnight within the 227.8 square mile city limits of Tucson, Arizona 545,852 residents crossed over into the new decade, and Tucson's LGBTQ Community was still standing proud with many of its fine resources still in place and ready for the new decade of the 2010's!

The 2000's Collection - ©Tucson LGBTQ Museum - All Rights Reserved (Text Format)