

DREAMS REALIZED AND DREAMS DEFERRED:  
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND PUBLIC POLICY IN PITTSBURGH, 1960-1980

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This dissertation analyzes the impact of civil rights, women's rights, and gay rights activists on public policy in Pittsburgh during the 1960s and 1970s. It challenges several of the interpretations which other scholars have made about the history and impact of the New Left and social movements in the United States since 1960. This study applies social network analysis to politics to explain the successes and failures these social movements had in the city in winning the reforms that they sought for their communities. As the activists grew in their political sophistication, so their political networks matured. Pittsburgh activists did not ignore the means of power that social movement scholars traditionally study, power at the polls and in the streets. But in addition to such tools, activists built a base of trust, respect, and mutual support between themselves and local politicians. By gathering and disseminating information about the problems afflicting their communities, African-Americans in the 1960s and feminists and gays in the 1970s won converts to their cause among the city's political elite. Leaders within the three movements leveraged their growing rapport with political leaders to win appointments to government commissions for community members and appropriations for programs aiding their communities. These positions brought activists further contacts and alliances with leaders at other levels of government. Using their political networks, these Pittsburgh activists in the 1970s

protected and sometimes advanced their cause even in the face of federal budget cuts and growing organized opposition to school desegregation, abortion, and gay rights.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Three rivers flow through Pittsburgh. Their waters mingle, but each on its own establishes its might. What follows in these pages is not the story of the Monongahela, the Allegheny, and the Ohio, but the history of three other powerful “rivers” weaving through Pittsburgh’s history. What follows is the story of the ebb and flow of power of the social movements formed by the city’s African-Americans, women, and gays.<sup>1</sup> In striving to improve life for their communities and to make politicians heed their calls to action, they faced incredible odds. Immediately following W.W.II, women, African-Americans, and gays lived frozen out of much of the city’s economic fortunes and political decision-making. Much of the city’s public accommodations and landlords practiced de facto racial segregation. Pittsburgh’s urban redevelopment programs both wiped out the most blighted neighborhoods and increased segregation and racial tensions. Police raided the city’s two gays bars, the only public space available to sexual minorities. Besides publicly humiliating patrons, city politicians often published the names and occupations of those arrested. Women faced fewer job possibilities than they had in W.W.II and fewer still

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this work, the words “gays” or “gays and lesbians” will stand in for the more inclusive acronyms les/bi/gay, “LGBT,” “GLBT,” or the newer phrase now coming into vogue “LGBTQA.” This usage is in keeping with the norms of the history profession and not to slight any segment of the community. It also matches how most people for most of the period under study viewed and categorized sexual orientation. In the first two thirds of that period, sex reassignment surgery had not yet made the category of Transsexuals possible, even if the broader category of Transgendered persons existed, encompassing drag queens, cross dressers, effeminate behavior in men, and transgression of female gender norms by women.

with the decline of left-wing unionism. The glacial speed of new openings did not match a decline in living standards for divorcees and widows. Against this backdrop, first African-Americans and then the other two groups launched struggles for their civil rights. As individuals and as organizations, they took to the streets, met with corporate and political officials, and ran candidates for political office to improve their lot. From 1945-1980, many of their battles centered on cultural oppression against women, gays, and African-Americans. Much of their efforts, however, targeted city officials and state legislators. In particular, activists from these movements demanded, at the very least, that the City improve police relations with their groups and open its own employment to their members. They called on public officials to serve as their negotiators with corporations and unions. Activists called on the City of Pittsburgh and the State of Pennsylvania to pass, strengthen, and/or enforce anti-discrimination ordinances and employment codes. The cumulative efforts of activists within each of these three minority groups created broader phenomena, known as social movements.<sup>2</sup>

This dissertation greatly adds to knowledge of Pittsburgh's history. Most of the histories written on the city cover Pittsburgh's labor struggles or urban redevelopment. Yet the city, once described as the "forge of Democracy," produced three of the first six heads of the National Organization for Women, the first African-American to head a state legislature, and the nation's first gay community to thwart an effort to repeal a gay rights ordinance. The inhabitants of Pittsburgh did all those things between 1965 and 1990 despite being best known for a conservative steelworker, white ethnic culture. As Maurine Greenwald in her survey of works

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<sup>2</sup> This study uses Charles Tilly's definition of a social movement as its basis for study. Tilly defined a social movement as, "a set of people defined by sharp social boundaries providing common interests and collective identity [ ] and dense social networks [giving] them a high capacity for collective action," Charles Tilly as quoted in Anthony Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973), 25

on Pittsburgh's women's history argued, Pittsburgh was "a 'man's town' characterized by labor's muscle and brawn amidst industrial smokestacks." This study takes up Greenwald's call to examine Pittsburgh's women after the 1930s. No published history of the city except for her survey of the literature has even tackled the broad outlines of women's history in the city after W.W. II.<sup>3</sup>

This study similarly adds to histories of African-Americans in Pittsburgh. In Larry Glasco's survey of such histories, he argued that the specialized studies on that community have not made up for the lack of an overall history of the group.<sup>4</sup> This dissertation builds on the work of Art Edmunds and Larry Glasco to provide some of the general contours of African-American life in Pittsburgh while looking more specifically at political organizing in the community in the post-W.W.II period.<sup>5</sup> Its findings flesh out and deepen our understanding of the conditions which led Glasco to conclude that African-Americans in Pittsburgh had suffered from a "double burden." They were shut out of economic opportunities by industrial stagnation and largely kept from political power because they lived dispersed across the city.<sup>6</sup> This study analyses the African-American community's successes and failures at uniting and increasing its political power after W.W. II.

In the field of gay history, this study makes perhaps its most path breaking contribution by examining the history of Pittsburgh's gay community. No books, dissertations, or journal

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<sup>3</sup> Maurine Weiner Greenwald, "Women and Class in Pittsburgh, 1850-1920," in Samuel P. Hays, ed., *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 33

<sup>4</sup> Larry Glasco, "Double Burden: The Black Experience in Pittsburgh," in Samuel P. Hays, ed., *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 69

<sup>5</sup> Art Edmunds, *Daybreakers: The Story of the Urban League of Pittsburgh, the First Sixty-Five Years* (Pittsburgh, PA: Urban League of Pittsburgh, 1983)

<sup>6</sup> Glasco, "Double Burden," 70

articles document the history of Pittsburgh's gay community. Perhaps the city's conservative reputation dissuaded scholars, but the field of gay history has overly focused on three cities with longer histories of a large openly gay community. Paradoxically, the harsher conditions which Pittsburgh's African-Americans, gays, and women faced when compared to their counterparts in other cities make the achievements of their movements in Pittsburgh all the more worthy of study for what they can reveal about social movements in general.

By examining these three movements in Pittsburgh, this study sheds light on a larger historical question: what impact did the social movements of the 1960s have and why? To answer that question, this study builds on a growing body of literature on social movements from the disciplines of sociology, political science, and history. It corrects for some of the holes in studies based on resource mobilization theory (RMT). Since the 1960s, this theory has dominated American research on the field. Led by John McCarthy, Mayer Zald, and Anthony Oberschall, this school of thought argues that social movements succeed depending on how well they institutionalize their organizational structures. A critic of RMT stated its arguments most succinctly as follows: movements are effective which have a high level of social and political organization, highly skilled leaders, and financial resources.<sup>7</sup> Or in terms of this period of study, the greatest of 1960s social movements, led by the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Students for Democratic Society (SDS), and the Black Panthers ultimately failed according to Oberschall. Their members did not set up adequate organizations to recruit enough people to replace leaders (jailed, killed, retired) and bring in sustaining funds. In particular, they depended too heavily on fleeting attention from sensationalist media to get their message out to new members. When journalists' and audiences' attention shifted to other causes, these

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<sup>7</sup> Craig A. Rimmerman, *From Identity to Politics: The Lesbian and Gay Movements in the United States* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 8

movements lost ground.<sup>8</sup> Resource mobilization has added much to our understanding of how people with few political resources can put forward their agendas. However, movements do not achieve their goals only because of their organizational structures. And their success does not necessarily depend upon the success of one or more given organizations. Some of the greater gains in Pittsburgh even for African-American civil rights came about even when the number of members of its chief organizations fell precipitously. The skill of the leaders of that movement helped it continue winning some victories, as RMT theorists predicted, but that skill had an effect because of the ties those leaders had forged with politicians. Some leaders in Pittsburgh's civil rights movement entered politics in the 1960s, won election, and protected the community's gains in the 1970s by their oratory and strategic alliances. But they also were able to protect their cherished reforms because of years of working with other politicians and the rapport they had built with them.

This study also adds to examinations of the period from a perspective based on Doug McAdam's political-process approach. Where resource mobilization theorists looked to the internal strengths of a movement for clues to its success, proponents of the political-process approach argue for the primacy of external factors. According to McAdam and other proponents of this approach, members of the RMT school fit within a school of political science known as

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<sup>8</sup> Anthony Oberschall, "The Decline of 1960s Social Movements," in L. Kriesberg (ed.), *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, vol 1 Greenwich, CONN: JAI Press, Inc., 1978 reprinted in Anthony Oberschall, *Social Movements: Ideologies, Interests, and Identities*. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993). John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "The Trends of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization," (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1973) in Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1987), Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980)

pluralism.<sup>9</sup> In particular, its offshoot interest group pluralism argues that “once a group recognized its own interests in the political process, political organization of that interest led naturally to its political representation and incorporation.”<sup>10</sup> However, according to the political-process approach, the concentration of wealth and power in the United States in the hands of a few means that an organization, no matter how well led, would be successful depending on the external resources of the political system. Thus, contrary to pluralists, not every citizen nor every interest group has equal access to politicians, the electoral process, and decision-making even in American democracy. More damningly put, if pluralists were accurate in their thinking, members of social movements would not even have to be involved in them. These activists could simply express themselves in a level playing field at the polls.<sup>11</sup> Other proponents of the political process approach argued that reform flows through the lenses of state capacities and the political incentives placed before politicians.<sup>12</sup> In the Pittsburgh case, the issues favored by

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<sup>9</sup> Douglas McAdam, *The Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) 40 as in Rimmerman, 10

<sup>10</sup> Dianne Pinderhughes best laid out the arguments of pluralism and argued against the merits of pluralist theory in terms of racial and ethnic groups. She found that Chicago’s African-Americans fared much worse than Poles or Italians in translating political involvement into reforms benefiting their community. See Andrew S. McFarland, *Power and Leadership in Pluralist Systems* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969) 33, Robert Dahl, *Pluralist Democracy in the United States: Conflict and Consent* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967), 24 and Isaac Balbus, “The Concept of Interest in Pluralist and Marxian Analysis,” *Politics and Society*, 1 (Winter 1971), 151-177 all in Dianne M. Pinderhughes, *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics, A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory* (Urbana, ILL: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 13-15

<sup>11</sup> McAdam, 1982, 40 as in Rimmerman, 10

<sup>12</sup> As Weir, Orloff and Skocpol argued, “[P]olicy outcomes are presumed to be jointly conditioned by the institutional arrangements of the state and by class and other social relations, but never once and for all, for state and social structures are themselves transformed over time.” Margaret Weir, Ann Orloff, and Theda Skocpol, “Understanding American Social Policy,” Introduction to Margaret Weir, Ann Orloff, and Theda Skocpol, *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States*, (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1988)16-17, 25

politicians and business leaders most often dominated the agenda of city, state, and federal governments. They devoted most of the City's resources to bricks and mortar expenditures. Activists had to use the increased access to institutions afforded them by the Great Society to push for greater advantages for their communities. And they capitalized on divisions within the political machine to elect allies. However, many of the activists' demands and victories had little to do with redistributing wealth and interfered very little with the financial goals of the Pittsburgh elite. Demands such as those surrounding repeal of sodomy laws or better treatment of rape victims centered on issues of dignity and violence directed towards their communities.

My research, therefore, leads me to agree, in part, with new social movement theorists (NSM) and proponents of identity politics. Kenneth Sherrill best stated the relationship of a group's identity formation to its political effectiveness. "The development of a collective identity, shared values, and shared demands is essential if groups are to acquire 'the capacity for exercising effective political power.'"<sup>13</sup> The gay rights movement, women's rights advocates, and the civil rights movement became the focus of this study because each movement mobilized an oppressed group around identity politics, in contrast to say the environmental movement which organizes people without regard to their individual characteristics. While women, African-Americans, and gays differed in terms of the nature of the discrimination that they faced, each group set about using government bodies and legislation to improve conditions for their group. Each differed as well in terms of the base of support within their group to which they

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<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Sherrill, "On Gay People as a Politically Powerless Group," In Marc Wolinsky and Kenneth Sherrill, eds., *Gays and the Military: Joseph Steffan versus the United States*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 112 as in Rimmerman, 11 See also Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Moufee, "Post-Marxism Without Apologies," *New Left Review*, no. 166, November-December, 1987 and Ernesto Laclau, "New Social Movements and the Plurality of the Social," in David Slater, ed., *New Social Movements and the State in Latin America*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands: CEDLA, 1985)

could turn to organize prospective activists. African-Americans had a more ready base for organizing in African-American families and churches; women and gays needed to convert even members of their group into supporters of their rights. Still, all three sought increased protections of their group's legal rights. These three groups therefore allow researchers to test the role of identity formation in determining the trajectory of organizing. Along those lines, I have found that Pittsburgh's sexual minorities proved utterly unable to defend their right to congregate, let alone their right to a job or housing, so long as gays lacked community institutions, as was the case before 1972.<sup>14</sup> The city's women rarely identified their problems as women until the late 1960s, and thus did not effectively organize for all women's rights until then.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, African-Americans, throughout the period, maintained better community

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<sup>14</sup> In essence, harassment and discrimination by public authorities prevented Pittsburgh's gays from even forming a community. This finding contrasts greatly with works on gay life that said that gays and lesbians formed vibrant communities in San Francisco, New York City and Los Angeles, before, during, or right after W.W. II. George Chauncey, *Gay New York Gender Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*, NY Basic Books, 1994 John D'Emilio *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*, (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1983) and Allan Berube, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (NY: New York Free Press, 1990)

<sup>15</sup> In this finding, this study fits with a growing body of literature on the organizing that women did during the period which Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor called the "doldrums" between two waves of feminism. Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums, The American Women's Rights Movement 1945 to the 1960s*, (NY: Oxford University, 1987) as in Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other's Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) 235n27 and 7. For works contradicting the notion of the 1950s as a silent period see Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues 1945-1968* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other's Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), Susan M. Hartman, *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics Since 1960* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1989) Few of those studies, however, look beyond the leadership of the national organizations, so this study examines how women at the grassroots and the general membership of national organizations acted in that time period. Janet Flammang's work on Santa Clara County counteracts that national

cohesion and therefore had better success in the field of reforms. Rifts between Pittsburgh's African-American nationalists, separatists, and integrationists never divided the community to the point of impeding progress for civil rights forces the way they did in other cities, as some studies have shown.<sup>16</sup>

To some extent, Pittsburgh's women's rights, gays rights, and civil rights activists benefited from a larger cultural shift towards expanding "human rights" as documented by Paul Gordon Lauren. Lauren found the post-W.W.II period especially to be a period in which human rights advocates around the world sought to create a world "in which all people might enjoy certain basic and inherent rights by virtue of being human."<sup>17</sup> However, the allies of any one of these Pittsburgh movements did not always support expanding rights for other groups. Additionally members of gay rights, women's rights, and civil rights organizations did not often view themselves as members of a larger crusade on behalf of all humanity. Throughout this study therefore, I have kept comparisons between African-Americans, women, and gays to a necessary minimum in order to avoid oversimplifying under one model the differences in the strategies, tactics, and arguments that each group used.

Social network analysis, an offshoot of NSM, has most greatly informed this study. According to Mario Diani and Doug McAdam, people are more likely to be drawn to a

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scale but does not look before the 1970s. See Janet A. Flammang, *Women's Political Voice: How Women Are Transforming the Practice and Study of Politics*, (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1997)

<sup>16</sup> This portion of the work on African-Americans conflicts with Dianne Pinderhughes's study of Chicago's African-Americans, where African-Americans, constantly divided between nationalist, separatist, and integrationist modes of thinking, could not free themselves from the Daley machine's refusal to address racial discrimination. It fits with her findings for the later period when Chicago's African-Americans united behind the candidacy of Harold Washington. Dianne M. Pinderhughes, *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics, A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory* (Urbana, ILL: University of Illinois Press, 1987),

<sup>17</sup> Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Right: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 1

movement by the involvement of their friends and family members in that movement. The bonds that they form with other activists within that movement through their shared experiences in it will then make them more likely to stay involved.<sup>18</sup> Thus, nearly half of the students involved in Freedom Summer cataloged by McAdam remained active in a social movement twenty years later. Also twenty years later, Sara Evans's New Leftists-turned-women's liberationists had been involved previously in the anti-war movement and black power. The social networks they formed and the tactics they learned in those two movements empowered them to fight new battles after the main cycle of protest subsided.<sup>19</sup> But neither a shift in cultural attitudes nor the cohesion of a group alone determines how successful a group will be in translating its demands to power. What does?

Historian Terry Anderson's work on the period made a stab at answering this question coming to a macro-cultural conclusion, one which this study corrects with a micro-political analysis. Anderson argues that the overall number of people involved in the combined social movements of the 1960s normalized the involvement of activists in American life. It ended a Cold War culture, one which proved particularly inhospitable to protesters, demonstrators, and all grassroots movements, and then it changed America. By 1980, according to Anderson, women had expanded greatly their opportunities for work and independence, African-Americans had ended legal segregation and won civil rights protections, and the U.S. had pulled out of

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<sup>18</sup> Mario Diani, "Introduction: Social Movements, Contentious Actions, and Social Networks: 'From Metaphor to Substance?'," in Mario Diani and Doug McAdam, eds., *Social Movements and Networks, Relational Approaches to Collective Action* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2003)

<sup>19</sup> Douglas McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Womens Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, (NY: Vintage, 1979), and Sara Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (NY: Free Press, 1989), Sydney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 174 and ch. 10.

Vietnam. Anderson expertly documents movements, reforms, and cultural changes, but he does not adequately detail how precisely civil rights movements translated their demands into legislative reforms. In essence, Anderson only charts the history of the movements, their interactions with one another, their demands, and then states the similarity of those demands to reforms enacted.<sup>20</sup> He leaves out the intervening step. Critics of the anti-war movement's claim to effectiveness prove most troubling to Anderson's argument here. These critics have credited the war's mounting casualties, lack of purpose, and its monetary cost with turning politicians towards withdrawal from Vietnam.<sup>21</sup> So the question in this case about the climate for social movements follows: What motivated politicians and policymakers hearing those demands from activists to agree with the demands?

I take Diani and McAdam's groundbreaking work on the power of networks within social movements as a jumping off point to study the power exerted by networks linking social movement activists and political figures. My overall argument is that social movements have power in politics not just because of the power they marshal at the polls or through donations to political campaigns. They wield power not just in how many people they can marshal into the streets. Nor do political elites respond just when the community that the social movement

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<sup>20</sup> Terry Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995)

<sup>21</sup> George Kennan, Senator Fulbright, Generals Matthew Ridgway and David Shoup had opposed intervention from 1965. Even Henry Kissinger admitted as early as 1966 that the conflict "could not be won militarily." Allied leaders visiting Washington D.C. condemned the war in the press after 1966. After the setbacks of the Tet Offensive and anger at the devastation, Congress voted to disallow re-entry of U.S. troops into Cambodia. And contrary to the movement exerting influence, a larger percentage of Americans polled opposed the anti-war movement more than the war itself, ranking it more hated than even Richard Nixon at the height of the Watergate scandal. Walter LaFeber, *The American Age U.S. Foreign Policy At Home and Abroad*, Vol. 2, Since 1896, Second Edition, (NY: W.W. Norton, 1999), 616-7, 642-3, 638, 644

organizations represent is threatening to domestic order.<sup>22</sup> Nor finally, do social movements change the political climate just by engineering some amorphous change in cultural climate. Undoubtedly, social movements have wielded power in those ways, but that is not the whole story. Social movements may exercise power, in addition, through the network of relationships which activists involved in those movements have built with politicians and policymakers. As Clarissa Hayward has shown, power is a “network of social boundaries--norms, identities, institutions which define both the field of action and the individual’s freedom within it for the powerful and the powerless alike.”<sup>23</sup> Where Hayward showed a two-way relationship impacting both those in power and those excluded from it, this study further examines how such networks operate. It shows how a political network matures or grows in strength. A political network does so by how well it reinforces those social boundaries “for the powerful and the powerless alike” in three broad ways. First, in the case of these three movements in Pittsburgh, activists gained from experience in learning how governmental bodies operate. Secondly, members of marginalized groups sometimes won when they built up a level of trust, respect, and rapport with elected officials. Thirdly, sustained interaction by members of a marginalized group helped policymakers and politicians alike accept the validity of claims made by social movements. With that experience, trust, and interaction with politicians, social movement activists exerted influence beyond the size of their constituency or its purse strings.

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<sup>22</sup> Piven and Cloward’s argument is not a straw man here because too many later author’s echo it. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, (NY: Pantheon, 1977), Jo Freeman, “Introduction,” in Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson, *Waves of Protest, Social Movements Since the Sixties*, (Lanham, MA: Rowman, Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999) Sydney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Christina Wolbrecht, *The Politics of Women’s Rights, Parties, Positions and Change*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000)

<sup>23</sup> Clarissa Rile Hayward, *Defacing Power*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Familiarity and experience proved crucial resources for social movement activists, helping them tailor their demands and learn how to deliver them for maximum effect. Too often, neophyte activists or first-time constituent lobbyists went into politicians' offices without understanding crucial details about the governing body they were visiting. Many made amorphous demands or ones over which the politician in question had no authority. Those activists who repeated the experience or gained the help of allied politicians and aides better learned how and when to craft language for proposed bills. They then knew, for example, when budget negotiations would forestall debates on civil rights protections. Social movement activists with experience additionally studied budgets to see if governing bodies truly lacked the money to implement demands and where to go to get more money for their proposals. With experience, activists also learned how to check incumbents' voting patterns and thereby how to thank, applaud, or reprimand politicians making promises or agreements with their communities.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, the extent to which movement activists built rapport with politicians helped their cause. Local and state level politicians proved willing to work with organizers who honored their word and worked with the politicians or demonstrated a commitment to continue working on the issue themselves. Activists showing up at an office threatening a politician's re-election stood little chance of success if they faded away without making good on their threat. Policymakers proved more willing to see in person, or return phone calls to, movement activists with a proven track record of leading members of their community or who kept their commitment. Politicians and bureaucrats who could not comply with demands or suggestions made by movement activists proved more willing to offer alternative solutions or entrée to other

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<sup>24</sup> The first of these broad outlines of the workings of political networks builds heavily on what resource mobilization theorists argued. The second and third depart from their work.

venues for reforms to community members for whom they had built respect. Additionally, political and bureaucratic leaders groomed into being allies of the movement did more than vote individually for measures suggested by movement activists. They actively wrote such legislation with input from the community or leaned on colleagues to vote for the measures.

Repeat interaction between movement activists and politicians, furthermore, helped make politicians more likely to believe the truth of the movements' claims. By becoming acquainted with members of the marginalized groups and their lives, politicians and policymakers learned much more about the "lived experience of discrimination." They put a face on it. Such politicians, as their relationships with activists matured beyond the first encounter, saw the person not the stereotype that societal attitudes too often told them about. The politician interacted with a human being not an abstraction of the "black militant," the "welfare queen," the "bra burner," or the "sexual deviant." It became harder for them to dismiss activists or their stories as unrepresentative. And finally, politicians who trusted the activists proved more willing to read, listen to, and digest the information that activists provided them about the conditions that their communities faced.

This work tells the story of the political networks formed by the three movements in chapters divided first by time period and then, for the 1970s, separated by movement. Chapter 1 establishes a base line context from which each of the three marginalized groups started right after World War II. It charts the comparative level of discrimination and the level of self-advocacy and community formation which their members did. In Chapter 2, the flourishing of neighborhood organizing, of challenges to machine politics, and of the civil rights movement opened opportunities for all three movements to advance in the 1960s. Chapter 3 argues that African-American activists in the 1970s continued to win some reforms in Pittsburgh even in the

face of government budget cuts and a grass roots counter-mobilization aimed at school desegregation.<sup>25</sup> Women's organizing in the 1970s dominates Chapter 4. It addresses the importance of Pittsburgh's women's rights advocates to national reform campaigns and the hazards they encountered because they made that their focus, mostly eschewing local politics. Chapter 5 details the advances made by Pittsburgh's gay rights movement even in the absence of any demonstrable power at the polls and the lack of large-scale agitation. Overall this study argues that the extent to which these movements formed mature political networks determined the extent to which they could win reforms.

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<sup>25</sup> In this portion, this work redirects the overall arguments put forward by the Edsalls, Formisano and Lukas that white backlash largely stymied or rolled back liberal reforms in the 1970s. Thomas Byrnie Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991), Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), J. Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* (NY: Vintage Books, 1986)

## II. THE ROAD TO JUNIOR PARTNERSHIPS: PITTSBURGH POLITICS AND SOCIAL POLICY, 1945-1959

Michael Weber's biography of David Lawrence gives too much credence to civil rights progress in Pittsburgh as flowing from the beneficence of Mayor David Lawrence and the Democratic organization.<sup>26</sup> Lawrence hath done marvelous things, but this chapter will not sing his praises. Certainly David Lawrence, like Isaac Newton deserved the title of genius, but like Isaac Newton, we should recognize that his genius flowed from "standing on the shoulders of giants."<sup>27</sup> Lawrence beautifully maneuvered Pittsburghers with conflicting interests to rebuild downtown. Ever the New Dealer, he also judged the pulse of different communities or classes, fashioning programs to bring his Democratic organization new constituencies. Just as historians of the New Deal have done, this chapter argues that David Lawrence and Pittsburgh's Democratic organization built laws and institutions, some of them genius, to create, head off, or channel demands for reform.<sup>28</sup> Given the nature of Lawrence's power and the undeveloped state of self-

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<sup>26</sup> Michael P. Weber, *Don't Call Me Boss: David L. Lawrence Pittsburgh's Renaissance Mayor* (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988)

<sup>27</sup> Isaac Newton, "If I have seen farther, it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants." As in <http://www.quotedb.com/quotes/3102>

<sup>28</sup> William Leuchtenberg, *FDR and The New Deal* (NY: Harper & Row, 1963) and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *Politics of Upheaval* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1960) as in Ann Shola Orloff, "Political Origins of America's Belated Welfare State," in Margaret Weir, Ann Orloff, and Theda Skocpol, *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States*, (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1988), 67

advocacy among Pittsburgh's minorities, many of their needs went unheard. Women and African-American groups asked for more from him, but the problems that these groups and gays faced before 1960 made them unable to function as anything more than clients of or, in the case of gays, victims of the Democratic political machine. Before then of the three groups, only African-Americans had developed the political rapport and alliances necessary even to expand haltingly what the Democratic organization was willing to give them.

**A. UP SOUTH: AFRICAN-AMERICANS BEGIN A MOVEMENT TO OVERTHROW DE FACTO SEGREGATION**

The Lawrence administration made its first halting interventions for African American civil rights in response to wartime racial strife. Before David Lawrence became mayor, the Chamber of Commerce created the Allegheny County Council for Civil Rights in 1943 to head off situations like that year's riots in Detroit. The council served mostly as a talking board in which African-American civil rights activists informed white religious leaders and a few politicians about discrimination. Two years later, the Pittsburgh chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) echoed national demands that African-American military service earn better racial conditions when its letterhead featured an African American man and woman in uniform. The words, "Back 'em Up" and "a just peace at home," accompanied that image. African-American leaders noted that white inaction would have consequences. Wilhelmina Brown's NAACP membership dues appeal letter for 1945 warned "military victory will bring with it certain social and economic adjustments that may result in strain and tension."

She sent the letter to members, including David Lawrence and several other politicians.<sup>29</sup> Maurice Moss of the Pittsburgh Urban League stated demands more directly. "The ingredients that go into making a riot," Moss said, "unemployment, bad housing, crowded living, lack of recreation, discrimination, and recrimination [abound in Pittsburgh]."<sup>30</sup> Lawrence responded to the NAACP solicitation with his donation and a letter saying that he wished he could do more.<sup>31</sup> He did that in creating the Civic Unity Council (CUC) soon after receiving the NAACP letter. Pushed by no large outpouring for reform though, Lawrence and his administration did not write a law giving the Civic Unity Council much authority. It could not launch lawsuits or issue fines. Instead the CUC was to act as a moral authority or missionary society organizing citizens groups. Its officials contacted groups such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), and the Urban League to speak about the law and the need for integration.

The staggering conditions which made African-American migrants call Pittsburgh "Up South" proved too intractable for a Civic Unity Council, without a legal arsenal to back it up. Pittsburgh was after all a city in which Dravo Corporation had announced it "does not employ Negroes" despite its desperation for 5,200 new hires at the start of war mobilization.<sup>32</sup> Such attitudes among employers continued after W. W. II. Bell Telephone would not employ African-

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<sup>29</sup> Wilhelmina B. Brown, NAACP Membership Dues Appeal, May 21, 1945 on official NAACP stationary in Records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Pittsburgh Branch, Archives Services Center, University of Pittsburgh (Hereafter NAACP Papers).

<sup>30</sup> Maurice Moss, "letter to the editor, *The Amsterdam News*, as quoted in Art Edmunds, *Daybreakers: The Story of the Urban League of Pittsburgh, the First Sixty-Five Years* (Pittsburgh, PA: Urban League of Pittsburgh, 1983) 107.

<sup>31</sup> David Lawrence to Wilhelmina Brown, on official Pennsylvania Legislature stationary n.d. in NAACP Papers

<sup>32</sup> George E. DeMar, Industrial Secretary of Pittsburgh Urban League to Lester Granger, April 1941 as quoted in Arthur Edmunds, *Daybreakers*, 103

Americans in Pittsburgh as operators although it did elsewhere.<sup>33</sup> No laws ordered segregation; Pittsburgh whites did not need them. Operators of lunch counters, bowling alleys, and movie theaters, of their own volition, refused to serve African-Americans or cordoned them off.<sup>34</sup> Racial segregation stained the town to the extent that relatives told a mixed race child visiting her mother working at a downtown department store not to say, "Mommy." They told the youngster that her mother was busy working, but really they feared that even the white mother would be fired from her sales job on account of race.<sup>35</sup> The Urban League had to pressure hospitals until 1947 to admit even token numbers of African-Americans into their nursing courses. The University of Pittsburgh medical school required even greater persuasion. In its case, a state legislative investigation made Pitt grudgingly allow "about one Negro a year" into the medical school. No Pittsburgh hospital would allow African-American physicians to practice until the mid-1940s when Montefiore, the Jewish hospital, did so.<sup>36</sup>

When civil rights activists escalated tactics, Mayor David Lawrence directly interceded but without the force to bring much change. Gimbels and other downtown department stores had ignored thousands of postcards asking them to employ African-Americans in sales positions. At that point, K. Leroy Irvis, public relations director of the Pittsburgh Urban League, threatened in 1947 in the pages of the *Courier* to launch pickets against them. Lawrence responded by calling

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<sup>33</sup> Edmunds, 109.

<sup>34</sup> Segregationists could count on the law in other ways. Police officers did arrest one man upon his refusal to sit in the theater balcony in nearby Homestead. Frieda Shapira, interview by Michael Snow, in the State and Local Government Oral History Project, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA (Hereafter SLGA) on October 29 1999, 5 and on November 4, 1999, 1

<sup>35</sup> Carolyn Franklin, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on January 22, 1999, p 21

<sup>36</sup> Dr. McKinley King, Report to the Urban League Board, as in Edmunds, 110, and Edmunds 110.

up Irvis and asking that he not give the city "a black eye."<sup>37</sup> In doing so, Lawrence wanted to project the city as a favorable business climate, but he also had to maintain his stature within the national Democratic Party. President Truman had created a Committee on Civil Rights the preceding year. Lawrence, with a racial brush fire at home, would appear as a tarnished ally in a Democratic Party where the president's top political strategist had forecast to Truman that victory in the 1948 elections depended on "unions and urban minorities."<sup>38</sup> Lawrence had to have known this in offering to meet with Irvis and the department stores. Thus, Lawrence's tone was less than supportive, asking Irvis to "come to his office to talk about this damned fool thing." Irvis unflinchingly told Lawrence over the phone that the "city already had a black eye" because of the segregation. Lawrence summoned department store officials to meet with Irvis to prevent a demonstration. Still negotiations failed when the negotiator for one department store started attacking Irvis. Though Lawrence told the business leader to shut up, on Irvis's signal from the negotiating room's window, activists took to the streets.<sup>39</sup> They had the aid of, and backing from, the NAACP, the Council of Churches, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the Building Service Employees Union. When national magazines covered these acts, the department stores caved within a few days. The action of thousands of petition signers and hundreds of picketers resulted in the hiring of two African-American clerks, but business leaders

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<sup>37</sup> Edmunds, 114 and "We're Mad! How About You?" flyer distributed by the I.B.P.O.E.&W and the Committee for Fair Employment in the Pittsburgh Department Stores, n.d. in Papers of K. Leroy Irvis, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA (Hereafter Irvis Papers)

<sup>38</sup> William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey, America Since 1945*, Third Edition, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1995) 89-90.

<sup>39</sup> K. Leroy Irvis, interview by Michael Snow for the Pittsburgh Civil Rights History Project, on May 27, 2003 Videotapes 1, 2

pressured the Urban League Executive Director into firing K. Leroy Irvis.<sup>40</sup> The Urban League board rehired him, but he quit in disgust. Some leaders in the African-American community then told Irvis that they had to break off contact because he was "R-E-D." For the next two years, Irvis and his wife survived on menial jobs and food given them by their neighbor, a vegetable peddler.<sup>41</sup> Irvis therefore would have served as an object lesson to other African-Americans who would lead civil rights agitation.

The summer following the pickets, members of the Civic Unity Council offered tepid support to civil rights, but the police and a judge showed bias against integration. To assert African-Americans' rights to use tax-supported facilities, members of the Urban League and the Progressive Party spent four Sundays attempting to integrate the city-run Highland Park pool. They told the police and press of their plan. On the first three occasions, neighborhood "thugs" kept their group of about three dozen integrators from entering the pool. The civil rights folk then told the press and the authorities their plan for a fourth attempt. Initially, police protection was good that Sunday, August 22, 1948. A battalion numbering 160 officers escorted the trolley car full of integrators to the pool. In addition, the CUC sent three prominent members as witnesses, and the police superintendent joined them. A police cordon separated the civil rights group from an angry crowd from the neighborhood, which ranged according to police testimony from 600 to 2600. Some activists went in the pool; others milled about. When the whites surged forward though, several officers acted unjustly. City police arrested three of the neighborhood youths who had attacked them, but they collared as well Nathan Alberts, one of the white civil

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<sup>40</sup> Edmunds, 115

<sup>41</sup> K. Leroy Irvis, interview probably by his aide, Janet Patterson, on April 30, 1987 in Irvis Papers. One reference on the transcript as an interchange between "Boss" and "Jan" leads me to attribute the interview to Janet Patterson. See also Irvis, interview by Michael Snow, May 27, 2003

rights/labor organizers. Alberts's attorney delineated a clear pattern of police double standards. Officers first charged Alberts with disorderly conduct but later upped it to inciting a riot because he had “motioned” with his arm “three times in thirty minutes.” None of the officers though ever heard Alberts urge the crowd forward. In contrast, the officers never charged the anti-swimmers with assault though one officer carried scars from the attack.<sup>42</sup>

Over the next several months, Florence Reizenstein, a friend of David Lawrence and member of the Civic Unity Council, did testify for Alberts's defense, but the official CUC report also said that "the Wallace Crowd went looking for a fight" with the street gang.<sup>43</sup> The judge and jury threw out inciting a riot charges against the pro-segregationists, but sentenced Alberts to twenty-three months in the county work house. The testimony of several officers, who mentioned a crowd following Alberts, swayed such jurors. As Alberts's defense attorney noted though, the lead officer, offering such testimony, had his back turned to Alberts and the officer assigned to watch Alberts had testified that Alberts never led nor signaled a crowd.<sup>44</sup> Thus official support for integration from on high was tempered by racism lower down city ranks, but Alberts was also caught up in the Red Scare. The courts delayed his trial until the press tied his sister to subversives, and the judge lectured him on communism.<sup>45</sup>

Three years later, civil rights activists demonstrated much greater organization in a sustained thrust to integrate the Highland Park pool, and, as a result, won greater aid from

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<sup>42</sup> William B. Doty brief for Appellant in *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania vs. Emilio Sciallo, Nathan Albert, D. Clemente, Paul Ionadi, Gabriel Gresson*, PA Superior Court, No. 35 (1951) Apr., 2a, 3, 39, 38, 3, 33, 11 in Records of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA (Hereafter ACLU Papers)

<sup>43</sup> Doty, 59

<sup>44</sup> Doty, 11, 33.

<sup>45</sup> Doty, 60

branches of city government. Rev. LeRoy Patrick was new to Pittsburgh and unfamiliar with the obstacles and the perils that might await him. Before the first attempt, Rev. Patrick called Chris Motes, head of the Civic Unity Council, and demanded "as many police as you think are necessary for us not to get our heads bashed in." True to 1950s form, white Pittsburgh swimmers jumped out of the pool and started yelling racial epithets when Rev. Patrick and two young African-Americans dove in. This time though, the police "one every three feet" kept the white youths away from the pool. Rev. Patrick returned every few days over the next few weeks. When the season ended, the American Service Institute, the NAACP, and several other groups organized a Swimming Pool Committee, which met to plot strategy throughout the winter. The next summer, city authorities put up a large canvas to block the view of the pool. Dragged there by Rev. Patrick, integrating pool parties returned on twenty-five successive occasions.<sup>46</sup>

Heavy police presence on those twenty-five afternoons prevented racial disturbances in Highland Park, but white Pittsburghers attempted violence when activists desegregated another pool without police protection. At the Paulson Avenue Pool, white boys intimidated the integrating swimmers into leaving by splashing them and then following their cars. The next day, the neighborhood whites left the pool but lobbed so many stones at the swimmers that the pool had to be closed and drained.<sup>47</sup> Rev. Patrick demanded that the head of the Civic Unity Council make the pool hire an African-American lifeguard. The remainder of the summer of 1952 the head of the Urban League himself did extra duty as a lifeguard.<sup>48</sup> From then on,

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<sup>46</sup> Rev. LeRoy Patrick, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on February 18, 2002, 24-29

<sup>47</sup> Rev. LeRoy Patrick, interview, 29-33, Marguerite Hofer, telephone communication with author, April 1999.

<sup>48</sup> Rev. LeRoy Patrick, interview, 32. K. Leroy Irvis noted that his first civil rights boycott in Albany New York had failed when a department store owner acceded to the demand that he hire African-Americans and the community had none qualified to fill the positions which he specified. In the 1947 pickets at Pittsburgh stores, Irvis

African-Americans could use the Highland Park and Paulson pools as a matter of course. In four years of struggle, they had gained access to a public amenity; owners and patrons of private establishments showed the same level of resistance to integration.

While much of the civil rights leaders' energy focused on integrating swimming pools, the grassroots struggle to integrate roller skating rinks demonstrated the lengths to which the movement proved willing to act independently of the aid of the Democratic organization and how difficult it would be to accomplish even small goals. In 1948, the Y-Teen Club in Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood approached the YWCA Public Affairs committee about starting a project to stop a rink from barring African-Americans from skating.<sup>49</sup> A steering committee of the YWCA, its Teen Council, and several community groups looked into the next steps. Petitioning the private owner of the rink, having influential citizens approach the proprietors, and collecting evidence for use in a lawsuit topped the list. Perhaps sensing the unwillingness of the city administration to enforce state law and after reaching consensus, members of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, some of whose members served on the CUC, told the teens to use a lawsuit as last resort.<sup>50</sup> The Pennsylvania Public Accommodations Law of 1938 forbade establishments from barring customers on account of race, but judges had a weak record of upholding it and police a weak record of enforcing it.<sup>51</sup> Mixed race groups of teens continued test visits to rinks in the area and organized letter writing over the next four years. At

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and the other Urban Leaguers and allies had all sorts of resumes on hand from African-Americans trained to fill a variety of positions.

<sup>49</sup> The records do not address the racial composition of the Y-Teen Club in East Liberty at the start of this campaign. YWCA Public Affairs Committee Minutes May 27, 1948 in YWCA Papers in Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania (HSWP).

<sup>50</sup> YWCA Public Affairs Committee Minutes, May 17, 1948 in YWCA Papers, HSWP

<sup>51</sup> Edna McKenzie, interview by Chris Moore, "Black Horizons," WQED, February 2003

the Lexington Roller Skating Palace, employees told African-American teens they had to be members to get in and needed signatures from two members to become members. The same employees automatically let in some white teenagers without asking to see memberships. Or the rink's employees granted white teens a membership on the basis of just the teen's own signature.<sup>52</sup> The struggle remained one fought only in the public demonstrations as long as the neighborhood's African-American and white teens could skate together at the gymnasium of the YWCA.<sup>53</sup>

When the East Liberty YWCA had to close its gym to skating, however, civil rights activists sought help from city officials. The Public Affairs committee approached the city recreation department about intervening with private rinks.<sup>54</sup> But it took a lawsuit from the local chapter of the NAACP filed in 1954 to end the discrimination. Judge O'Brien decided in 1957 that the rink violated the Public Accommodations Law of Pennsylvania.<sup>55</sup> It had taken nine years to integrate one roller skating rink! The delay meant a phenomenal amount of effort would have to go into even small victories which cost whites little in terms of giving up advantages. This struggle foreshadowed how recalcitrant Pittsburgh's whites would be in surrendering economic advantages in the years to follow. For African-Americans' struggle to succeed in Pittsburgh, it would take much stronger actions and much greater support from political leaders

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<sup>52</sup> YWCA Public Affairs Committee Minutes, March 21, 1949 in YWCA Papers, HSWP and "Lexington Skating Rink Found Guilty in Court Decree Issued in Pittsburgh," *Human Relations Review*, vol. 2, no. 7, Sept-Oct. 1957.

<sup>53</sup> YWCA Public Affairs Committee Minutes, June 15, 1953 in YWCA Papers box 80, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

<sup>54</sup> YWCA Public Affairs Committee Minutes, June 15, 1953 in YWCA Papers box 80, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

<sup>55</sup> "Lexington Skating Rink Found Guilty," p. 1.

and the law. As civil rights leaders broadened their appeal, more politicians finally threw their support behind the effort.

When the State Fair Employment Practices bill stalled, Allegheny County civil rights organizers crafted one for the City of Pittsburgh. Michael Weber in his biography of David Lawrence speaks as if the Mayor created his own civil rights bill without much agitation from anyone. Newly available records, however, document the large amounts of work in Allegheny County that had accompanied the effort to create such a law at the state level before Lawrence moved on the issue. That activism led to organizations capable of fighting for local civil rights. NAACP leader and State Representative Homer S. Brown had fought unsuccessfully for twelve years for a state law banning discrimination in employment. Frustrated with the inadequate level of help from Lawrence through his ties to state legislators and by their own lack of success, some forty religious, civic, and African-American groups met locally to form their own Council on Civil Rights. To distinguish it from the one created by business leaders, they chose the overly long name, the Allegheny County Citizens Council on Civil Rights (ACCCCR).<sup>56</sup> It passed a motion in 1949 calling on the state to establish a Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC).<sup>57</sup> After the Citizens Council alerted them that the bill had stalled, leaders of the YWCA began letter writing to Governor Duff to intercede to get such a bill released from committee.<sup>58</sup> After one legislative committee killed this bill, the local African-American newspaper, the *Courier*, endorsed another one that legislators introduced.<sup>59</sup> Legislative opponents of a law banning discrimination in employment then stalled this bill as well for the next several years.

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<sup>56</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, May 29, 1947 in YWCA Records

<sup>57</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Citywide Public Affairs Committee Meeting, January 27, 1949 in YWCA Records

<sup>58</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, March 31, 1949 in YWCA Records

<sup>59</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, April 18, 1949 in YWCA Records

Impatient after eighteen months of no progress, another civil rights group, the Allegheny County Council on Fair Employment, joined the Citizens Council in expressing exasperation to Mayor Lawrence on the lack of progress on the state bill.<sup>60</sup>

The size of the groups represented in this coalition and the tenacity shown in how frequently they met and lobbied appears to have sped up and strengthened the Lawrence administration's support for civil rights. Together in October 1951, the two councils petitioned Lawrence and city council to study the feasibility of a local ordinance. To influence a favorable outcome to that study, they brought to Pittsburgh Milo Manley of the Philadelphia Fair Employment Practices Commission to make a presentation on how such a law worked in that city.<sup>61</sup> By November, they had gained support from all the groups in the area, which had worked on the state law, and approached the city solicitor for support. By January 1952, the solicitor and the mayor assured the groups of their cooperation and support. The Civic Unity Council actively pushed for the bill.<sup>62</sup> A committee of civil rights leaders and African-American politicians drafted the legislation, including Judge Homer S. Brown and the Civic Unity Council's Florence Reizenstein. The YWCA and ACCCCR prepared testimony in case the bill faced opposition.<sup>63</sup> When the bill came up for discussion, the Council of Civil Rights lined up groups to testify on the necessity of the ordinance. City council approved the law on November 19, 1952.<sup>64</sup> While Pittsburghers enjoyed the benefits of the 184 cases adjudicated by the

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<sup>60</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, October 25, 1951 in YWCA Records

<sup>61</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, October 25, 1951 in YWCA Records

<sup>62</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, November 19, 1951 and January 21, 1952

<sup>63</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, January 3, 1952 in YWCA Records

<sup>64</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, November 7, 1952 and December 4, 1952 in YWCA Records.

Pittsburgh FEPC and the 109 cases where it won convictions, they continued fighting for a state ordinance.<sup>65</sup> They finally won that fight in 1955.<sup>66</sup>

The Lawrence administration, however, showed the limits of the Democratic organization's willingness to take on a greater role in civil rights when civil rights groups brought a suit against the City in 1951. During one of the earlier actions undertaken to integrate the Highland Park pool, a crowd had attacked a group of civil rights activists and the police did not intervene. This initial event does not reflect on Mayor Lawrence's stance on race as he had been out of the country at the time of the incident and not able to direct the City's response.<sup>67</sup> It does reflect, however, some of his police officials' lack of support for civil rights. Many months later, the NAACP and the Urban League brought suit under a state police statute, claiming malfeasance. The City's response to the suit did show Lawrence and his administration's break from civil rights leaders' position. The suit was progressing through the courts as the City's FEPC ordinance passed. City Solicitor Anne Alpern argued that the City's new law meant that it could not be sued for discrimination.<sup>68</sup> In essence, Alpern's oral argument said the City's law proved that it did not discriminate and was working to ameliorate discriminatory conditions. Therefore, in Alpern's reasoning, the City did not have to protect those civil rights activists who went out in advance of what the City was doing. As Michael Weber and Art Edmunds noted,

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<sup>65</sup> Pittsburgh Fair Employment Practices Commission, *Annual Report*, No. 3, March-August, 1955

<sup>66</sup> The law passed October 22, 1955. P. L. 744, No. 222

<sup>67</sup> Edmunds, 116. Edmunds does not provide the date or year of the initial incident or the name of the case, so further information to pin down when the initial incident occurred is unavailable.

<sup>68</sup> Edmunds, 116. Some exact details on the case remain a mystery. The case does not show up in the records of the NAACP and Urban League stored. Any number of cases bear the names of the potential litigants Jones and Smith, so it has not shown up in searches of fifty plus cases in Lexis-Nexis and West's Pennsylvania Digest. Fifteen civil rights leaders interviewed to date additionally remember the case but not its specifics.

Mayor Lawrence had become a supporter of civil rights protections, a position from which he would expand later in city government and his later posts at the state and federal levels. Lawrence even won accolades for the City's FEPC, touring the country in 1952 promoting fair employment practices and winning praise as a pioneer on civil rights issues.<sup>69</sup> The City's positions in the case brought by the Pittsburgh civil rights organizations, however, showed what Lawrence demanded of his administrators, at least in the early years. The City would tackle civil rights issues, but it had to address them on his terms. And the resolution of those issues had to coincide with what Lawrence felt benefited the City or his administration.

Mayor Lawrence, at least according to one oral history interviewee, also intervened in the workings of the new Commission on Human Relations to block a police brutality case. Members of the Civic Unity Council and the FEPC had met in 1955 drafting legislation to merge their bodies into a new Commission on Human Relations (CHR).<sup>70</sup> In one of its first years of the CHR's operation, the *Courier* ran stories highly critical of the police handling of the case of a mentally challenged man who died in police custody while awaiting charges that he had murdered a police officer. Chris Motes, director of the Commission on Human Relations, then gathered evidence to see if police officers used excessive force against the man. Complicating matters, the officers claimed that the accused took his own life, but Motes found evidence to the contrary. Some police officers then broke the wall of silence to tell their side of the story. At this point, Mayor Lawrence called Motes and had him close the case and destroy the briefs and witness reports.<sup>71</sup> Unfortunately, only the oral testimony of one person backs up this account. The written evidence for the mayor's intervention was burned and corroboration died with

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<sup>69</sup> Edmunds, *Daybreakers*, 121; Weber, *Don't Call Me Boss*, 280-1

<sup>70</sup> Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, *Annual Report*, 1992, 6

<sup>71</sup> Harvey Adams, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA, March 7, 2000, 60-61

Motes, with the Mayor's Executive Secretary Walter Giesey, and with Lawrence. Even in the absence of corroborating evidence for this occurrence, it still fits with a pattern of Lawrence's other behavior. He had leaned on Irvis to stop pickets to keep Pittsburgh from getting a black eye, and the City denied responsibility in the police inaction in the violence accompanying swimming pool integration. Additionally, the *Human Relations Review*, the newsletter of the Commission on Human Relations, ran an article on investigating allegations of police brutality and planned to make an impartial report.<sup>72</sup>

While the Lawrence administration brought some civil rights measures to the aid of African-Americans, its urban redevelopment policies proved a double-edged sword. The 1955 demolition of the Lower Hill alone forced 1239 families to move.<sup>73</sup> The popular accounts retelling the history of Pittsburgh's Renaissance paint a picture of a vibrant neighborhood decimated by wrecking balls and government sleight of hand. The conditions on the ground in 1955-1960 proved more muddled. As city agencies began gutting the Lower Hill District community, the slum clearance projects still seemed to benefit poor whites and African-Americans. A lion of civil rights energy, Homer S. Brown had actually co-sponsored the enabling legislation from the state.<sup>74</sup> And State Senator Joe Barr received accolades from YWCA members for introducing such measures to authorize city agencies to assemble large

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<sup>72</sup> The head of the police department also promised full cooperation in the investigation, at least in the beginning. "Better Police-Community Relations Sought," *Human Relations Review*, Vol. 1 No. 3, March 1956, 1-2

<sup>73</sup> Michael Weber, "Rebuilding a City: The Pittsburgh Model," in Richard Bernard, ed., *Snowbelt Cities: Metropolitan Politics in the Northeast and Midwest Since World War II*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990) 273

<sup>74</sup> Glasco, "Double Burden," 89

tracts of property for redevelopment and to build housing for the poor.<sup>75</sup> Redevelopment officials applauded themselves for knocking down tenements where dozens of families shared one toilet. Before the demolition, Robert Pease, then working as an engineer with the Urban Redevelopment Authority, had visited apartments in the area. Pease found a paraplegic veteran lying in his own filth and apartments where the walls had cracks in them so big as to let in light.<sup>76</sup> Some families, such as that of Sala Udin, moved into public housing units of better quality than what they had lost.<sup>77</sup> Udin's family joined 446 others moving into such projects. Overall, when the City Planning Department tracked the dislocated families, it showed about two-thirds moved into better housing.<sup>78</sup> But what of the other third? What the administration gave to some African-Americans, it took away from others in that same community.

Failure to help relocate displaced residents led to the first racial criticisms of redevelopment, but African-American groups' record of prodding Lawrence's urban redevelopment proved slower to win favorable results. Mostly, such airings of concerns only set the stage for later, successful challenges to slum clearance in the 1960s.<sup>79</sup> The Centre Avenue

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<sup>75</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Citywide Public Affairs Committee, April 19, 1945 in Records of the Young Women's Christian Association of Pittsburgh (Hereafter YWCA Records) in Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA (Hereafter HSWP)

<sup>76</sup> Stefan Lorant, *Pittsburgh: the Story of an American City*, (Lenox, MA: Author's Editon 1975); Robert Pease, former director of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on April 16, 1999,12,20

<sup>77</sup> Sala Udin, Pittsburgh city council member, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on August 12, 1999

<sup>78</sup> Weber, "Rebuilding a City", 273-274. The numbers and proportions above come from Weber. The Pittsburgh Public Housing Authority gave higher numbers displaced and fewer relocated to better housing. Robert Brown, *Public Housing in Action: The Record of Pittsburgh*, (Pittsburgh Public Housing Authority,1957), 2,3

<sup>79</sup> In later years, officials involved in the redevelopment of the Lower Hill issued *mea culpas*, stating that they did not know the impact at first upon families displaced. These remembrances ring false given that the YWCA made them aware of the problems in the 1955-8. On the other hand, it could be that such officials viewed public housing

YWCA brought the problem to the attention of the larger YWCA Public Affairs Committee near the very beginning of the Lower Hill District's redevelopment.<sup>80</sup> They heard testimony from the first 600 families displaced from the Lower Hill. Members of such families related that city authorities had not planned for where the families would move, that the families faced increased overcrowding in those neighborhoods, and that the City failed to enforce housing codes there. The Public Affairs Committee sought comment from the Mayor's Commission on Housing, the Commission on Human Relations, and other civic groups. Representatives of the city administration turned up for a meeting with the YWCA members where the women additionally grilled them, asking why the city, school board, and county could not renovate and make available some of the large number of properties seized through tax foreclosures. The government representatives simply responded that city officials believed that doing so would infringe upon private enterprise, displacing craftsmen and builders.<sup>81</sup>

Parts of the Lawrence administration, however, proved receptive to the entreaties from the beginning. The Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations provided some of the fact finding. Eleanor Ryder of the commission reported on the number of vacant properties, the difficulties that middle income families had in building new homes. Most incredibly, Ryder reported that residential segregation had increased in the city.<sup>82</sup> The number of African-Americans had increased in the city but the number of census tracts in which they lived had decreased. With Ryder's strategizing, the YWCA Public Affairs Committee called on the City to

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as better housing than the homes that the families vacated. Or it could be that the leaders of redevelopment just failed to make the relocation help a possibility for moderate income people misunderstanding the trouble realtors and white residents would pose for such families.

<sup>80</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, March 28, 1955 in YWCA Records

<sup>81</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, October 29, 1956 in YWCA Records

<sup>82</sup> Minutes of the Public Affairs Committee of the YWCA, September 24, 1956

hire more inspectors and worked to form a corporation to build moderate income housing.<sup>83</sup> While these women had made officials aware of the problems and gained the help of at least one government body, they did not put much effort into changing urban redevelopment policy. Instead they renewed support for the Pennsylvania Fair Housing Act and set about stopping discrimination in neighborhoods to which relocatees moved.<sup>84</sup>

With the help of Commission on Human Relations, many different civic groups rallied to stop the effects of block-busting in these neighborhoods, such as Homewood and Highland Park.<sup>85</sup> After one African-American family bought a house in one white neighborhood and white neighbors held a mass meeting, perpetrators smashed some of the family's windows in the house.<sup>86</sup> The commission formed teams of white families to visit the family, showing that the racial divide need not be a barrier to good neighbors. Clergymen and their parishioners placed signs in front of their houses reading "This House Not For Sale." Those placing the signs thus sought to stop the herd mentality inducing panic selling to realtors. The YWCA responded to this success, holding workshops on residential integration to which 32 groups sent representatives. They invited realtors, bankers, the Commission on Human Relations, and the

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<sup>83</sup> Civil rights groups formed the Calumet Corporation to build homes for moderate income families in 1957. Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, March 25, 1957 in YWCA Records. ACTION Housing, the Allegheny Conference's non-profit formed to build moderate income housing, may have grown out of this meeting. It was formed around the same time, after a meeting between David Lawrence and Richard King Mellon. Only further research will tell how much the YWCA and other groups influenced that proposal of Mellon and Lawrence.

<sup>84</sup> Minutes February 18, 1957 in YWCA Records

<sup>85</sup> Realtors practiced "block busting" as a deliberate strategy to profit from racial fears. They moved 1-2 African-American households into white neighborhoods, sometimes selling or renting to these families at a loss. Unscrupulous, realtors then would approach many of the white families in the area offering to buy their homes before the neighborhood "turned into a ghetto." Often, white families sold in panic at prices well below what their homes market value. In the process block busting fanned racial tensions in integrating neighborhoods.

<sup>86</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, September 17, 1957 in YWCA Records

Allegheny Conference's housing arm as well.<sup>87</sup> The East Area YWCA members responded to the workshop much like the Public Affairs committee had, calling for code enforcement and fixing up foreclosed homes. Still a new wrinkle barred their way. Eleanor Ryder explained that this city fix-up plan would not work because state law demanded that such homes be sold within one year. The group then sought to change state law.<sup>88</sup>

While the Commission on Human Relations worked on opening existing housing to displaced families, other branches of city government failed displaced persons until goaded to action. Officials from the Public Housing Authority canceled one project when whites residents rallied with a slogan, "Does the North Side want the Hill District to come to the North Side?"<sup>89</sup> When white residents complained again three years later, officials cut the size of another public housing project in the Northside.<sup>90</sup> Thus even while the Commission on Human Relations worked to have white residents open new neighborhoods to moderate income African-Americans, the housing authority was furthering segregation among low-income Pittsburghers. Civil rights groups used their ties to work on sympathetic insiders in the administration to improve such situations. Dr. Hovde of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority, for example, spoke to the Allegheny County Council on Civil Rights in 1954, noting the troubles African-Americans had in building new homes.<sup>91</sup> Mayor Lawrence, after these criticisms had been leveled at the problems created by the redevelopment project and reductions in public housing projects and prodded by Hovde, testified before Congress in favor of greater aid for public housing and

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<sup>87</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, May 27, 1957 in YWCA Records

<sup>88</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, October 15, 1957 and November 16, 1957

<sup>89</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, February 28, 1952 in YWCA Records

<sup>90</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, February 28, 1955 in YWCA Records

<sup>91</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, February 15, 1954 in YWCA Records

moderate income housing.<sup>92</sup> Members of his Commission on Human Relations pointed out to the U.S. Senate that only 109 units had been built with private moneys in areas where most African-Americans lived. At the same time, 4,309 units had been built in the city as a whole.<sup>93</sup> Senators also heard other Pittsburghers testify that residents of additional redevelopment areas, uncertain of where they could move, were resisting and delaying projects.<sup>94</sup> When Congress then passed the National Housing Act of 1957, the City broke ground on Spring Hill Gardens, a \$1.8 million housing development aimed at middle income families displaced by redevelopment programs. Only one other government authority in the entire country beat Pittsburgh to the punch in starting such a project under the auspices of FHA, Section 221.<sup>95</sup> Thus, Mayor Lawrence “standing on the shoulders” of his administrators such as Hovde had become a maverick among big city mayors in the speed with which he sought to improve housing for moderate income African-Americans.

Other groups formed to battle the very nature of large scale-redevelopment in Pittsburgh, but their ideas largely fell on officials' ears deafened to such suggestions. Residents coalesced into the Hill District Homeowners Association (HDHA) to demand better code enforcement from the City and to form block clubs to make improvements on their own. K. Leroy Irvis, by that

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<sup>92</sup> Weber 274. The timing indicates that Lawrence made these moves when African-Americans and allied white civil rights activists opened his eyes to the problems.

<sup>93</sup> "CHR Testimony to Senate Subcommittee December 13, 1957," *Human Relations Review*, Vol. 2, No. 8, November-December 1957, 2

<sup>94</sup> Testimony of James R. Hornick and Maurice A. Shapiro, Chairman of the Neighborhood Improvement Association of the Community Councils of Allegheny County, Before the U.S. Senate, on December 13, 1957, in Robert Brown, *Public Housing in Action: The Record of Pittsburgh*, (Pittsburgh Public Housing Authority, 1957), 32, 33

<sup>95</sup>"Ground Broken for N.S. Middle Income, Housing," newspaper clipping in Irvis Papers. This clipping is unattributed as to in which paper it originated and from what date. The article lists K. Leroy Irvis as a candidate for state representative, so it must have been from the spring of 1958.

point serving as a clerk to Judge Alpern, helped the group win a charter and non-profit status from Judge William Cercone.<sup>96</sup> After the group staged a large public meeting with a keynote speaker from the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, city redevelopment officials honored its request to view conditions in the Upper Hill.<sup>97</sup> A member of the Commission on Human Relations and the African-American member of city council joined on the tour with the director of ACTION Housing, the chief administrator of the Public Housing Authority, and the city's chief urban renewal coordinator. On the tour, George Laban, the president of the HDHA, showed conditions created by absentee landlords: gutted buildings, vacant lots, and "dwellings without baths or even hot water." He hoped that "a conducted tour might hasten [City urban redevelopment officials] to ward off complete redevelopment as being witnessed in the Lower Hill." The group additionally hoped to incline such officials towards the existing residents who wanted to stay, "owners who are striving to maintain [homes] in accordance with good accepted standards." Laban's hopes must have been dashed when Bernard Loshbough of the ACTION Housing said to

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<sup>96</sup> "Hill Housing Group Wins Charter OK," newspaper clipping unattributed as to paper or date in Irvis Papers. A letter from the group to Irvis however describes it as a non-profit, so the group must have received the charter before the letter's date, making the article's publication sometime before October 1956 but not before 1953. Vera Duskins, Secretary of the Hill District Homeowners Association, to K. Leroy Irvis, Pittsburgh, PA on HDHA Stationary, October 7, 1956 in Irvis Papers.

The question of whether Judge Alpern as a protégé of David Lawrence picked Irvis in order to co-opt him awaits future researchers. Alpern's papers, newly acquired by the Archives of Industrial Society, will not be open to researchers until 2005 or later. Irvis provides a partial answer in his silence on the matter. In repeated interviews over the years, he never speaks of Alpern asking him to moderate his role in civil rights organizing. Indeed, Irvis did not moderate, as working to gain a charter for a group critical of Lawrence's redevelopment plan testifies. Irvis also does not say that Alpern acted on Lawrence's behalf in choosing Irvis as a clerk in order to control him or buy him off.

<sup>97</sup> Vera Duskins, Secretary of the Hill District Homeowners Association, to K. Leroy Irvis, Pittsburgh, PA on HDHA Stationary, October 7, 1956, "A Mass Meeting of Great Importance to All HILL DISTRICT HOMEOWNERS," leaflet, October 12, 1956 in Irvis Papers

the press after the tour that the City should turn its sights to the Upper Hill and that "Piecemeal improvements might aggravate the problem." For the next several years residents of the Middle Hill and the Upper Hill worried about large scale demolition until they organized further.<sup>98</sup>

It would take several more years for redevelopment officials to implement the proposals for code enforcement, to open a relocation office, and to plan neighborhood improvements on a more humane scale. All the criticisms and suggestions put forward by the YWCA, the Commission on Human Relations, and the Hill District Association proved slow to percolate through the bureaucracy. In part, African-Americans criticizing the hardships of redevelopment spoke with a muffled voice because a major institution of the African-American community wholeheartedly supported redevelopment and censored criticisms of it. For decades the African-American newspaper the *Courier* had highlighted events in the community and even achieved prominence sending one edition throughout the nation. It had taken stands in support of civil rights and kept the community informed of proposed civil rights legislation. On urban redevelopment, however, the *Courier* did not advocate for the African-American community. The paper's publishers were staunch Republicans especially dedicated to corporate growth. Its articles in the 1950s refused to carry criticisms of the Lower Hill project.<sup>99</sup> Instead the *Courier* described the newly opened Civic Arena as an engineering marvel. Its writers did not note the hundreds of families displaced from the Lower Hill to make way for this sports complex.<sup>100</sup>

A split in the Democratic leadership in Allegheny County presented a great opportunity for civil rights supporters and opponents of urban redevelopment when David Lawrence

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<sup>98</sup> "Upper Hill Is Described as Unbelievably Shocking," *Courier*, September circa 1958 The article lists Irvis as assistant district attorney so it must have been in 1957 of 1958.

<sup>99</sup> K. Leroy Irvis, interview by Michael Snow, for the Pittsburgh Civil Rights History Project, May 27, 2003

<sup>100</sup> "Civic Arena Ground Breaking," *Courier*, May 3, 1958, in Irvis Papers

supported K. Leroy Irvis to run for state representative. Lawrence wanted to defeat the state representatives in the Hill District who had broken with his proposed legislation to reform city taxes and who supported a competing faction in the Allegheny County Democratic Party. Irvis, of course, was an unlikely choice as the man Lawrence had accused of giving the city a black eye in the department store boycott ten years before. The situation, however, called on Lawrence to cast a broad net as the incumbents had the backing of a man in the party who employed most of the African-Americans working for county government.<sup>101</sup> Irvis had also rehabilitated his image with the Democratic organization. Irvis had wandered through odd jobs after the Urban League fired him, but he had overcome this blacklisting by dint of his intelligence and hard work. Accepted to the University of Pittsburgh Law School, Irvis quickly became a top student. As Irvis served on the Pitt Law Review, school officials recommended him to Judge Anne Alpern when she called looking for their brightest student. Irvis's friend, Alderman Harry Fitzgerald also recommended him to Judge Alpern.<sup>102</sup> She appointed Irvis as her law clerk, the first African-American in the state so honored.<sup>103</sup> The work he did as clerk and the connections which the position gave him allowed Irvis to become an assistant district attorney. Alpern then recommended him to Mayor Lawrence when the mayor cast about for two candidates to knock off the Hill District's incumbents. Two legislators shared each house district in those years, and Lawrence was angry at the district's two incumbent representatives for voting against his

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<sup>101</sup> Pat O'Neill, "Democrats Out To Cut One of Their Biggest Vote-Getters, DBR," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, n.d. and John L. Clarke, "Some Candidates Howl About White Leaders," *Courier*, April 30, 1958 newspaper clippings in Irvis Papers

<sup>102</sup> K. Leroy Irvis, interview by Janet Patterson on May 8, 1986, 2 in Irvis Papers

<sup>103</sup> "First Court Clerk," *Courier*, City Edition, May 7, 1955 in Irvis Papers and K. Leroy Irvis, interview by Michael Snow, for the Pittsburgh Civil Rights History Project, May 27, 2003 and "Alderman Fitzgerald Quits DBR's Office to Aid Regular Democratic Organization," *Courier*, April 12, 1958 in Irvis Papers

proposal for a wage tax.<sup>104</sup> Running for governor, Lawrence told Irvis he wanted "men of good quality with him in Harrisburg." He additionally chose Irvis because he thought Irvis "could win."<sup>105</sup> On this score, Lawrence must have been thinking of Irvis's abilities to mobilize people shown in the thousands picketing at the department stores ten years before and the help Irvis was giving to the Hill District Homeowners and Tenants Association. With Lawrence and his organization's endorsement, Irvis would have to raise very little in the way of campaign funds. Without the endorsement, the ward chairmen and Democratic committee members, upon whom so many in the African-American community depended for jobs, would tell voters not to elect Irvis. In short, Lawrence gave Irvis a greater stage upon which to play. In the end, he did not control what Irvis could say and when.

Irvis's election also gave the African-American community an opportunity to fight for greater control over politics in their main neighborhood. African-American City Council member Paul Jones had tried for years to wrest some authority from Fifth Ward Chairman David Roberts.<sup>106</sup> Roberts, however, employed more African-Americans in county government than all other departments combined.<sup>107</sup> With Lawrence's backing, committeemen and other ward chairmen from the district and even three of Roberts' employees proved willing to break with the McClelland-Roberts faction.<sup>108</sup> Jones then put out leaflets excoriating Roberts's record on

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<sup>104</sup> Pat O'Neill, "Democrats Out To Cut One of Their Biggest Vote-Getters," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, n.d 1958 and Pat O'Neill, "Organization Is Spelled Out to Democrat," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 21, 1958 "Verona, Anderson to Oppose Wage Tax," *Courier*, May 3, 1958, 2 newspaper clippings in Irvis Papers

<sup>105</sup> K. Leroy Irvis, interview by Janet Patterson on May 8, 1986, 20 in Irvis Papers

<sup>106</sup> Pat O'Neill, "Jones Challenging DBR Power Who Controls Fifth Ward," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, n.d.

<sup>107</sup> John L. Clarke, "Some Candidates Howl About White Leaders," *Courier*, April 30, 1958

<sup>108</sup> "Thomas Buonnocore Quits DBR Office To Support Regular Democratic Ticket," *Courier*, May 3, 1958, 2 Pat O'Neill, "Jones Challenging DBR Power Who Controls Fifth Ward," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, n.d.

backing African-American candidates and lauding the Democratic organization. They claimed that Roberts had sought “to BLOCK the nomination Homer S. Brown for Judge and Jones for city council.” On the other hand, “the Regular Democrats” had given the ward a "COMMON PLEAS JUDGE, a CITY COUNCILMAN, a POLICE MAGISTRATE, an ALDERMAN, a CONSTABLE, and a host of leaders who constitute the core of NEGRO DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP in the city [emphasis retained]."<sup>109</sup> In the election, Irvis and his co-candidate won, but Roberts, not up for re-election that year, hung in for several more years as prothonotary and as ward chairman, albeit with diminished power.<sup>110</sup> African-Americans had switched some of their allegiance from Roberts to Lawrence. Only future struggles would prove how much or how little that allegiance would bring the community.

In Harrisburg, Lawrence and Irvis teamed up to expand the state’s civil rights laws to include discrimination in housing. Their combined abilities proved formidable in the state House of Representatives. In his maiden speech before the body, Irvis made the other legislators aware of the appalling housing conditions in Allegheny County. Of 40,000 homes built between 1950 and 1955 in the county, "only 130 were made available to colored people," Irvis said. Half of the residents of Pittsburgh's three African-American wards lived in substandard housing "not because they want to live there but because they are surrounded by an invisible wall raised--not by individual homeowners--but by the men who are in the business of selling homes."<sup>111</sup> As if such appeals to the legislators' sense of justice were not enough, Irvis linked such a measure to

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<sup>109</sup> "Fifth Ward Voters -- Wake Up" Democratic Party Campaign Leaflet, for the Primary Election May 20, 1958 in Irvis Papers

<sup>110</sup> Pat O'Neill, "Organization Is Spelled Out to Democrats," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 21, 1958 in Irvis Papers.

<sup>111</sup> "Fair Housing Bill Gets House Okay Moves to Senate, " *Pittsburgh Sun Telegraph*, August 5, 1959, in Irvis Papers

public relations in the Cold War and likened it a means to eliminate weak spots in Pennsylvania's economy. Irvis also reminded legislators that both parties' platforms had favored a Fair Housing Law; in voting for the measure, they would be honoring their word to voters.<sup>112</sup> Irvis must have proven truly persuasive because the usually staid body gave him a standing ovation. Meanwhile, Lawrence worked wonders pressing the flesh. He persuaded several members of the House Law and Order Committee to reverse an earlier 9 to 4 vote and allow the bill to come up for a vote. The house then passed the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1959 by 131 to 66. All but one representative from Allegheny County voted for it, such was the strength of Lawrence's command of the region.<sup>113</sup>

In the state senate, however, opponents of the bill proved too strong for civil rights advocates. Harvey Johnston, a realtor from McKeesport, attacked the bill. In an eight page screed he distributed to legislators, Johnston argued that the bill would harm African-Americans by forcing them to accept "whites of low character into their homes." And he warned that African-Americans would use the bill to force their way into whites' homes. Accusing the NAACP of prejudice in favor of colored people, Johnston said it was only right to form "a national association of the advancement of white people."<sup>114</sup> Other realtors proved less inflammatory but no less in opposition to the bill. The Homebuilders Association joined Johnston in lobbying against the bill and commissioned public opinion polling saying that 80

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<sup>112</sup>Rep K. Leroy Irvis Lauded for Eloquent Maiden Address on Fair Housing, " *Courier*, August 29, 1959, 2 newspaper clipping in Irvis Papers

<sup>113</sup> The full house voted on August 4. Joseph H. Miller, "GOP Senators Kill Bill For 'Fair Housing,'" *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 31, 1959 and "Fair Housing Bill Gets House Okay Moves to Senate, " *Pittsburgh Sun Telegraph*, August 5, 1959, newspaper clipping in Irvis Papers

<sup>114</sup> "Fair Housing Bill Awakens Dixie Bias," *Courier*, April 18, 1959 in Irvis Papers

percent of county residents opposed housing protections.<sup>115</sup> In the face of such opposition, senators killed the bill in committee. The committee in question had no members from Allegheny County, somewhat diminishing Lawrence's pull with them.<sup>116</sup>

Civil rights advocates protested vigorously, but they would have to regroup forces for another two years to win a victory. A few weeks after the committee vote, the NAACP and other civil rights groups brought 500 supporters to Harrisburg to rally for a new vote. The NAACP and the Baptist Ministers Association even chartered a bus from Pittsburgh, bringing a total of 100 Pittsburghers. The senate had turned too strongly against the measure, though. One senator turned his back on the field secretary of the NAACP. Senator Fleming from Pittsburgh's northern suburbs even said that all of his constituents were opposed to it and that he had not received letters in support of it. He kept to that claim even though several civil rights leaders present mentioned the letters which their friends, his constituents, had written.<sup>117</sup>

## **B. NOT QUITE IN BETWEEN TWO WAVES OF FEMINISM**

Pittsburgh's women operated under some heavy constraints in the decade and a half after W.W. II. American culture rolled back their place in society and ridiculed those who could not or did not conform. State laws maintained women's subordination. And working class women's economic opportunities actually declined. Still, members of women's organizations served at the

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<sup>115</sup> "Home Builders Ass'n Proposal Can Kill Or Weaken Fair Housing Bill in Senate," *Courier*, January 28, 1961, 7 in Irvis Papers

<sup>116</sup> Joseph H. Miller, "GOP Senators Kill Bill For 'Fair Housing,'" *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 31, 1959 newspaper clipping in Irvis Papers

<sup>117</sup> "Citizens to March on Harrisburg October 14 to Protest Stymie of Fair Housing," *Courier*, October 1, 1959 "GOP Leaders Insult Fair Housing Bill Protesters," *Courier*, October 24, 1959, 4 in Irvis Papers

epicenter of civil rights organizing and even the Democratic organization. Too busy fighting to improve everyone else's place in society, women's organizations did not ask the Democratic organization to protect them as a class and received table scraps as a reward.

Pittsburgh feminists in the 1940s and 1950s faced an obstacle unfamiliar to the city's civil rights activists. African-Americans daily encountered Pittsburghers in the 1950s all too willing to point out their racial identity to them and to point it out in ways which emphasized race as the root cause of discrimination. In contrast, Pittsburgh's feminists, like women's rights advocates nationwide, had to strengthen the level of identity formation among women. In essence, feminists had to help the city's women to identify their subordinate position as a problem. In the 1950s, a vast majority of women activists and their organizations fought for the rights of women by proxy. They fought for minorities' rights and to improve conditions for poor women. To make women identify with feminism, women's rights advocates would have had to convince women that their problems arose out of the fact that they were born female. Before 1967, Pittsburgh women's groups rarely gave evidence of taking up that challenge. Thus, they won improvements for their sex in an indirect and piecemeal fashion.

As Betty Friedan and historians of post-war women, who paraphrased her, have documented, the media, educators, and government launched a direct assault on the increased independence that American women enjoyed during W.W.II. The federal government encouraged businesses to hire men to replace women war workers.<sup>118</sup> Sociologists linked the 800 percent increase in divorce between 1890 and 1940 with the 400 percent increase in wives holding jobs.<sup>119</sup> *Life* laid out for women their proper role most succinctly in a 1956 article on

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<sup>118</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (NY: Dell Publishing, 1963)

<sup>119</sup> Albert Q. Maisel, "Divorce is Going Out of Style," *Reader's Digest*, 1957, p 38.

the ideal suburban housewife. "Of all the accomplishments of the American woman, the one she brings off with the most spectacular success is having babies," the article expressed.<sup>120</sup> Friedan called the overall efforts by educators, bureaucrats, and journalists to push women back into more feminine roles, "the feminine mystique."

The feminine mystique succeeded in reestablishing the position of housewife as the dominant activity for most women and made caregiver-type occupations the norm for women who worked. It succeeded, at least for a few years, in making the expanded opportunities of W.W. II an aberration. In Pittsburgh, the feminine mystique stigmatized those women who remained in non-traditional roles and limited the demands of those who wished to join them. Pittsburgh's career women made limited progress in entering the workforce. The labor force participation rate of women over the age of 14 increased slightly in the city in those years, growing from 28.4 percent in 1940 to 29.8 percent in 1950 and 33.8 percent in 1960.<sup>121</sup> At first glance, the overall census data appear to show women expanding beyond their previous traditional occupation groups. Women employed as clerical, domestic service, or service workers in 1940 made up 70 percent of all women workers as opposed to 57 percent in 1950 and 56 percent in 1960. However, the precipitous decline in the number of domestic servants accounted for one third of the decline of the percentage of working women in traditional

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<sup>120</sup> Michael Schaller, Virginia Scharff, and Robert D. Schulzinger, *Present Tense, The United States Since 1945*, Second Edition, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 113

<sup>121</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Decennial Census of the United States: 1940 Population, Characteristics of the Population*, vol. II (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), table c-43; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States: 1950 Population, Characteristics of the Population*, Part 38 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), table 35; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960 Characteristics of the Population, Pennsylvania*, vol. II (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1962), table 74, table 20. These figures mirror the national averages of 27 percent in 1940 and 31 percent in 1950.

occupation groups.<sup>122</sup> Another seeming contradiction to the feminized roles for women also turns out to be still within the feminine mystique's orbit. The number and percentage of women working in the professions increased as did their percentage of women workers. But, if the ranks of the city's professional women mirrored that of the Greater Pittsburgh metropolitan area, almost half of these women professionals worked as teachers. Out of 27,208 women employed as professional, technical and kindred workers, 9,172 worked in public education and 4,071 in private educational services. This compared to 235 women working as professionals in the legal, engineering, or professional services industry.<sup>123</sup>

While women in general slightly increased their entry into the world of work, opportunities for Pittsburgh's working class and undereducated women to make a decent wage declined from 1940 to 1960. After W. W. II, the job market for women wanting to support themselves and their families by working as domestic servants shriveled. Only 5,737 women worked as domestic servants in 1950, down from 9,796 in 1940. Some of these domestic servants probably found better paying and prestige granting work as factory operatives, but not for long. As Pittsburgh's industry geared up for defense production and rebuilding European infrastructure, 2,700 more women living in the city found work as operatives. The gains were short-lived as men returned from serving in occupied countries overseas and reentered the workforce after G.I. Bill stints in college. The number of women employed as operatives in Pittsburgh shrank by almost a third between 1950 and 1960. This figure demonstrates the shocking fact that fewer women worked in Pittsburgh's factories or at higher paying skilled jobs

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<sup>122</sup> The percentage of women employed as domestic servants declined from 12.5 percent to 6.1 percent between 1940 and 1960. *1940 Census of the Population*, table 42; *1950, Census of the Population*, table 35; *1960 Census of Population*, table 74

<sup>123</sup> *1950 Census of the Population, Pennsylvania*, table 84

than had at the tail end of the Great Depression.<sup>124</sup> Some of the decline resulted from Pittsburgh corporations firing women when they married. For example, Westinghouse revived prewar seniority rules that discriminated against married women. Using these rules in layoffs, Westinghouse eliminated all female married electrical workers by 1951.<sup>125</sup>

Given the declining opportunities for working class women in Pittsburgh industry, many or most of these former domestic servants undoubtedly switched over to what Friedan called "occupation housewife" or to doing the same type of work in hotels, offices, and laundries. The growth of the number of female service employees demonstrates this fact, increasing from 9,878 to 12,772.<sup>126</sup>

Even those women remaining in jobs faced great obstacles. Some found that sexual harassment went with the job. Women facing that treatment on the job had no legal recourse, and it was unheard of to complain.<sup>127</sup> Moreover companies such as Westinghouse and ALCOA routinely fired women, including in white collar occupations, once they got pregnant. Those women too had no legal recourse until the passage of Title VII of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 and even then federal authorities dodged using that law to protect women fired for becoming pregnant.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> 6388 in 1940 vs. 6258 in 1960. *1940, Census of the Population, Pennsylvania*, table c-42; *1960, Census of Population, Pennsylvania*, table 74.

<sup>125</sup> Mark McColloch, "The Shop Floor Costs of Division," Paper presentation delivered at the 1998 Pennsylvania Labor History Society Conference. September 19, 1998 Monroeville, PA; Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex During W.W. II.* (Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 144-151.

<sup>126</sup> *1940, Census of Population, Pennsylvania*. table c-42; *1950, Census of Population*, table 35.

<sup>127</sup> Jo Ann Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on September 19, 2001, 25

<sup>128</sup> Phyllis Wetherby, interview by Michael Snow on December 4, 2001, Phyllis Wetherby, electronic communication to Michael Snow in response to follow up questions, February 8, 2002 in SLGA, Keith Marcon, son of a former ALCOA employee, personal communication, April 14, 2001, Thomas Kerr, President of the ACLU of

In addition to women's' limited opportunity to challenge their subordination to men through finding jobs which paid them enough to be independent, state laws and courts severely restricted women's control over their reproductivity. Pennsylvania laws against abortion included prohibitions for the sale of "devices and medicine meant to prevent conception."<sup>129</sup> In 1943, the courts reinterpreted the law to allow the sale of contraceptives so long as the seller did not publicize or exhibit them.<sup>130</sup> Police authorities around the state tried to interpret the statutes to prohibit the sale of all contraceptives, but the state's courts had to rule again in 1949 to allow such sales.<sup>131</sup> Legislators and judges imposed stronger penalties on abortion providers. People convicted of trying to induce a miscarriage faced up to \$3,000 in fines or five years in solitary confinement or hard labor.<sup>132</sup> The absence of police records makes it difficult to determine how much Pittsburgh authorities enforced such laws. The only year for which we have police records shows three arrests for the crime.<sup>133</sup> The loophole for women seeking abortion was that judges considered them a victim of the crime rather than the perpetrator.<sup>134</sup> Still by penalizing doctors and health practitioners, these laws helped keep Pennsylvania women from safely limiting their fertility. As many scholars have argued, these laws joined cultural taboos in limiting women

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Pennsylvania, Letter to the Editor of the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* urging passage of the Bill to End Sex Discrimination on the Basis of Pregnancy, May 27, 1976, in Matson Family Papers,

<sup>129</sup>Purdon's 18 PA, § 4525, 364.

<sup>130</sup> *Commonwealth v. Mosholder*, 46 D. & C. 31, 91 P.L.J. 139, 1943.

<sup>131</sup> *Commonwealth v. Payne*, 66 D.& C. 462, 1949.

<sup>132</sup> Purdon's 18 PA, § 4718, 201.

<sup>133</sup> The loss of police records in years of shuffling between depositories and the department's refusal to open records stored on site created this obstacle. Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, *Annual Report*, 1957, p 46

<sup>134</sup> *Commonwealth v. Fisher*, 149, A 2d 666, 189 PA Super. 13, 1959

from being able to grow beyond the role of being the children's mother or the good wife.<sup>135</sup> The legislators did not stop at that point though. Public obscenity statutes punished advertising cures for venereal diseases and sexual problems.<sup>136</sup> Women afflicted by such diseases and too embarrassed to consult their physician thus would go wanting for information as to why they were unable to conceive. So the laws kept other Pennsylvanians from becoming parents.

State law, additionally, gave legal sanction to the subordination of women sexually to men. The law defining statutory rape explicitly took into account the character of the woman making the charges. If jurors found that the young woman was "not of good repute," authorities would downgrade the charge or conviction to the much lesser crime of fornication.<sup>137</sup> Courts ruled it unnecessary and even inadmissible for defense attorneys to prove specific allegations of the accuser's non-chastity. Judges instead just wanted the defense simply to prove general reputation.<sup>138</sup> While the statute on regular rape did not mention the reputation of the victim, Pennsylvania judges ruled such evidence admissible as to the likelihood that the accuser consented.<sup>139</sup> Some judges and lawyers even took the ruling in *Commonwealth v. Eberhardt* as demanding that they had to instruct jurors to consider the accuser's reputation for morality and chastity.<sup>140</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to find the frequency with which defense

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<sup>135</sup> For analysis of the impact of these laws in the U.S. in the 1950s, see Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (NY: Basic Books, 1992) and Rickie Sollinger, *Wake Up Little Suzie* (NY: Routledge, 2000)

<sup>136</sup> The punishment included a \$500 fine and or imprisonment for one year. 1939, June 24, P. L. 872 § 531. Purdon's 18 PA, § 4531, 368.

<sup>137</sup> Purdon's 18 PA, § 4721, 210

<sup>138</sup> *Commonwealth v. Landry*, 99 P.L.J. 464, 1952

<sup>139</sup> *Commonwealth v. Eberhardt*, 67 A. 2d 613, 164 Pa. Super 591, 1949

<sup>140</sup> Interpretation of *Commonwealth v. Eberhardt*, 67 A. 2d 613, 164 Pa. Super 591, 1949 in Purdon's 18 PA, § 4721,223.

attorneys turned the tables on women making accusations of rape, shifting the trial into one about her character. In the absence of that evidence though, logic would dictate that they had a large incentive to do so. Defense attorneys with a few well placed remarks about a victim's character changed their client's potential sentence from fifteen years in prison to a fine of a few hundred dollars.<sup>141</sup> So the women involved had to defend themselves and their character in court. Married women faced a greater threat. In the courts, they found no recourse should they suffer from unwanted advances from their husbands. The wording of the Pennsylvania statute on rape did not preclude charging a husband with raping his wife, but nor did the law say that forcing sex on one's wife was rape either. No one was charged with the crime of marital rape until the 1970s.<sup>142</sup> In effect then, wives could not refuse their husbands' sexual advances.

Women's organizations in Pittsburgh only slowly turned to advocating politically for women's equality on the job. Though the National Women's Party had the Equal Rights Amendment introduced in the U.S. Congress every year in the 1940s and 1950s, the YWCA, both locally and nationally, opposed it until the 1970s.<sup>143</sup> In its place, the YWCA and other major women's organizations in Pittsburgh supported state protective laws which restricted women's flexibility in employment. They played into a strategy which Linda Gordon called maternalism. Women's groups nationwide succeeded in protecting women workers and even won some social welfare benefits for women by arguing to lawmakers that women needed protection as the weaker sex and as mothers.<sup>144</sup> For example in 1947, the Pittsburgh branches of

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<sup>141</sup> Purdon's 18 PA, § 4721, 210

<sup>142</sup> "House Bill 580," PAAR Spectives: The Newsletter of PAAR, April 1976

<sup>143</sup> Jan Neffke, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA.

<sup>144</sup> Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare 1890-1935*.(New York: Free Press, 1994)

the National Council of Jewish Women, the YWCA, and the American Association of University Women passed resolutions in opposition to Pennsylvania House Bill 35.<sup>145</sup> The bill would have lengthened women's workweek from 44 to 48 hours and lowered the age at which women could work a night shift from 21 to 18. The AAUW resolution clearly spells out the maternalist logic of the women involved or at least their notion that such logic resonated with legislators. In proto women's liberation form, it did decry that women often had to put in a double shift of "6 to 8 hours at home and then work 8 hours on the job," but it reiterates maternalist reasoning in four passages. Most clearly it stated, "The primary purpose of legislation for women workers is conservation of their health and provision for the health and future development of the young."<sup>146</sup> Couching such demands for women's rights in terms of their duties as mothers not only made lawmakers more likely to accede to them, but the language used also hindered women's ability to make demands in their own right, as Linda Gordon has so well argued.<sup>147</sup> For example, the public affairs committee of the YWCA in 1947 voted a resolution of support for Pennsylvania House Bill 195 which would have mandated equal pay for equal work between men and women, but at the same time it repeatedly urged members to write legislators to oppose easing the laws restricting women's labor.<sup>148</sup>

Over the next twelve years, the YWCA's Public Affairs Committee determined the issues on which its members would work each year by having its committee members rank issues and by polling the broader membership. The board never made equal pay for equal work a key issue

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<sup>145</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Citywide Public Affairs Committee, March 19, 1947 and April 16, 1947 in YWCA Papers

<sup>146</sup> American Association of University Women Pittsburgh Branch resolution, April 21, 1947 in YWCA Papers.

<sup>147</sup> Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled*

<sup>148</sup> Minutes YWCA Citywide Public Affairs Committee, March 19, 1947 and April 16, 1947

by featuring it in the YWCA's radio programs or in the public affairs column of the YWCA's newsletter, *The Blueprint*. In the early 1950s, the board continued the practice despite the fact that the membership in polls listed it as a top ten issue every three years.<sup>149</sup> Perhaps these powerful women leaders in Pittsburgh feared the equal pay issue as a trap. They signaled as much in a resolution in 1957, saying that the UN's Commission on the Status of Women's Equal Pay for Equal Work resolution "had been approved by men so that women don't undercut their wages."<sup>150</sup> While making some ambivalent gestures towards demanding equal pay, the volunteers and staff of the YWCA's public affairs bodies focused the bulk of their work on other issues such as international peace and opted for any other cause not traditionally associated with feminism<sup>151</sup>

While several leftist historians have argued that the Red Scare inhibited women's organizing on economic equality, Pittsburgh's women's groups appeared uncowed by the Red Scare; hence, their silence on the ERA probably did not result from fear. To be certain, the Red Scare did hold back leftists across the nation working on women's issues. Ruth Rosen has deftly noted how the left-leaning Congress of American Women (CAW) dissolved rather than fight a legal battle when HUAC forced it to register as an agent of a foreign organization. The CAW

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<sup>149</sup>Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, October 18, 1948, December 13, 1948, January 17, 1949, October 16, 1950, January 26, 1951, October 15, 1951, January 19, 1953, October 25, 1954, in YWCA Records

<sup>150</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, April 22, 1957, in YWCA Records

<sup>151</sup> Their delegates to the national convention in 1949 voted to prioritize the United Nations, inflation, immigration policy. Four years later the radio program focused on the Fair Employment Practices Commission, strengthening the United Nations, and housing. Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, January 17, 1949 and Minutes of the Citywide YWCA Public Affairs Committee, January 19, 1953, Minutes of the Metropolitan YWCA Public Affairs Committee, April 18, 1956 in YWCA Records

had been one of the strongest voices for equal pay for equal work and job training for women.<sup>152</sup> Around Pittsburgh, raids by the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) eviscerated several United Electrical Workers (UE) locals after the UE refused to purge communists. The infighting between the IUE and UE allowed employers to roll back the UE's hard fought contract provisions which aimed at protecting married women on the job and bringing parity between men's and women's wages.<sup>153</sup> Despite these notable struggles, Pittsburgh's liberal women's organizations show no evidence of avoiding economic issues because of fear of red-baiting. Most remarkably, the public affairs committee of the Pittsburgh YWCA came out as one of Senator Joseph McCarthy's first opponents. When McCarthy chaired a Senate hearing in Pittsburgh on public housing, a couple of members attended and wrote to him in protest of how he conducted the meeting.<sup>154</sup> Even as anticommunist diatribes smeared the national YWCA's work in support of the United Nations, the Pittsburgh YWCA made defense of free speech and free thought one of its four top priorities for years. Yes, they thought twice about such involvement in the wake of Eleanor Roosevelt's descriptions of the "hysteria in Washington and damage to faithful public servants." Some members expressed fear and dissented a little against involving the YWCA in controversial issues, but the committee came out swinging against the excesses of the Red Scare.<sup>155</sup> Most notably the group responded when the Pennsylvania

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<sup>152</sup> Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*, (NY: Viking, 2000), 28.

<sup>153</sup> Ronald L. Filippelli and Mark McColloch, *Cold War in the Working Class*, SUNY Series in American Labor History, Robert Asher and Amy Keselman eds., (Albany SUNY Press, 1995), 80-1, 149, 165

<sup>154</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Citywide Public Affairs Committee Meeting, October 22, 1947 in YWCA Records

<sup>155</sup> The National Office sent copies of a booklet circulating by the rightwing titled, "Behind the Lace Curtain." It attacked the YWCA's programs in favor of international bodies and some of its other public affairs programs. Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, October 28, 1948 in YWCA Records

Attorney General's Office attacked local attorney Marjorie Matson in the Pittsburgh newspapers. The committee sent its resolution to the office and to the papers denouncing "public denunciation based on innuendo and flimsy allegations of guilt by association," as counter productive in the fight to protect the U.S. from subversion.<sup>156</sup> When public school teachers came under HUAC's gaze, the YWCA asked Congress for full public hearings on loyalty oaths, knowing that Representative Estes Kefauver had already set up a committee to investigate HUAC's "character assassinations."<sup>157</sup> The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) joined the YWCA the next year "to work for the re-establishment in the U.S. of a climate in which citizens are free to express their opinions."<sup>158</sup> And such a coalition broadened the next year, with the American Association of University Women and the Council of Church Women of Allegheny County helping the NCJW and YWCA in drafting "Defenses Within A Free Society." This joint statement served as their response to red-baiting and investigations of local university professors.<sup>159</sup>

Not only did the women of Pittsburgh's social service and civic organizations fight McCarthyism, but they also fought for improvements in conditions for poor women. Again they did this while consciously rejecting the political issues put forward by the National Women's Party and organizations supporting the Equal Rights Amendment. As such their actions support Dorothy Sue Cobble's argument that scholars need to broaden the definition of feminism to embrace the activism going on between feminism's first (Suffrage) and second waves (NOW,

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<sup>156</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, January 25, 1951 in YWCA Records

<sup>157</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, April 26, 1951 in YWCA Records

<sup>158</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, June 26, 1952 in YWCA Records

<sup>159</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, March 26, 1953 in YWCA Records

women's liberation).<sup>160</sup> The women of the YWCA's Public Affairs Committee especially took on issues which benefited their fellow women, many times as a form of solidarity with such women as women. They testified before Congress in 1947 in favor of public housing as a means of "eliminat[ing] the very grave problems affecting girls and women which are brought about by inadequate, unsanitary and congested housing."<sup>161</sup> Board members wrote Congress in favor of extending social security in 1949, demanding that "women workers have the same rights and privileges as men."<sup>162</sup> The board of the North Area YWCA protested to some cleaning firms upon learning that they only paid older women 50 cents an hour.<sup>163</sup>

As Betty Friedan was only beginning to write her attack on the feminine mystique, a book which many credit with birthing second wave feminism, the YWCA launched programs to give suburban wives outlets in civic activism. The YWCA wanted such women involved in activities besides housework and child rearing. And its members grew concerned that their own organizations would become mere recreation centers without a public affairs component. The board members drew up a pilot program to help women become more involved in civic affairs. They debated whether it was better for such programs in the suburbs to concentrate on getting women active in bringing services such as sidewalks and schools to the suburbs or allowing them to have a broader view. In the end members of the Public Affairs Committee decided to involve such women in minimum wage and hour fights, efforts to help migrant workers, and implementing fair housing legislation. These items stood as the same checklist of issues on

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<sup>160</sup> Dorothy Sue Cobble, "The Missing Wave: Labor Feminism and Social Policy in the United States, 140-1970," Paper presented at the Pittsburgh Center for Social History Working Class History Seminar, March 22, 2001

<sup>161</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Citywide Public Affairs Committee Meeting, October 22, 1947 in YWCA Records

<sup>162</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, March 31, 1949 in YWCA Records

<sup>163</sup> Minutes of the Metropolitan YWCA Public Affairs Committee Meeting, April 18, 1956 in YWCA Records

which the central city YWCA members sought to help other women around the country. The overall goal though was the most tellingly feminist. In launching that project, YWCA members argued that without it the women would atrophy. Mrs. Hornbeck pointed "frustration" among "the matrons of suburbia the wives of technicians, scientists, etc., who find themselves becoming, 'more narrow and narrow.'"<sup>164</sup>

Meanwhile a good number of women were active in civic affairs, serving in the Democratic organization, but they only won for themselves personal advancement and symbolic victories over women's constricting place in society. Women served most often as aides to ward chairmen, receiving small government jobs in return.<sup>165</sup> David Lawrence, the head of the organization did reward a couple of these women from the Young Democrats and the Federation of Democratic Women with key positions. He promoted Anne Alpern to be city solicitor, after she had faithfully served as assistant solicitor under Mayor Scully. Lawrence also appointed Genevieve Blatt to his cabinet when he took office as governor, and promoted Alpern to Attorney General.<sup>166</sup> Lawrence's successor as mayor, additionally, appointed Marion Finkelhor as assistant solicitor.<sup>167</sup> The appointments of such women symbolically countered the feminine mystique especially in a time when companies fired a good number of women as they married and many more women felt pressure to leave low level jobs and to exit the professions let alone positions of power.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Minutes of the Public Affairs Committee of the Metropolitan YWCA, October 13, 1959 in YWCA Records

<sup>165</sup> Sophie Masloff, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on August 19, 1998

<sup>166</sup> Weber, *Don't Call Me Boss*, Joel Fishman, *Judges of Allegheny County, Fifth Judicial District, 1788-1988*, (Pittsburgh: Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Bicentennial Committee, 1989) 5-6

<sup>167</sup> Fishman, 45-6

<sup>168</sup> Rita Wilson Kane, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on November 10, 1998

This symbolic value however was not at a par with the service women performed for the Democratic organization. First, dozens of Democratic committeewomen and the favored women from the Federation of Democratic Women who worked for city government, worked as cleaning women or in typing pools.<sup>169</sup> Certainly more of these women worked in such positions than as solicitor or attorney general, staying well within culturally acceptable norms for women's place. Second, the bulk of the Democratic Party's funds for elections came from tickets to the Jefferson and Roosevelt Day dinners and card parties.<sup>170</sup> The Federation of Democratic Women sold those tickets and put on those dinners and parties in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>171</sup> Additionally, the common dictum was then and remains now that city politics is all about pot holes and garbage. That is, local politicians survive or fall on the basis of their constituent services.<sup>172</sup> Women as aides to ward chairmen and as secretaries of city councilmen and state representatives did the bulk of the constituent services which kept voters in local elections happy. For example decades before she became a city council member and mayor, Sophie Masloff worked her way up from a simple member of the Young Democrats to serve as assistant ward chairman. In that role, Masloff even took utility bills downtown for recent immigrants to the Fifteenth Ward.<sup>173</sup>

A good amount of the Democratic Party's power then depended upon the work of these women, and yet the women in the federation could not bring home victories for their gender. The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1959 left out women from the categories of people

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<sup>169</sup> Kane, interview, and Masloff, interview

<sup>170</sup> Robert Colville, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on January 12, 2000

<sup>171</sup> Masloff, interview 4, 8, Kane, interview

<sup>172</sup> Interviewer's notes for an oral history interview with Nello Giorgetti transcript closed. Interviewer Michael Snow's notes on Nello Giorgetti interviewed for SLGA on January 3, 2000

<sup>173</sup> Masloff, interview, 11, 17-19

which the proposed Human Relations Commission would protect from discrimination. Even with Governor Lawrence in power and pushing hard for the bill, this provision never came up. The omission stood as more than an oversight. Both the Democratic and Republican state platforms of 1958 had called for protections based on sex and age. In the debates on the measure only Representative Irvis brought up the notion, but he did not include it in the bill for which he and the governor pushed.<sup>174</sup>

### C. IN SEARCH OF A HIDING MINORITY: GAYS AT THE POINT

Whereas Pittsburgh's political elites had just begun rewarding African-Americans for their votes and continued to shortchange women for their work between 1945 and 1960, these same figures worked to eradicate what little existed of a gay community. To be certain, the dissolute state of that community was not their work alone. Wider cultural prohibitions against homosexuality hindered individual gays and lesbians from coming together, and state laws criminalized those who did. In enforcing those laws, Pittsburgh's police, however, overzealously crushed the few public spaces in which gays and lesbians could create a life for themselves. And city politicians exploited that policing power for electoral gain. In all, city officials prevented the creation of a gay community capable of advocating for its rights.

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<sup>174</sup> "Rep. K. Leroy Irvis lauded for Eloquent Maiden Address for Fair Housing Bill," *Courier*, August 29, 1959, 2. The *Courier* article, noted as did Irvis's speech, that the House Legislative Journal contained those planks. They never came up for debate and no other writer of a newspaper article gave them mention. I conclude from this fact that Governor Lawrence and his legislative aides made no effort to push for the inclusion. "Fair Housing Bill Gets House Okay Moves to Senate," *Pittsburgh Sun Telegraph*, August 5, 1959. Unfortunately for filling in the details on this issue, Irvis has no recollection of the issue. K. Leroy Irvis, interview by Michael Snow for Pittsburgh Civil Rights History Project, on May 27, 2003, videotape,

Public officials acted in a macho culture of the postwar United States which inhibited the city's gays and lesbians from realizing their orientation, let alone building institutions or a social movement for their advancement. Pittsburghers, like most Americans, whipsawed between the contradictory poles of marginalizing the obvious transgressors of gender norms and denying the existence of gays and lesbians. Unlike later students, classmates did not jeer two of the men interviewed by the Pitt Men's Study because no one talked about homosexuality. One interviewee requesting anonymity reported that "a large segment of society just didn't know anything like that happened."<sup>175</sup> In contrast, most gays and lesbians undoubtedly knew about millennia-old proscriptions against same-sex intercourse. My requests for contacts from ten activists from the gay rights struggle have only turned up two other men willing to talk openly about gay life in that period. The rest of the generation failed to act on their proclivities until the 1970s, refused to speak about their orientation to this day even on condition of anonymity, or succumbed to AIDS. This paucity of sources affirms that gays and lesbians right after W. W. II lived under strictures so heavy that many lacked a label for themselves let alone a support network.<sup>176</sup>

In the absence of information specific to gay identity formation in Pittsburgh, I can surmise that it mirrored gay life elsewhere in the nation. Some works on the founding of the gay rights movement nationwide divulge that gays found so little information about themselves that they took such bleak portrayals of homosexuality as *Death in Venice*, *City and the Pillar*, and *The Well of Loneliness* as godsend that they were not alone in the world.<sup>177</sup> In both of these

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<sup>175</sup> "Alfred," interview, 30

<sup>176</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>177</sup> In James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*, 1956, the main character cannot stay with Giovanni and spirals into a life of crime followed by execution. Chris Freeman, "Something They Did in the Dark," in Allida M. Black, ed.,

books, as in most of the modern portrayals of homosexuals in the Western canon before 1973, the author subjected a gay or lesbian character to excruciating psychological disorders or death.<sup>178</sup> In this situation, most of Pittsburgh's gay and lesbians lived under so deep a disguise as to render them invisible even to potential allies.

To maintain that disguise, Pittsburgh's gays and lesbians had to dissociate themselves from behavior inappropriate to their gender roles. The secrecy acted as a benefit and a curse. One African-American interviewee knew no one who lost his or her job in the 1940s or 50s because of homosexuality. "Those few individuals that I termed flamboyant were no threat," he added.<sup>179</sup> To these men, Pittsburgh's heterosexuals in the 1940s and 50s afforded a liberty not unlike that granted by peasants to the village idiot. As a bartender from a gay bar said, "Straight

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*Modern American Queer History*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001). Radcliffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* with its bleak look at lesbian depressed Karla Jay, making her think that constrained choices were all that was available to her. Many other women in the 1950s, according to Duberman, took the book as a clarion call. Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (NY: Plume, 1994) Author, Christopher Isherwood wrote to Gore Vidal in anger over the protagonist turning into a murderer/rapist in *The City and the Pillar*. Isherwood asked what moral the reader would bring away from the text. "This is what homosexuality brings you to, he will say: tragedy, defeat, and death." Christopher Isherwood to Gore Vidal, 1948 as quoted on in Charles Kaiser, *Gay Metropolis, The Landmark History of Gay Life in America Since WWII*, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997) 61-2. George Chauncey disagrees with the doom and gloom finding supportive novels published in the 1930s. George Chauncey, *Gay New York Gender Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*, NY Basic Books, 1994. We have to ask however how many gays found those novels in comparison to the reach of the bestsellers listed above. Bonnie Zimmerman's survey of lesbian literature found that Patricia Highsmith's 1952 novel was almost unique in having a happy ending. Zimmerman contrasted it with hundreds of lesbian pulp fiction pieces portraying decadence. Bonnie Zimmerman, *The Safe Sea of Women*, Beacon 1990, xi as quoted in Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (NY: Plume, 1994)

<sup>178</sup> Chirs Freeman provides an excellent analysis of the impact of reading literature on gay identity formation. Chris Freeman, "Something They Did in the Dark," in Allida M. Black, ed., *Modern American Queer History*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 131-154

<sup>179</sup> "Alfred," interview by Anthony Silvestre, September 24, 1989, Pittsburgh Gay Community Oral History Collection, Pitt Men's Study Offices, 30

people would come in and watch the pretty freaks carrying on."<sup>180</sup> In exchange for openly feminine behavior, the objects of amused whispers could live confined to "the one or two professions where they were accepted." Gays not wanting to limit their career to the categories "hairdresser and interior decorator" conformed "very rigidly and strictly to what they thought society demanded."<sup>181</sup>

Those sexual minorities lucky enough to find a network of friends stood a chance of building concealed lives approaching a level of basic human rights which heterosexuals in Pittsburgh in the 1950s took for granted. A straight Pittsburgher stood a reasonable expectation of building a life with another person. In any number of public venues or the mundane tasks of daily life, he or she could meet and get to know several potential mates. In contrast, gays and lesbians had to ferret one another out to establish even casual friendships. One gay man reported in a 1989 oral history interview that he knew very little about gay life until he gained the confidence of a male friend. The friend introduced him to a cohort of six to eight others in a series of dinner parties and small get-togethers. That rare individual fortunate enough to find a compatible mate in such a narrow range of acquaintances could build a life with that person. Four decades before the mainstream media dared broach the subject of same-sex marriage, this circle of gays and lesbians even held ceremonies celebrating their joined lives. They even took wedding photos. Of course, in the 1940s and 1950s, these ceremonies "did not have the approval, certainly not legally nor sacredly" as the interviewee noted.<sup>182</sup> We can imagine that

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<sup>180</sup> Bar Owner Z, interview by Anthony Silvestre, September 14, 1992, Pittsburgh Gay Community Oral History Collection, Pitt Men's Study Offices, 4.

<sup>181</sup> "Alfred," interview 40

<sup>182</sup> "Alfred," interview, 18

such relationships faced added hardships of fear of blackmail. Their families may have involuntarily committed one or both parties had the relatives found out about the relationship.

The extent to which Pittsburgh's racial divide in the 1950s helped atomize the gay community remains unclear. Researcher Tony Silvestre found one African-American from the period who was active in gay life in the 1940s and 1950s. The interviewee, referred to here as "Alfred" because he wished to remain anonymous, described house parties which gay persons of color threw for one another. He remembered being so far removed from interaction with white gays that he thought they did not exist until he saw a television news article in the 1970s.<sup>183</sup> Research for this study searched for gay persons of color using current African-American and gay activists for leads but turned up no African-Americans who were alive and acting upon their sexual orientation before 1960. This lack of sources makes it hard to determine how representative Silvestre's interviewee's statements were about gays not interacting across the races. Interviews with white gays mentioned gay persons of color active in gay bar life in the 1960s, so Alfred's experience may be exceptional.<sup>184</sup>

Pittsburgh politicians curtailed gays and lesbians' ability to turn such a network into a community by outlawing their inroads into public space. Residents of a particular neighborhood or members of a particular ethnic or religious group enjoyed the freedom to gather in public or congregate in private establishments. There they could reinforce social bonds, compare notes on problems, discover a consciousness of their similarities in outlook, counter negative images of themselves, and demonstrate the dignity of their way of life to the rest of society. In contrast,

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183 "Alfred," interview, 10-35

184 Bar Owner Z interview. Bar Owner X interview by Michael Snow June 3, 2003. See Appendix A for analysis of oral sources and racial diversity in the gay community.

laws declared it illegal for homosexuals to congregate.<sup>185</sup> Thus the proprietors of Pittsburgh's one gay bar operating in the 1940s paid off a chapter of the American Veterans of Foreign Wars to use its liquor license and masqueraded the establishment as a bar called "Am Vets."<sup>186</sup> Other bars skirted the law by having a separate room or end of the bar for homosexuals.<sup>187</sup> One bartender demonstrated the resilience of homosexuals from that period noting the "fun time" they had in "[t]he mystique of going to side places ... or the mystique of sneaking out."<sup>188</sup> Politicians from the period took their laws to the arcane extreme of dictating that a man in female apparel had to wear one piece of men's apparel and that persons of the same sex could not dance together or even touch in bars.<sup>189</sup> The danger inherent in such laws was obvious. Pittsburgh's police used all these regulations as the pretext to invade establishments frequented by gays and lesbians and harass the patrons. Employees exhibited their fears in the great lengths to which they went to protect their establishments. Doormen flashed red lights or sounded a buzzer in a raid in order to allow some patrons time to escape or to stand next to the opposite sex.

In such raids, police conduct reinforced the cultural and legal subordination of gays and lesbians. Officers turned up the lights, asked for identification, and ridiculed those present. The police were much more likely to arrest or beat anyone who made eye contact with the officers and thereby failed to show deference.<sup>190</sup> To increase the public humiliation and repercussions of

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<sup>185</sup> Bar Owner Z, interview.

<sup>186</sup> David Stoner personal conversation with Michael Snow on December 2, 2001.

<sup>187</sup> "Alfred," interview

<sup>188</sup> Bar Owner Z, interview, 3

<sup>189</sup> Bar Owner Z, interview, 4 Verifying the ordinances used proves tricky as the Law Library at the University of Pittsburgh only keeps current ordinances, disposing of out of date copies. The City Clerk's office has no older copies either.

<sup>190</sup> Stoner, conversation

such raids the police often turned over the names of patrons and their employers. The newspapers played into this harassment by publishing the list of women and men "found in" gay bars or public restrooms frequented for sex.<sup>191</sup>

Because of these raids, police and politicians in Pittsburgh thwarted every attempt gays and lesbians made to free themselves of economic exploitation by straight bar owners. The existing gay bars mistreated customers. For example, the Carnival Lounge charged \$2.50 for a beer in 1959. Before the glass even warmed, bartenders and waitresses demanded, "Buy another or get out." Gays and lesbians tried at least six times in the 1950s and early 1960s to establish a gay-owned and run bar, one which would hopefully treat its clientele with decency if not fair prices. All were shut down by the authorities.<sup>192</sup> The oral sources do not specify what ordinances the police used, but Pittsburgh's police probably mirrored the authorities from New York City. There the State Liquor Authority refused or challenged licenses on the grounds that a bar "permit[ed] the premises to become disorderly in permitting homosexuals, degenerate, and undesirable people to congregate on the premises."<sup>193</sup> In 1955 alone, Pittsburgh police arrested 4,643 people for disorderly conduct and 1,292 for "visiting disorderly house."<sup>194</sup> The case of the Hernandez Hideaway in the Pittsburgh suburb of McKeesport demonstrates the lengths to which

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<sup>191</sup> Stoner, conversation, John McCarter personal conversation with Michael Snow on August 23, 2001.

<sup>192</sup> Bar Owner Z, interview, 8.

<sup>193</sup> Notice from State Liquor Authority to Gloria Bar & Grill, Inc. December 13, 1939 as quoted in George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940*, (NY: Basic Books, 1994) p 338. From the 1940s to the 1970s, California and New York State laws made it illegal to sell liquor to a homosexual. Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1982) 17-18 and Duberman, p115f

<sup>194</sup> Bureau of Police, 12. Visits to a brothel fell under the charge of "visiting assignation house." Pennsylvania's statute for what constituted a disorderly house included "encouragement of idleness, gaming, drinking, or misbehavior or common nuisance and disturbance of the peace." 1939 June 24 P.L. 872 §511. The state legislature gave the City of Pittsburgh power to develop its own ordinances defining disorderly conduct.

gays and lesbians bar owners went to evade detection. To enter the club, "you had to climb these stairs, cross over a roof and come down another set of steps to go in the back way of the top floor[.]" Even so well-hidden a place was raided, its patrons scared away.<sup>195</sup> In the 1950s, African-American small business owners and professionals who catered to African-American clientele sustained the Urban League and NAACP. Because police raids destroyed the homosexuals' ability to form gay-owned businesses, they blocked both that avenue for advancement for entrepreneurs and the accompanying obligation to give back to the community. Those gay and lesbian business owners or professionals who succeeded financially could not openly give to their community or feared the repercussions of doing so privately.

The raids and arrests might have existed as just a law enforcement issue had the city's politicians not leaned on the police to step up these activities for political ends. One interviewee noted that Pittsburgh police increased the number of raids and arrests just before election time. The two years of police arrest statistics from before 1968, which are open to researchers, unfortunately do not shed light on the arrests of gays and lesbians. Only the Pittsburgh Narcotics and Sex Crime Squad broke down its arrests by month, and its arrests only accounted for 534 of 33,778 the police department's total. Thus the figures leave us mostly in the dark as to what other police units in Pittsburgh were doing in terms of morals charges and when they were most active. However, arrests by this squad did spike in the month of the 1956 primary lending some credence to this interviewee's testimony. The squad made 164 arrests that month, two and half times more than in the month with the next highest number of arrests. The squad made half of those arrests for vagrancy, a charge elsewhere used against men suspected of cruising streets or

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<sup>195</sup> Bar Owner Z, interview, 8.

public parks for sex with each other and used against suspected prostitutes.<sup>196</sup> The fact that the Sex Crime squad made these arrests lends credence to the conclusion that these included morals arrests, not simply harassment of panhandlers or drifters.<sup>197</sup>

Pittsburgh police proved more than willing to use state sodomy and morals laws to attack homosexual behavior publicly, often for corrupt ends. The police department formed the Morals Squad in 1948 to "round up suspected male sex deviates." It made nightly sweeps of areas where homosexuals met with one another on the streets or in the old bus station. Between 1948 and 1951, the squad arrested close to 800 men. When the State Attorney General's office investigated those arrests and re-examined witnesses a pattern of corruption emerged. The courts convicted seven such Morals Squad officers in 1954. The squad had entrapped many gay men, dropping their cases in exchange for payments of around \$200. Other arrestees seem to have been straight men caught up in the wrong place at the wrong time, to whom squad members made the same threats and offer of leniency in exchange for cash. The Morals Squad could play on the stigma of the charge to arrestee's reputations in order to get away with corruption. Defendants attempting to clear their names faced a heavy burden instead of the financial bribe the squad suggested. Gay friends of the accused most often refused to appear in court as witnesses for the defense for fear of self-implication. One gay man from the period remembered

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<sup>196</sup> Stoner, conversation, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, Annual Report, 1957, p 46.

<sup>197</sup> Verification of the extent of arrests and the number of gays justly accused and entrapped has proven beyond the scope of this study. The Pittsburgh Police Department has refused to grant access to other reports and likely will give access to arrest records only after a Freedom Of Information Act lawsuit. The ACLU papers are not yet open to researchers on this subject since the names are not yet blacked out. Further research will have to scan microfilms of newspapers for these months for a more detailed analysis.

beatings at police stations, men who fled town, and others disowned by their families. Many witnesses in the corruption trial wept on the stand.<sup>198</sup>

The end of the Morals Squad however did not end the threat to gays and lesbians from law enforcement. In 1955, Pittsburgh Police arrested 72 people for sodomy. Police officers charged some 70 people with sodomy in 1956 securing some 38 convictions.<sup>199</sup> They were acting in accordance with state laws which discriminated particularly against gay men. For example, someone convicted of actually committing bigamy faced a maximum of two years in jail while a homosexual caught inviting someone else to engage in consensual same-sex intercourse faced up to five years.<sup>200</sup> In addition, state legislators defined the crime of fornication as only covering heterosexual sex between unmarried people. Convicted fornicators faced only misdemeanor charges and \$100 fines.<sup>201</sup> In contrast, someone convicted of sodomy faced up to ten years in solitary confinement at hard labor and or \$5,000 in fines. The arrests and convictions for sodomy do not signal only homosexual activity as Pennsylvania's sodomy law did apply to heterosexual oral and anal sex.<sup>202</sup> But Pennsylvania courts give evidence in the 1950s of diverging attitudes toward heterosexual versus homosexual oral sex. State courts ruled

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<sup>198</sup> Jim Austin, "The Great Morals Squad Scandal," *Pittsburgh Out* July 1980, 11-15, Robert Molyneux, "Morals Squad Inquiry May Be 'Greatest Scandal,'" *Pittsburgh Press*, October 3, 1951, 1, "Probers Continue Morals Squad Quiz," *Pittsburgh Press*, October 16, 1951, 2, and "7 Ex-Vice Cops Sentenced: Morgan Gets 3 ½ to 7 Years, Others Appeal," *Pittsburgh Press*, January 28, 1954, 1

<sup>199</sup> Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Annual Report, 1957, 16,12. For vagrancy arrests of prostitutes in the 19th century see arrests see, Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987),173. New York police in the 1920s used the crime of degeneracy for men cruising, but the crime does not show up in Pennsylvania statutes or in Pittsburgh arrests. Chauncey , *Gay New York*, 184-186

<sup>200</sup> 1939 June 24, P. L. 872, § 502, 1939, June 24, P. L. 872, § 503

<sup>201</sup> 18 PA § 4506 Purdon's PA Statutes, Philadelphia: George T. Bisel, Co., 1963

<sup>202</sup> 18 PA §4501 Purdon's PA Statutes, Philadelphia: George T. Bisel, Co. 1963.

that cunnilingus was not sodomy in 1955, only to change their minds in 1958.<sup>203</sup> Law enforcement and judicial authorities also used it as additional charges against child molesters and rapists when prosecutors and courts separated sodomy charges from rape cases.<sup>204</sup> While the police arrests above included heterosexual rapists and child molesters, gays and lesbians knew the impact of the law on their lives. The politicians who passed those laws, the police who enforced them, and the court officials who upheld them equated their acts of love with rape and molestation.

The courts' implementation of those state morals laws in the 1950s became even more discriminatory towards gays and lesbians with the passage and application of the Barr-Walker Act. Perhaps symbolizing the Pittsburgh Democratic organization's desire to build a new social order as well as a new city, State Senator Joseph Barr proposed this legislation in the next breath after sponsoring more legislation to redevelop Pittsburgh. The act signed into law in 1952 greatly increased the potential penalties for homosexual intercourse. It allowed courts to impose on certain sex offenders "an indeterminate sentence having a minimum of one day and a maximum of life in certain cases."<sup>205</sup> Senators Barr and Walker, as they stated in the act, aimed to protect the public from violent and habitual sex offenders but included persons charged with sodomy and solicitation to commit sodomy.<sup>206</sup> The courts held that an indeterminate sentence

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<sup>203</sup> *Commonwealth v Perrillo*, 45 Luzerne Legal Register 32, 1955 and *Commonwealth v Burkett*, 11 D. & C. 2d 654, 1958

<sup>204</sup> 18 PA § 4501 Purdon's PA Statutes.

<sup>205</sup> *Pennsylvania Legislative Journal*, February 5, 1951. The act passed without debate, without a report from the Judiciary Committee and without record of hearings or evidence taken. Amicus Brief of the Greater Pittsburgh ACLU, in *United States ex rel Gerchman v. Maroney*, 15221 F 3rd, p 20.

<sup>206</sup>As well as incest, indecent assault, assault with intent to commit sodomy, and assault with intent to rape or ravish. *Laws of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*. vol. 2 Harrisburg, PA: 1951, 1851.

equaled the maximum sentence. Prior to the Barr-Walker Act only prisoners convicted of treason, murder, kidnapping for extortion and holding hostages in a penal institution suffered life in prison.<sup>207</sup> After 1952, judges would subject sex offenders to psychiatric examination before determining sentence. Those convicts deemed a violent threat, habitual offenders, or mentally ill became eligible for the Barr-Walker provisions.<sup>208</sup> In the name of "efficient punishment, treatment and rehabilitation," Senators Barr and Walker wrote provisions that might shorten a sex offender's sentence or offer a lighter alternative to hard labor, but the law tipped the balance against the prisoner. Under the act, a parole board might read in the psychiatric report that the prisoner up for review was a first time offender or of no threat of bodily harm to the public, but the sentencing judge or the Department of Welfare chose the psychiatrist to make the examination. The act made no provision for the accused to have access to or be able to challenge the initial report. It also contained no guaranty that a parole board would see any report subsequent to that initial one.<sup>209</sup> Since the psychiatric profession labeled homosexuality a mental illness until 1973, gay or lesbians so charged stood a good chance of rotting for a long time in a state institution. In fact, two state commissions later decried the disproportionate number of homosexuals committed under the act. In 1957, the report concluded that 40 percent of convicts sentenced under Barr-Walker were "in no way dangerous sex offenders." In general, they fell into three types "'habitual offenders,' 'homosexuals with characterological problems,'

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<sup>207</sup> Amicus Brief of the Greater Pittsburgh ACLU in *United States ex rel Gerchman v. Maroney*, 15221 F 3rd, p 13 in Matson Family Papers, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

<sup>208</sup> *Laws of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*. vol. 2 Harrisburg, PA: 1951, p 1851.

<sup>209</sup> ACLU Amicus Brief *US ex rel Gerchman v. Maroney*, 8-9.

and the 'casual, occasional personally maladjusted sex offender.'"<sup>210</sup> Five years later exactly half of the 94 Barr-Walker convictions resulted from sodomy offenses compared with just under a third of convictions for rape or assault with intent to ravish.<sup>211</sup>

The Barr-Walker convictions may have only accounted for 2.5 percent of all sex offenders in the Pennsylvania judicial system in the 1950s, but they served as show trials to all gays and lesbians. The ACLU pondered as much when it sought to overturn the act in 1964, arguing whether, given the lack of evidence behind the law's assumptions, the legislature's real intent in 1952 was "making examples."<sup>212</sup> The gay bartender quoted earlier as to the mystique of hidden lives pointed out the danger in the same breath, saying, "But it was actually dangerous, too ... if you got caught they had two choices, jail or shock treatment." In all, the convictions, the stigma they reinforced, and the police harassment meant there was no community amongst gays and lesbians. In the words of the bartender, "Our people met in parks and we dreamed of love and all that stuff, but there wasn't the arena for that."<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Justice, Bureau of Corrections, *Characteristics of the Barr-Walker Cases* (1957) in Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission, *The Dangerous Sex Offender*, 1963, 10. in ACLU Papers

<sup>211</sup> In that same ten year period, the state Bureau of Corrections received 3,740 sex offenders. Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission, *The Dangerous Sex Offender*, 1963, 11

<sup>212</sup> Amicus Brief, op cit, p 38.

<sup>213</sup> Bar Owner Z, interview, 3, 7 This argument stands strongly at odds with studies on three other cities. Allan Berube and John D'Emilio documented the lives and subculture that gay men created when war mobilization threw them together in large same-sex confines during and immediately following WWII. D'Emilio and others also documented the origins and trajectory of gay and lesbian civil rights organizations in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*, (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1983) and Allan Berube, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (NY: New York Free Press, 1990) The large numbers of gays thrown together in those cities by war mobilization and concurrently pushed into the open by military discharges probably had a lot to do with making these cities ripe places for gays to build community. Randy Shilts,

In all, sexual minorities did not join African-Americans and women's rights advocates in building political power to win reforms in the period between W.W. II and the 1960s. The stigma facing them prevented sexual minorities from forming stable community institutions let alone building working relationships with local politicians from a base in those institutions. The cultural climate of the time period stigmatized and assaulted the self-worth of members of all three groups, but African-Americans had enough community institutions and advocacy groups to which they could turn to press politicians for reforms. From their positions on city council and in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, African-Americans in office first tried to establish government institutions and laws to protect racial minorities. They lacked the power to succeed. Civil rights activists appealed repeatedly to Mayor David Lawrence for help. Over the course of fifteen years, they turned him into a civil rights innovator, at least when it came to building judiciary bodies. Pittsburgh's women's groups also had a large set of community institutions, but women in the city faced increased stigmatization when they dared stray from the housewife/caregiver role. Moreover, women rarely turned those organizations into tools benefiting women politically. They mostly lent their talents and political connections to help African-Americans win some victories for African-Americans, Democratic men to win battles as Democrats. Only under the auspices of a time period dedicated more to self-liberation would these other groups begin to copy African-Americans' political networking.

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*Conduct Unbecoming, Lesbians and Gays in the U.S. Military*, (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993) The two factors also made these cities exceptional.

### III. CIVIL RIGHTS, COMMUNITY FORMATION, AND IMPROVED POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES, 1960-1970

Vice President Hubert Humphrey, speaking in Syracuse in 1965, could have easily summed up the history of the entire 1960s though he need not have thought he was doing that. There he said, “Freedom is hammered out on the anvil of discussion, dissent and debate.”<sup>214</sup> Pittsburghers mirrored those national trends towards dissent and debate. Angered by urban redevelopment's destruction of inner cities, community organizers mobilized their neighbors and redirected American urban policy. Liberals challenged machine politician's hold over local politics. And the civil rights movement activated millions of Americans to fight for greater economic opportunity for African-Americans. The civil rights movement and neighborhood activism made the late 1960s American political landscape fertile ground for African-Americans', women's, and to a lesser extent gays' claims for justice if not equality. The success or ultimate worthiness of the dreams of these organizers is not at issue in this chapter. Whether or not their demands led to a level playing field or how much they leveled the playing field is a subject for other studies. Plenty of other studies have also looked at the converse impact of the civil rights movement on neighborhood organizing.<sup>215</sup> This chapter takes that impact as a given and explores instead the

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<sup>214</sup> Hubert H. Humphrey, Speech, June 6, 1965, Syracuse University, N.Y. as in <http://www.bartleby.com/66/39/29639.html>

<sup>215</sup> Robert Fisher, *Let the People Decide, Neighborhood Organizing in America* (NY: Twayne Publishers, 1994) and Gary Delgado, *Beyond the Politics of Place, New Directions in Community Organizing* (Berkeley, CA: Chardon, 1997)

less understood impact of neighborhood organizing on civil rights activism. This chapter focuses on the effect that the movements to protect neighborhoods and reform local politics had on women's, African-Americans', and gays' organizing. Both these initial reform movements created a cultural climate in which other groups could fight for their own liberation. And they created governmental and non-governmental institutions to help all marginalized groups fight for their rights. These political openings forged by liberals, neighborhood organizers, and the civil rights movement helped social movement activists to carve a space for themselves from which they could escape the narrow bonds of clientilism or, in the case of gays and lesbians, victimization.

#### **A. URBAN RENEWAL**

Grassroots campaigns to wrest political power from Pittsburgh's machine bosses faced an impediment in that the city's wealthy Republican elite allied with the machine. Fearing the post war economic decline of Pittsburgh, Richard King Mellon gathered the city's executives under the Allegheny Conference for Community Development (ACCD), an organization dedicated to overhauling the region. Mellon's major holdings in 25 local firms and Mayor David Lawrence's power of eminent domain and government regulation presented a formidable force. This public/private partnership reshaped Pittsburgh to suit business' needs, clearing huge tracts of "blighted" land for green spaces, industrial parks, and luxury apartments.<sup>216</sup> Local media, partly

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<sup>216</sup> Roy Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh*. (NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1969). Roy Lubove called the Renaissance a "reverse welfare state." Such wording understates the benefits of the Renaissance to the region as a whole. Near the end of his staunchly libertarian life, Lubove repudiated those who took up his words calling their writings, "Marxist hallucinations." After all, the Renaissance cleaned the air over Smoky City and controlled

owned by Mellon, spoke as if the partnership saved Pittsburgh, calling it a new Renaissance. Little organized opposition blocked such projects in the 1950s and early 1960s even though the 1955 demolition of the Lower Hill alone forced 1239 families to move.<sup>217</sup> Probably little opposition could organize effectively in these years. With so much cohesion and power arrayed in the public/private partnership, few Pittsburghers probably thought they had any chance to reorient policy to fit lower class needs. In addition, Pittsburghers who dared criticize the Renaissance risked alienating many local employers and granters of public contracts. Still neighborhood groups slowly shifted the course of redevelopment.

Community organizers fighting to preserve neighborhoods from redevelopment helped create government institutions with which they and other social movements could align to press demands on local, state, and federal politicians. First, lawmakers in Washington D. C. created new regulations in response to previous community criticisms such as those leveled by the Hill District Homeowners and Tenants Association. The Housing Act of 1961 stipulated that the Housing and Home Finance Agency would certify for federal funds only those urban renewal plans which made provision for “housing of displaced families” and “citizen participation.”<sup>218</sup> In

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flooding on its three rivers. Business imperatives subtly guided these moves, for Lubove. Prospective middle managers for Mellon’s companies cited pollution and grime as reasons for locating elsewhere. And so Mellon used his stake in the Pennsylvania Railroad to stop coal burning locomotives while Lawrence’s Health Dept. outlawed coal furnaces. Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh: The Post Steel Era*, vol. 2, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996). I might add that Mellon’s Gulf Oil stood to gain from a switch to diesel locomotives and natural gas heaters.

<sup>217</sup>Michael Weber, “Rebuilding a City: The Pittsburgh Model,” in Richard Bernard, ed., *Snowbelt Cities: Metropolitan Politics in the Northeast and Midwest Since World War II*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990) 273

<sup>218</sup> Fern M. Colburn, *The Neighborhood and Urban Renewal*, (National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, 1963), 8, Gregory D. Squires, Larry Bennett, Kathleen McCourt, and Philip Nyder, *Chicago: Race, Class, and the Response to Urban Decline*, ( Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982)106, and

Pittsburgh, urban redevelopment officials then launched one major new project in East Liberty. They did so at the urging of neighborhood merchants whereas previous projects had risen at the behest of downtown corporations. One head of Pittsburgh's urban redevelopment effort boasted that his agency had conducted some 254 neighborhood meetings in East Liberty before buying property there.<sup>219</sup> For two years, Morton Coleman from the City Planning Department and others attended block meetings asking East Liberty residents what they wanted and helping them plan housing.<sup>220</sup> Still, much of that citizen participation also frustrated many residents. The hardships caused by rebuilding streets in East Liberty forced many small businesses to fail while building moderate income housing for relocatees progressed very slowly.<sup>221</sup>

In other projects, the neighborhood opponents of redevelopment used the work of the public/private partnership itself to their advantage. The Allegheny Conference formed ACTION-Housing, at the urging of Richard King Mellon and with the support of Mayor Lawrence in the late 1950s. In the early 1960s, ACTION-Housing began supporting neighborhood organizations such as the Homewood-Brushton Civic Improvement Association or forming new ones itself such as the East Liberty Renewal Council and the Spring Hill Civic League.<sup>222</sup> In doing so, the conference sought to make its urban redevelopment projects more successful by

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Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1990), 181

<sup>219</sup> "Office Closed, Renewal Foes Claim Victory," *Pittsburgh Press*, April 16, 1964, 1 in CLP Nathan Schwartz Clippings File

<sup>220</sup> Morton Coleman, interview by Michael Snow, on July 30, 1999 in SLGA, 11-13

<sup>221</sup> Edward Linder, interview by Sorley Sheinberg, in the Stanton Balfour Oral History Project

<sup>222</sup> "A Report on Neighborhood Extension---the first Year: Homewood-Brushton, Hazelwood-Glenwood, Perry Hilltop," ACTION-Housing Inc., released 1964, 4. and James V. Cunningham, "A Brief History of Neighborhood Organization in the City of Pittsburgh," March 1, 1980, unpublished paper in Papers of Jonathan Robison, Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA (Hereafter Robison Papers)

bringing neighborhood groups to the table to support existing plans. Over time, however, these groups would prove more independent than the conference expected.

Moreover, bowing to pressure from community and civil rights groups and seeing the harm wrought by prior large-scale redevelopment, Congress passed laws demanding “maximum feasible participation” of citizens in decision-making.<sup>223</sup> Following provisions of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Mayor Barr created the Committee on Human Resources and made it into an independent agency. It focused on community organizing and providing services in eight targeted neighborhoods which housed 60 percent of Pittsburgh’s poor and 81 percent of its welfare cases. Community leaders agreed that it had largely remained independent of political interference, even while cutting unemployment in those neighborhoods to one-third the prior level at the start of the program. By the spring of 1967, the committee, now named Community Action Pittsburgh (CAP), went further as a vehicle for empowering poor neighborhoods. The CAP, under the leadership of David Hill, placed its emphasis on organizing “so the poor can have a voice in community affairs.”<sup>224</sup> CAP joined with ACTION-Housing and the Pittsburgh’s

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<sup>223</sup> The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 mandated “Maximum Feasible Participation” in all aspects of projects receiving federal funds. Under the 1964 act, the Federal Government set up Community Action Programs directly in impoverished neighborhoods and gave social service and urban redevelopment funds directly to them. Gregory D. Squires, Larry Bennett, Kathleen McCourt, and Philip Nyder, *Chicago: Race, Class, and the Response to Urban Decline*, ( Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982)106, and Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1990), 181

<sup>224</sup> “Evaluation of the Pittsburgh PA Community Action Program (Mayor’s Committee on Human Resources)” Pittsburgh PA: Research and Planning Community Action Pittsburgh, May 1967. It’s independence was confirmed by Aldo Colautti, executive secretary to Mayor Joseph Barr, interview by Michael Snow, July 31, 1998 in SLGA

four settlement houses in using federal funds to form even more neighborhood organizations to prepare residents to govern themselves.<sup>225</sup>

Because some cities did not follow Pittsburgh's lead and move to create such independent community projects, Congress created even more stringent requirements for neighborhood input in the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966. The authors of the act viewed older urban renewal projects as having fallen short because of their "add on" nature and because local citizens lost faith and patience with them.<sup>226</sup> Residents of neighborhoods involved in what became known as Model Cities would vote for commissioners overseeing every aspect of the federal project from planning to execution.<sup>227</sup> When Pittsburgh's Hill District and Oakland neighborhoods qualified for such funding, the South Oakland Citizens Council, the Citizens Council for Hill District Renewal and other neighborhood groups helped oversee elections and recruit candidates from the two neighborhoods.<sup>228</sup>

Even before Pittsburgh had the aid of strict federal redevelopment provisions mandating citizen participation, the residents of the Oakland neighborhood defeated plans for their neighborhood. At the end of the 1950s, residents got wind of the University of Pittsburgh's plans to seize most of the central residential and business district of the neighborhood. When some residents started receiving notices that their homes would be taken, neighbors formed a broad coalition, the Citizens Committee to Save Oakland from the Ravages of Redevelopment.

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<sup>225</sup> James V. Cunningham, "A Brief History of Neighborhood Organization in the City of Pittsburgh," March 1, 1980, unpublished paper in Robison Papers

<sup>226</sup> "Model Cities Partnership Participation," *Model City News*, Vol. 1, No. 2, October, 1969, 2 in Robison Papers

<sup>227</sup> "Technical Assistance Bulletin, No. 3 Subject: Citizen Participation in Model Cities," December 1968 A HUD Guide, Washington D. C. US HUD MCGR G 3110.1 in Robison Papers

<sup>228</sup> "Model Neighborhood Elections Set for November 22, 1969," *Model City News*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2 in Robison Papers

Its co-chair Eugene de Pasquale sent petitions with 3,000 names to the state capital and federal authorities, bypassing local agencies. “I’ve been to all the urban redevelopment meetings; they just don’t listen,” de Pasquale said.<sup>229</sup> Highly dramatic acts helped change that inattention. A major landowner in the area, Nathan Schwartz, bought the group an abandoned church and rang the bells to call Oakland residents to the meetings, as if they were calling European villagers to safety.<sup>230</sup> Some of these officials apparently changed their minds about the scope of redevelopment projects after the customary meetings where Urban Redevelopment Authority middle level officials gathered citizen comments on already drawn up plans. Bob Pease met with residents, heard their concerns, and advised them how to alter or end redevelopment plan.<sup>231</sup> While the exact chain of causation remains too murky to reconstruct, it is significant that de Pasquale then spoke in ways that challenged the blighted area designation of the neighborhood.<sup>232</sup> Residents’ trips to Washington D. C. to visit Congressmen and messages to President Johnson apparently paid off too, Nathan Schwartz declared. Schwartz said, at the closing of the URA office and shelving of its plans, “For the first time, urban redevelopment has been required to take into account the needs and requirements of the people who live in an area slated for redevelopment.”<sup>233</sup> To make certain that the plans stayed on hold, Oaklandites

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<sup>229</sup> “Local Citizens Group to Protest Oakland Renewal,” *Pitt News*, October 7, 1963, 11 in CLP Nathan Schwartz Clippings File

<sup>230</sup> Interviewer’s notes from an oral history interview with Nathan Schwartz transcript closed, interview by Michael Snow on October 27, 1998 in SLGA

<sup>231</sup> Robert Pease, interview by Michael Snow, April 16, 1999. 18 in SLGA

<sup>232</sup> “Local Citizens...”, 11

<sup>233</sup> “Office Closed, Renewal Foes Claim Victory,” *Pittsburgh Press*, April 16, 1964, 1 in CLP Nathan Schwartz Clippings File. The victory of the Citizens to Save Oakland stands as one of the earliest instances in the U.S. where a neighborhood group forced a city to shelve a major urban redevelopment project.

reiterated their demands to President Johnson in the last few weeks of his presidential campaign and said they would take into consideration those plans at the ballot box.<sup>234</sup>

The example of Oakland created a sense, an atmosphere in which average citizens could defeat the Barr-Lawrence political machine or at least alter its policies favoring large business owners at the expense of neighborhoods. Three years later, residents of the city's Central Northside forced Mayor Barr to shelve plans to redevelop a large swath of their neighborhood too.<sup>235</sup>

In the late 1960s, neighborhood organizers and civil rights activists also found help in the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work. Some professors and students there joined a wave of radicalism epitomized and spearheaded nationally by Francis Fox Piven and Jeremy Cloward. Piven and Cloward taught their social work students and followers to throw off the notion that their clients had pathologic problems other than poverty and marginalization. They argued that the solution to their clients' problems lay in organizing the poor to reform the system and win power for poor people and disenfranchised groups.<sup>236</sup> In Pittsburgh, Meyer Schwartz, the associate dean of the Pitt School of Social Work, most followed this line of teaching. Schwartz, for example, told a conference of community organizers at the University,

We must search for the creation and support of variegated relatively independent, indigenous, militant organizations of the poor. Unless a counterforce of indigenous organizations is found the Allegheny Conference will prevail and the Anti-Poverty Program will be no less than a desperate holding operation.

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<sup>234</sup> Al Janezic, "Oakland Voters Will Protest Renewal Plan of Chancellor," *Pitt News*, September 28, 1964, 4 in CLP Nathan Schwartz Clippings File

<sup>235</sup> J. J. Drexler, "The Political Economy of Neighborhood Revitalization: A Case Study of Pittsburgh's North Side Neighborhoods," Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1981, 113

<sup>236</sup> For analysis of Piven and Cloward's influence on the founding of the National Welfare Rights Organization, see Gary Delgado, *Organizing the Movement: The Roots and Growth of ACORN*, (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994) and Jo Freeman, 14

For Schwartz, even the “Mayor’s Commission on Human Resources serve[d] as a buffer and a mediator rather than an advocate of radical policies.”<sup>237</sup> Nicholas Von Hoffman at a conference at the university, called the anti-poverty program “another obstacle to get through to get to the point where you start social change.”<sup>238</sup> Activists flocked to the School of Social Work to take classes in community organizing, and student interns flocked into communities to organize. While neighborhood activists re-oriented urban redevelopment policy into a vehicle for training future activists, good government reformers pressed to open up local politics to new voices.

## **B. LIBERALS AND THE MACHINE**

The Democratic organization, headed first by David Lawrence and then by Joseph Barr, wielded immense power over politics in Pittsburgh. Under boss David Lawrence, the machine handed out jobs and projects to faithful city council members and ward chairmen. Poll watchers from the Democratic organization kept track if they heard the sound of more than one lever when a city employee entered the voting booth. They would then “talk with” the voter about the trouble with not voting “Straight Ticket.” Lawrence insured working class support by giving a couple of city council seats to candidates from labor unions. Various immigrant communities also had their own member of city council in what Pittsburghers called Balkan Succession. By these means, the Democratic Party locked Republicans out of city offices.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Charles C. Robb, “Big Brother as Big Business,” *Pittsburgh Point*, November 23, 1967

<sup>238</sup> “Organizing the Poor: Difficult Days Ahead,” *Pittsburgh Point*, November 16, 1967, 1

<sup>239</sup> Michael Weber, *Don’t Call Me Boss*, 70, Clarke M. Thomas, “Fortunes and Misfortunes: Pittsburgh and Allegheny County Politics 1930-1995,” *Issues*, Pittsburgh PA: University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics, 1999, 38 and Weber 62

The Democratic organization also locked out independent Democrats. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s and up into the late 1960s, an executive committee of the Allegheny County Democratic Party selected the candidates endorsed by the party for every office from state representative and city council member to county commissioner.<sup>240</sup> Even at the low end of political power, ward chairmen selected their committee people rather than the other way around.<sup>241</sup> A system of at-large city council elections also kept independent Democrats from successfully challenging the machine. To win, they needed support from a wide range of ethnic groups and neighborhoods or a lock on one large group. From the 1930s until the late 1960s, no candidates without the Democratic Party's endorsement won any office in the City of Pittsburgh.<sup>242</sup> Pittsburgh voters found little alternative outside the primary as no Republican or third party candidate won a city council seat after 1936.

The Democratic organization's hold on power additionally impeded marginalized groups such as minorities, women, or poor people from bargaining from a position of strength when they made requests of local politicians. To be certain, the system from the 1930s to the 1960s served constituents. Residents took their problems to ward chairmen or committee people. In exchange, they owed their loyalty to the organization and their votes to its endorsed candidates. As a former Democratic committee man from Highland Park said of this system,

You had a city job. You participated in politics. You did your work. You did what Dave Lawrence or Joe Barr said, and life was wonderful.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Thomas, 33

<sup>241</sup> Frank Lucchino, former member of Pittsburgh City Council, interview by Michael Snow on October 21, 1999, 16-18 in SLGA

<sup>242</sup> Weber, 79-83, Thomas, 3

<sup>243</sup> Lucchino, interview ,18

The Lawrence machine rewarded African-American voters with a civil rights ordinance and some jobs. However, it especially shortchanged them when their job positions remained consigned to low-end jobs in the city's sanitation department and when urban redevelopment plans displaced over a thousand African-American families from the Hill District alone.<sup>244</sup> They faced difficulty if they tried to turn to other candidates. Support for candidates outside the organization or for demands beyond what the machine granted risked those jobs.

Many of the ward chairmen wielded additional power over constituents because they or their favorites held positions as aldermen and justices of the peace. The extent to which some lower cadres of the Democratic organization wielded power reared its ugly head at the State Constitutional Convention in 1968. The justices of the peace served as a minor judiciary in Allegheny County up to the late 1960s. A reporter covering the debate on abolishing that office noted that K. Leroy Irvis spoke with a quivering voice. Irvis spoke about a system fraught with abuse because justices of the peace received their paychecks by charging fees for their services. One plan to abolish the system depended on thousands of petitioners calling for a referendum in Allegheny County. Numerous people called a delegate opposed to the justice of the peace system, saying that they feared for their jobs, their food stamps, or their siblings in jail if they signed such a petition.<sup>245</sup> The public outcry over such complaints caused Pennsylvania lawmakers to reform the fee-based system in 1969 and eventually abolish both positions of aldermen and justices of the peace in the early 1970s.<sup>246</sup> Until that time though, the power of

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<sup>244</sup> Ralph E. Koger, "Robinson Makes Good Showing," *Courier*, May 20, 1967, 1 in Irvis Papers ; Weber, "Rebuilding a City...", 273

<sup>245</sup> Patrick Boyle, "'Hot' Issue May Be Left Up to Voters," *Pittsburgh Press*, February 16, 1968

<sup>246</sup> Lucchino, interview

justices of the peace stood as yet another threat to voters and candidates wanting to deviate from the direction set by the Democratic organization.

Even with the demise of those offices, the patronage system still exerted great control for several years especially in poor neighborhoods. For example, Byrd Brown running for Congress in 1970 won the Hill District/Fifth Ward handily but not as well as did the Democratic candidate for governor four years before. The *Courier* chalked the civil rights icon's lower margin up to the machine's continued power over African-Americans dependent on patronage.<sup>247</sup>

In addition to power wielded over potential dissenters or competitors, the machine largely neutralized what independent citizens might gain through lobbying their elected representatives. City council operated under wraps behind what Pittsburghers referred to as the Mahogany Curtain. All major business of the council took place on closed Monday morning executive sessions. Department heads and the mayor would present to council the bills that they wanted passed. All votes by council were then unanimous. Even had they wanted to strike out independent of what the mayor wanted, council members faced difficulties.<sup>248</sup> Council members had no staff to make phone calls or respond to letters, let alone to research the issues for them.<sup>249</sup>

Various factors weakened that ward structure in the late 1960s, including the entrance of liberal professionals into the political fray. People with higher levels of education and income became committee people. Not dependent on the organization for city jobs, they proved more

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<sup>247</sup> William Robinson, "Liberal Vote Fails Byrd Brown," *Courier*, May 20, 1970, 1, 5 in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks.

<sup>248</sup> Clarke M. Thomas, "Fortunes and Misfortunes: Pittsburgh and Allegheny County Politics 1930-1995," *Issues*, Pittsburgh PA: University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics, 1999, 44

<sup>249</sup> Peter F. Flaherty, former City Council Member, interview by Michael Snow on March 5, 1999, 6 in SLGA

independent of the organization in making decisions at endorsement meetings.<sup>250</sup> Residents of the more affluent neighborhoods of Squirrel Hill, Highland Park, and later Shadyside proved particularly independent of organization directives. In 1964 in Squirrel Hill, Molly Yard Garrett defeated the endorsed candidate in the Democratic primary for state representative.<sup>251</sup> Yard capitalized on her years of collaborating with reformers such as Eleanor Roosevelt, her experience in 1940s Philadelphia fighting as a reformer for “good government,” and her stature and alliances as an officer of Americans for Democratic Action.<sup>252</sup> From the early 1960s and perhaps earlier Yard also conducted workshops called Practical Politics, teaching reform-minded Pittsburghers to infiltrate ward organizations working their way up from precinct captain and committee people.<sup>253</sup> Even with Yard’s fame and connections, the Democratic organization was able to block her election. Its leaders directed their supporters to vote for Yard’s Republican opponent. Coupled with that opponent’s appeal to his fellow Jewish residents of the district, the organization’s opposition to Yard threw a solidly Democratic seat to the Republicans. By the mid-1960s, however, enthusiasm of independents had coalesced to where it could better challenge the Democratic organization.

New reform organizations established independent Democratic ward organizations in several neighborhoods. Most notably, in Yard’s stomping grounds of the 14th Ward in 1966, the “Regular” Democratic organization made a deal with the “New Democrats.” The organization would not run someone for state representative against Gerald Kaufman, Yard’s former

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<sup>250</sup> Lucchino, interview, 19

<sup>251</sup> Thomas, 46

<sup>252</sup> Phyllis Wetherby, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on December 4, 2001, 68 , Jo Ann Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow on October 23, 2001, 22 in SLGA

<sup>253</sup> Ivan Itkin, interview by Michael Snow on November 22, 1999 in SLGA

campaign manager. In exchange, the independents would not contest the ward chairmanships. Kaufman won, and independents won more than a third of the fourteenth ward committee positions that year. By 1968, this truce no longer held. The new organization, the Fourteenth Ward Independent Democrats, vied for control of the ward chairmanship. Even after Democratic regulars threatened several public employees, Ivan Itkin, a Yard protégé, gained enough votes to win the chair position.

Around the universities, the Oakland Democratic Club formed to “make the Democratic Party more representative of the will of the people...by working for the widest possible participation in Party Affairs of all elements of our Oakland area.”<sup>254</sup> Its literature sounded a battle cry to bring city government back to the citizens. It asked residents, “Who decides who shall run for office? Who decides what our elected representatives do after they’re elected?”<sup>255</sup> The 7/11 Democratic Club brought together dissident Democrats from a large swath of the city’s East End. In 1969, its endorsed slate for city council all advocated improving the city’s performance in providing low-income housing.<sup>256</sup> Under the leadership of community organizer, Jim Cunningham, the 7/11 Democratic Club followed a similar trajectory and obstacles as the Fourteenth Ward independents had. With such organizations behind them, Itkin and Cunningham became the first men elected ward chairmen without the endorsement of the Democratic organization.<sup>257</sup> Perhaps more influentially, these organizations became networks of reformers to which other activists could turn for aid. In just the most remarkable instance, the

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<sup>254</sup> Article II, Constitution of the Oakland Democratic Club, n.d. in Robison Papers

<sup>255</sup> “Will You Help Run Our Government?” Oakland Democratic Club, n.d. in Robison Papers

<sup>256</sup> “The 7/11 Democrat,” Pittsburgh, PA, May 1969 in Robison Papers

<sup>257</sup> Thomas, 54.

7/11 Club proved willing to endorse even David Owen, a black militant injured in a gun fight with the police.<sup>258</sup>

Near successes by independent candidates for city council also gave Pittsburghers impatient for reform the sense that they could beat the Democratic organization or at least threaten it enough at the polls to make it reorient its policies. Most notably in 1967 a group calling itself the Allegheny Alliance fielded three candidates for city council. “Berke, Berger, and Robinson” campaigned against the failure of the City to press vigorously for new laws including housing discrimination, against its failure to create a central relocation agency, and against its failure to enforce housing codes. Since city council candidates ran at-large, Daniel Berger, Joseph Berke, and Rev. James Robinson took their “Operation Shoeleather” to neighborhood meetings all over the city.<sup>259</sup> Robinson had learned such organizing skills from Malcolm X and Saul Alinsky’s community organizing institutes. He had applied those skills to fight highway projects and slumlords in Pittsburgh’s Northside and segregationists in Mississippi.<sup>260</sup> With almost no budget, Robinson placed fifth, with 23,000 votes. Given his reputation, he came just some 800 votes shy of a city council seat.<sup>261</sup> Though a loss, this showing was enough to cause “concern at Democratic Headquarters.” Voters that year also defeated David B. Roberts, the prothonotary and Fifth Ward chairman, who had for thirty years exerted “patronage control over most top Negro vote-getters.” A writer for the African-American newspaper declared the vote an end to “party-sponsored paternalistic

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<sup>258</sup> “The 7/11 Democrat,” Pittsburgh, PA, May 1969 in Robison Papers

<sup>259</sup> “Alliance May Run Fall Candidates,” *Pittsburgh Point*, May 16, 1967, 1, 2

<sup>260</sup> James Joseph Robinson, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA

<sup>261</sup> Shirley Url, “Slated Candidates Lead Both Tickets in City Council Race,” *Pittsburgh Press*, May 17, 1967 in Carnegie Library Biography Clippings.

‘plantationism.’” No longer could the Allegheny County Democratic organization consign African-Americans to just one department, declared K. Leroy Irvis, the state representative from the Hill District.<sup>262</sup>

Those efforts to broaden the impact of citizens over the Democratic Party ultimately proved effective in the municipal elections of 1969, which ended the Democratic organization’s 34 year hold on the mayor’s office. City council member Pete Flaherty ran for mayor against the man Joe Barr hand-picked to be his successor, Judge Harry Kramer. Flaherty ran as “Nobody’s Boy.” That is, Flaherty was independent of both the Democratic organization and the Downtown corporate leaders.<sup>263</sup> Liberal independents of the Seventh, Eleventh and Fourteenth Wards supported Pete Flaherty.<sup>264</sup> Flaherty, in turn, promised support for their causes telling the *Pittsburgh Press*, “I believe what is needed now is a renaissance in housing and in our neighborhoods.”<sup>265</sup> His strategy according to the *Post Gazette* curiously rallied to him both African-Americans, who grew upset at the City’s handling of discrimination and police brutality cases, and white ethnic voters, who angrily assumed that the City’s anti-poverty agencies favored African-American neighborhoods.<sup>266</sup> Flaherty easily defeated Kramer in the primary and Republican John Tabor in the general election.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Ralph E. Koger, “Robinson Makes Good Showing,” *Courier*, May 20, 1967 in Irvis Papers

<sup>263</sup> Thomas, 47

<sup>264</sup> Mary McShea and Bob Connolly, “Pete Flaherty Politician,” December 14, 1972 in Robison Papers at HSWP

<sup>265</sup> *Pittsburgh Press* October 24, 1969 as in Mary McShea and Bob Connolly, “Pete Flaherty Politician, December 14, 1972, 11 in Robison Papers at HSWP

<sup>266</sup> *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, September 19, 1969, 2 in Mary McShea and Bob Connolly, “Pete Flaherty Politician, December 14, 1972, 9 in Robison Papers at HSWP

<sup>267</sup> Thomas, 49

Flaherty's assent to power also promised to open decision-making to independent voices. Within eleven months of taking office, Pete Flaherty put out an order banning closed-door sessions between department heads and city council.<sup>268</sup> Some council members bemoaned the measure as a lack of communication or as making more work for them. However, City Councilor Jack Lynch, a former aide to Bobby Kennedy who returned to Pittsburgh, reacted strongly and favorably to Flaherty's order. Said Lynch, "City business will now be put in the public eye. The mayor never should have been in the position to execute a man in a private chamber."<sup>269</sup> Concurrent with and drawing energy from this fight to make urban politics more open was the civil rights movement.

### **C. AFRICAN AMERICANS 1960-1970**

Having built community institutions and civil rights organizations well before 1960, Pittsburgh's African-American community was able to leverage established political relationships and build new ones to win yet more rights in the 1960s as liberals and neighborhood activists opened more doors for them. Through strong sets of alliances with other community organizations and local politicians, African-Americans overcame great odds locally to win passage of state civil rights laws. As detailed before, Homer S. Brown and his successors had pushed for an anti-discrimination bill for eighteen years in the state legislature, finally winning job protections in 1955.

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<sup>268</sup> Lucchino, interview by Michael Snow

<sup>269</sup> "Minutes of City Council," December 7, 1970, *Municipal Record, Minutes of the Proceedings of the Council of the City of Pittsburgh*, Pittsburgh, PA: Park Printing, Inc., 1970, 603, 604

The Allegheny County Council for Civil Rights continued bringing together 30-40 groups every month in the early 1960s to plot strategy and mobilize constituents to add housing protections.<sup>270</sup> In this fight, they faced a subtle but forceful foe. Ronald Catarinella, a Pittsburgh developer and past president of the Pennsylvania Home Builders Association, traveled the halls of the capitol telling legislators and journalists that the bill would actually hurt minorities by lowering the number of low-income homes built. Echoing President Eisenhower's justification of his tepid response in the wake of the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, Catarinella also said that the bill "does nothing to help combat the deep seated feelings in the hearts and minds of the general public."<sup>271</sup> The editors of the powerful African-American paper, the *Courier*, parried that the realtors should own up to their responsibility to help educate the public.<sup>272</sup> Opponents of the Fair Housing bill, however, had another major weapon. In Allegheny County, the homebuilders reissued their findings from their previous defeat of the bill, a survey that showed county residents opposed to the bill four to one. At the behest of such opposition, Senator Robert D. Fleming from Allegheny County launched delaying tactics and then proposed that the measure only apply in counties where voters approved it in a referendum. Given the home builders' work in public relations and advertisement of their survey, Fleming's bill stood as an obvious attempt to thwart civil rights while hiding behind the rhetoric of "the will of the people."

Governor Lawrence, however, this time could continue his strong support for the bill even more resolutely because of a government body he had created, the Committee on

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<sup>270</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, September 13, 1960 in YWCA Records

<sup>271</sup> "Home Builders Ass'n Proposal Can Kill Or Weaken Fair Housing Bill in Senate," *Courier*, January 28, 1961, 7 in Irvis Papers

<sup>272</sup> Editorial, "Fair Housing," *Courier*, January 28, 1961 in Irvis Papers

Discrimination in Housing. It armed the governor, and all allies of civil rights with a report which showed that one million Pennsylvanians had suffered from housing discrimination. The *Courier* mobilized its readers to urge the governor to stay firm in support of the Fair Housing law in 1961.<sup>273</sup> Former civil rights activist turned legislator, K. Leroy Irvis led the fight to pass the bill and with the ground work laid by such a strong coalition, succeeded. The bill passed 106 to 96 with supporters fighting back several hostile amendments. After the bill had won, several opponents then switched their votes to the affirmative column. Despite the survey results, all but one member of the Allegheny County Democratic contingent voted for the bill, and half the Allegheny County Republicans joined them.<sup>274</sup> To reflect the new powers that it created for the state's civil rights enforcement agency, the law changed the name of the Pennsylvania Fair Employment Practices Commission to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

The strength shown in that fight for fair housing by the pro-civil rights coalition of legislators and activists then carried the civil rights movement to another victory. Irvis directly confronted the naysayers of civil rights laws. After legislators passed the Fair Housing law, he declared, "Education rather than prosecution shall be the main effort of the commission [the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission]."<sup>275</sup> K. Leroy Irvis co-authored the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act to prohibit colleges, universities, and trade schools from discriminating on the basis of race, religion, and national origin. The act also empowered the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission to check registration at such schools. In a nod to the growing strength of the pro-civil rights forces, legislators passed the Fair Education bill by a

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<sup>273</sup> Editorial, "Urge Lawrence to Stay Firm on S53," *Courier*, January 28 1961, 7 in Irvis Papers

<sup>274</sup> Frank B. Matthews, "Fair Housing Bill Is Passed; Law on September 1," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, February 21, 1961 in Irvis Papers

<sup>275</sup> Matthews in Irvis Papers

lopsided margin of 139 to 57 in 1961. Though all the no votes came from Republicans, thirty-seven Republican legislators sided with the Democrats on the bill.<sup>276</sup> Thus civil rights activists now had state support staff and legal backing to challenge schools seeking to continue the practice of accepting “one negro a year.”<sup>277</sup>

Pittsburgh’s African-Americans could thank the Democratic organization for backing such state level measures, but they let it be known in 1961-2 that the Democrats could not take African-American votes for granted. For example, Charles Wilson expanded the effort which African-Americans in the Hill District had launched in the 1950s to get more benefits out of their loyalty to ward chairs. Wilson ran for Fifth Ward Alderman against the established ward structure. Wilson’s advertising in the *Courier* excoriated the local machine for failing to place African-Americans in anything but subservient positions. Wilson declared that the ward heelers were ill-serving the needs of the community. He demanded to know why the Board of Education had not changed conditions where most African-American teachers were mere substitutes. Wilson demanded to know as well, “Why hasn’t the police squad been integrated as directed by the Mayor years ago?”<sup>278</sup> In the days before civil service, Wilson argued a valid point. Even applicants for school crossing guard had to win approval of the ward chairman, who first consulted the Mayor.<sup>279</sup>

Urban League President Wendell Freeland’s campaign for state legislature created a bigger impression. Freeland bucked modern tradition and ran as a Republican. Yet he still received crucial support in the African-American community. The *Courier* derided Freeland’s

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<sup>276</sup> “Fair Education Bill Approved in House With Help of GOP,” *Pittsburgh Press*, April 18, 1961 in Irvis Papers

<sup>277</sup> Edmunds, *Daybreakers*, 110

<sup>278</sup> “Survival in the Economic Jungle,” *Courier*, April 8, 1961 in Irvis Papers

<sup>279</sup> Lucchino interview

opponent as merely “a product of machine politics.” It called on voters to repudiate such “Uncle Toms, 1962 Vervion [sic].”<sup>280</sup> The campaign put Democratic officials on notice when the *Post Gazette* also endorsed Freeland. Freeland’s campaign lost two-to-one, but those results were a credible showing by a shoestring campaign.<sup>281</sup> They especially threw off trends in a district where so many voters depended on either city employment or ward boss funneled largess handed out by government agencies. Both these campaigns, therefore, told Democratic leaders, from precinct captain on up to governor that African-Americans expected government agencies to improve employment opportunities within their bodies. They also told these leaders that African-Americans had options and, though economically tied to ward structures, could refuse to vote the straight Democratic ticket. To further influence the Democratic bosses of the town, Byrd Brown threatened to lead 10,000-20,000 African Americans out of the Democratic fold in the 1962 elections because the Democrats only gave lip service to African-Americans. He took as evidence that the party sent no local African-Americans among its delegation to its convention. To back up his threat, Brown informed Democratic officials that African-Americans, with 150,000 registered voters, made up the largest voting block in Allegheny County.<sup>282</sup> That spirit of rebelliousness also translated into challenges to the Democratic leadership’s designs for rebuilding the city.

Until the mid-1960s, civil rights activists such as Freeland simply echoed the liberals’ and neighborhood organizers’ rhetoric, but sometimes the movements were more directly linked.

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<sup>280</sup> The *Courier* writer undoubtedly meant “Version.” Editorial, “Send Freeland to Harrisburg,” *Courier*, November 3, 1963, 20

<sup>281</sup> Frank Bolden, “Negro Vote Puts Both Parties in Political Debt,” *Courier*, November 10, 1962

<sup>282</sup> Alvin Rosensweet, “Negro Held Politically Powerless Here,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, 1962 in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks in Brown family residence Pittsburgh

African-American organizations usually dedicated their work to either the civil rights movement or neighborhood activism, but their members and their political allies rotated between the movements. Much of the time in the early 1960s African-American community organizations appear to have practiced a division of labor with some groups just focusing on expanding civil rights protections and others focusing on neighborhood improvements. For example, the Urban League and the NAACP dedicated their resources to civil rights protections; the HDHA, to improved housing. In contrast, neighborhood activists, especially from the Northside took what they learned fighting bulldozers and highway planners into civil rights work. Most notably, Rev. “Jimmie Joe” Robinson attributed his work fighting the Otto Milk Company and the construction of Route 65 with getting him to head South to register voters. Robinson’s Northside colleague Rev. John Long and Father O’Malley started in door-to-door work fighting slumlords and large-scale redevelopment before adding civil rights work to their activism.<sup>283</sup> Of course, civil-rights-leaders-turned-politicians such as Homer S. Brown and K. Leroy Irvis worked on both sets of issues. Allied groups such as the YWCA and the NCJW worked simultaneously on issues championed by both the civil rights movement and neighborhood activism. By the early 1960s, much greater numbers of African-Americans joined veteran neighborhood activists such as Robinson and Long in demanding that the City shift redevelopment from large-scale projects to small-scale neighborhood ones.

This greater outcry against the hardships placed on African-Americans by urban redevelopment forced Pittsburgh’s political elite to alter their rebuilding plans, somewhat in the early 1960s. Groups such as the Hill District Community Council had tried to make local redevelopment officials reorient plans in ways that would preserve the neighborhood for its

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<sup>283</sup> Robinson, interview by Michael Snow in SLGA

residents, but their groups had proven, in the words of one later civil rights activist, “too small, inexperienced and ineffective.” That changed in the 1960s. Promises that neighborhood residents would benefit from new housing proved hollow, and, in that context, staffers from the Hill House uncovered City plans to raze another eight blocks around Crawford Street in order to build a new symphony hall.<sup>284</sup> The city’s lone African-American city council member said that people in the Hill District feared that the entire Hill would be torn down and “turned over to whites.”<sup>285</sup> Additionally in 1960, Jim McCoy, Byrd Brown, and Frankie Pace rented a billboard at the corner of Crawford St. and Center Ave. It declared “No Development beyond this point!” In those few words, the billboard put City redevelopment officials on notice that African-Americans would not allow the City to tear down any more of the Hill District. Residents also marched down to City Hall, chanting “Not Another Inch.”<sup>286</sup> Lorenzo Hill, director of Hill House, quickly launched the umbrella group the Citizens Committee for Hill District Renewal, bringing together churches, block clubs, civil rights organizations, and the like. As the committee grew to 2,000 members, it garnered help from powerful Pittsburgh elites. Most notably, the Pittsburgh Foundation ponied up money for plans for another location for the symphony.<sup>287</sup> In addition, civil rights leaders exposed the hardships and inequities of the

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<sup>284</sup> Hill House is the outgrowth of the Irene Kaufmann Settlement House, an earlier settlement house from the Progressive Era. Donald W. McIlvane, “Guest Column: McIlvane on School Integration,” *Forum*, March 2, 1973, 9. David Craig, a member of the City Planning Commission from the 1950s to the early 1960s, confirms McIlvane’s assertion. The numbers of residents from the Lower Hill coming to planning meetings was small, and “politicians count noses.” David Craig, interview by Michael Snow on August 28, 1998 p 18 in SLGA

<sup>285</sup> Alvin Rosensweet, “Bias Narrows Choice of Housing,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, September 13, 1963, 5

<sup>286</sup> Lawrence Glasco, “The Civil Rights Movement in Pittsburgh: To Make This City “Some Place Special,” 7 at Freedom Corner, [http://www.freedomcorner.org/civil\\_rights\\_in\\_pittsburgh.html](http://www.freedomcorner.org/civil_rights_in_pittsburgh.html) and Bill Hetzel, “The Line Drawn, A Place To Stand,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, April 5, 1998

<sup>287</sup> McIlvane, 9

Pittsburgh Renaissance in the pages of the local papers. Wendell Freeland said that redevelopment of the Lower Hill increased the severity of overcrowding. African-Americans pushed out of the Lower Hill found few places that realtors, landlords, and banks would allow them.<sup>288</sup> Landlords almost doubled the rents they charged to whites in Homewood-Brushton when blacks moved into the same apartment.<sup>289</sup> That same week, the *Post Gazette* also divulged the results of an Urban League survey on local policymakers. African-Americans held only 34 of 1,800 positions in policy making in the Pittsburgh area. Freeland chalked up the disproportionate pains caused by urban redevelopment to the fact that “it took place without Negro participation...and the Urban Redevelopment Authority was out of contact with the [African-American] population.”<sup>290</sup> African-Americans would have to wait several years for such seats. In the meantime, the City shelved plans to redevelop the Middle and Upper Hill.<sup>291</sup>

The strong and very public pronouncements of Wendell Freeland and Byrd Brown signaled the full-fledged entry of civil rights movement leaders into fights over urban redevelopment. Freeland served as president of the Urban League and Byrd Brown as president of the NAACP.

While city officials handed this victory to African-Americans on the issue of urban redevelopment, the mayor and other politicians initially sat out battles between civil rights marchers and local businesses. Still the timbre of agitation greatly increased. Much of the impetus came because the NAACP formed the United Negro Protest Committee as its action arm

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<sup>288</sup> Rosensweet, “Bias...”, 1

<sup>289</sup> Rosensweet, “Bias...”, 5

<sup>290</sup> Alvin Rosensweet, “Leaders Are Excluded From Urban Project,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, September 17, 1963, 1, 4

<sup>291</sup> “Hill District will remain residential” n.d. clipping in Irvis Papers

under the leadership of Jim McCoy. Soon after its formation in 1963, the UNPC launched a series of protests against local businesses so large that Pittsburghers began referring to them as Marching Season. Out of its 3,700 workforce in Pittsburgh, Duquense Light employed just a handful of African-Americans and consigned them to janitorial positions. Following a thousand-person strong meeting at Central Baptist Church, 3,000 UNPC supporters decried such “tokenism” and encircled Duquense Light headquarters.<sup>292</sup> The size of the march should have shocked city officials into action; instead the marchers and the *Courier* had to prod them. The paper noted that K. Leroy Irvis alone among elected representatives joined the marchers. The paper and some speakers at the Duquense Light March remarked that mayors had taken part “in most other cities where peaceful demonstrations have taken place.”<sup>293</sup> The four days of demonstrations against Duquense Light showed Pittsburghers in positions of power that the African-American community could mobilize with tremendous force. They also showed a now united community. Even African-Americans who criticized the demonstrators agreed that they were necessary. This was a sea change over days when businesses and the machine squelched such criticisms. When, for example, K. Leroy Irvis had launched similar protest in the 1940s, the Urban League fired him. This time Art Edmunds of the Urban League had the following to say: "It's a shame that Negroes have to go to that extent before the problem is recognized." More importantly, the Duquense Light marchers demonstrated a huge level of commitment. One young man with holes in his shoes, for instance, walked to the marches several miles from Homewood on all four days. The *Post Gazette* ran his story giving it greater power.<sup>294</sup> Mostly,

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<sup>292</sup> Byrd Brown, former president Pittsburgh NAACP, interview by Michael Snow, on October 20, 1998, 18 in SLGA

<sup>293</sup> Woody Taylor, “Over 2,000 Join UNPC in Massive Pittsburgh Walk,” *Courier*, August 17, 1963 in Irvis Papers

<sup>294</sup> Alvin Rosensweet, "Demonstrations Resented by Some," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, September 14, 1963

the ensuing actions that Fall aimed just at large employers. The huge turnouts at marches brought other companies' negotiators to the table willing to work out favorable deals. Without resorting to city intervention, Equitable Gas, for example, agreed to hire without consideration of race and to let civil rights groups review its list of applicants. Rejected applicants could also turn to the Urban League and the NAACP for review of their qualifications.<sup>295</sup>

The UNPC, however, did receive aid from one former political insider. Harry B. Fitzgerald, former alderman, served as chair of the group negotiating with Mine Safety Appliances Co. Mine Safety employed 1200 people in Pittsburgh but only 20 of them were African-American. When negotiations with Mine Safety bogged down, Fitzgerald and the UNPC announced that they would decide whether or not to launch pickets in three more weeks.<sup>296</sup>

Perhaps the greatest impact of those marches was on the mobilization of the community. Membership in the NAACP shot up from 6,000 to almost 10,000 in one year. By 1963, this increase gave Pittsburgh the highest per capita membership of any city.<sup>297</sup> Those numbers would give the NAACP greater clout with local politicians in the succeeding years detailed below.

The exception to major Pittsburgh politicians' early inaction in the case of civil rights demonstrations came when the marchers turned their attention to the work of government agencies. Marching Season even kicked off with a foreshadowing that civil rights leaders had their sights on inequities in government employment as well as private discrimination.

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<sup>295</sup> "Equitable Gas, Negro Group Reach Accord," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, September 14, 1963, 1, 5

<sup>296</sup> "Negro Job Protest Facing Two Firms Here," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, September, 1963, 1, 4

<sup>297</sup> Alvin Rosensweet, "The Negro in Pittsburgh: Leaders Are Excluded from Urban Projects," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, September 17, 1963, 4

Thousands attending the NAACP's Freedom Rally in 1963 at the Civic Arena heard that of the City's 6,000 employees, the only African-Americans worked as garbagemen. Pittsburgh's political elite missed that omen however, as the *Courier* reported, because no city or county officials honored the invitations to attend. In light of both situations, Byrd Brown denounced "politicians' streams of words devoid of meaning."<sup>298</sup> Six weeks later, Mayor Barr found himself intervening to avert picketing at the Washington Plaza Apartments over the issue of construction firms not hiring enough African-Americans. Barr met separately with both sides trying to induce the firm to hire more minorities.<sup>299</sup> Perhaps Barr and his administration felt more keen on intervening in that instance because this project sat as part of the Urban Redevelopment Authority's plans for the Hill District. In October 1963, civil rights leaders threatened to return to the Civic Arena, this time marching because only five of eighty-six ushers were black and no African-Americans worked as higher staff. This time, the Stadium Authority caved before picketing became necessary. The director of the Arena promised to hire African-American guards and electricians.<sup>300</sup>

County government also drew UNPC fire. The county commissioners met with McCoy and company to hear a complaint that the county employed only one lone African-American in a white collar job. When challenged, Commissioner McClelland could not produce a list of

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<sup>298</sup> "Steel City Is Called Birmingham of North at Big NAACP Rally," *Courier*, June 15, 1963 in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks in Brown family residence Pittsburgh

<sup>299</sup> Herbert Stein, "Barr Seeks To Avert Picketing," newspaper unknown, August 6, 1963 in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks in Brown family residence in Pittsburgh

<sup>300</sup> "NAACP Promises Stern Measures Unless Arena Authority Improves Job Policy," *Courier*, October 7, 1963 in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks in Brown family residence in Pittsburgh

African-American employees.<sup>301</sup> It would take several years more agitation for local politicians to improve these government employment practices. In the meantime, the civil rights agitation enlightened the wider Pittsburgh audience to racial disparities.

“Marching Season” in 1963 had one other huge side effect with political repercussions; it awakened white Pittsburghers’ consciences. A few weeks after the first massive demonstration at Duquense Light, the *Post Gazette* ran Alvin Rosensweet's series of eight articles on race in Pittsburgh. These openly exposed the history of de facto segregation in the city to white Pittsburghers. African-Americans had daily experienced such things, but white coworkers denied the existence of discrimination in the city. With Rosensweet's articles that changed. Into several hundred thousand homes came stories of employment agencies denying jobs and restaurants refusing to serve even African-American veterans. City Councilor James Jordan set straight those whites who thought conditions had changed. He relayed that they had improved over the previous ten years, but that he still never knew what he would encounter.<sup>302</sup> Those articles frequently mentioned that the African-American community previously had not developed a core leadership, something that the civil rights movement changed over the next three years.<sup>303</sup>

Pushed from the streets, in the press, and threatened at the polls, Mayor Barr’s administration finally took bold actions between 1964 and 1967. First, the City entered the fight against subtle forms of discrimination practiced by real estate developers. Dr. Osvald Nickens had tried to buy a house in the new area of Stanton Heights. The developer tried to dissuade

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<sup>301</sup> “County Job Ratio Scored by Negroes,” newspaper unknown, October 4, 1963, Byrd Brown Scrapbooks in Brown family residence in Pittsburgh

<sup>302</sup> Alvin Rosensweet, "Race Pressure in City Called Rough on Kids," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, September 20, 1963, 1, 5

<sup>303</sup> Alvin Rosensweet, various, *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, September-October, 1963

him, telling him that the house cost \$47,000. Nickens and his civil rights activist friends found that the fair market value stood nearer \$36,000 and brought the case before the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations (CHR). The developer's lawyer, Gilbert Helwig, then launched a two-pronged attack on the CHR. The City of Pittsburgh joined civil rights organizations in countering. First, Helwig argued that African-Americans lowered property values. Moe Coleman of the City Planning Department easily refuted that claim with statistical testimony. Second, Helwig claimed that Pittsburgh's Fair Housing Law of 1957 violated private property owners' constitutional rights. In making that claim Helwig challenged the city's authority to pass such a law. Because its authority was tied to the interests of the civil rights leaders by these new laws, city officials defended their jurisdiction with great force. In their defense of the law, city solicitors joined lawyers from the NAACP in successfully protecting the 1957 law and the CHR.<sup>304</sup>

Civil rights leaders scored a greater victory when the City formed Community Action Pittsburgh with its timing and activities giving evidence of a change in mindset among Pittsburgh politicians. First Mayor Barr sent representatives to Washington D. C. in 1964 to hammer out details on what would become the War on Poverty; the administration did not wait for marching orders from the federal government. Before the legislation even passed Congress, Pittsburgh had a plan in place to create community advisory boards to oversee new federal redevelopment projects and administer anti-poverty programs.<sup>305</sup> In this manner, the plans echoed the demands Freeland and other civil rights leaders had made two years before: that the poor and African-

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<sup>304</sup> "Fair Housing Declared No Relief to Ghettos," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 15, 1964 in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks in Brown family residence Pittsburgh, and David Craig, former Pittsburgh Solicitor, interview by Michael Snow on August 28, 1998 p 24, in SLGA

<sup>305</sup> Aldo Colautti, executive secretary to Mayor Barr, interview by Michael Snow, July 31, 1998, 29-31 in SLGA

Americans have representatives in decision-making affecting their communities. Moreover, even though Mayor Barr had extraordinary control over city government under Pittsburgh's charter, he proved willing to support this legislation which would bypass his authority. Barr in this matter stood in stark contrast to other mayors such as Chicago's Richard Daley who fought against the measure as a disruption of their authority. As a result of Barr's support and his administration's early planning, Pittsburgh received more federal War on Poverty per capita than any other city.<sup>306</sup> Barr and his administrators directed most of those moneys towards eight African-American and integrated neighborhoods.<sup>307</sup> There citizens launched revitalization projects on a human scale such as code enforcement programs against slum lords and opening community health centers. Barr even made a habit of appointing civil rights leaders and militants to the community boards.<sup>308</sup> And finally Pittsburgh continued its community action program even after Congress mortally wounded the national program's budget in 1967.<sup>309</sup>

African-Americans and allies also used the Commission on Human Relations to strengthen Pittsburgh's civil rights ordinance. By the mid-1960s, civil rights leaders considered woefully inadequate the fines handed out for discrimination by the Commission on Human Relations. Commission Member Florence Reizenstein worked ceaselessly on the issue, lobbying both city council and her friend Mayor Barr. Reizenstein had worked alongside Pittsburgh mayors for forty years and brought all of those connections to bear. According to members of

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<sup>306</sup> Colautti, interview, 30

<sup>307</sup> David Hill and David Epperson, two members of the Mayor's Commission on Human Resources actually served prominently on the planning meetings of groups demonstrating to defend the federal program. Urban League of Pittsburgh to ALL CAP SUPPORTERS,,Pittsburgh, January 1967 in the Papers of Charles Owen Rice (hereafter COR)

<sup>308</sup> "Black Caucus Sees a Difference," *Pittsburgh Point*, October 30, 1969, 2

<sup>309</sup> Vince Gagetta, "Mikell to Head CAP, Pledges Help for Poor," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, February 12, 1975, 25

city council later eulogizing Reizenstein, City council agreed to their demands because civil rights organizations had such a powerful insider ally on their side. The Commission on Human Relations could now enforce open housing laws with triple the fines that it had imposed in the past.<sup>310</sup>

At the state level, former civil rights activist, K. Leroy Irvis leveraged his rapport with other legislators to move up the chain of command in state Democratic leadership, helping form core African-American leadership for the city. Because Irvis was a compelling orator and brilliant strategist, he was able to win his first leadership position despite the doubts of machine politicians Governor David Lawrence and William Green, the head of the Eastern Pennsylvania Democratic organization.<sup>311</sup> Irvis's fellow Democrats elected him caucus chairman in just his third term.<sup>312</sup> Shared oppression partially cemented Irvis's alliance with Jewish legislator Herb Fineman. One Democratic legislator had the gall to ask when Fineman would put up a Star of David on his caucus door. During the same week in a debate on voting age requirements, another Democrat asked why "Negroes hadn't shown much interest." Both Fineman and Irvis offered their resignations in response to such comments and thereby won reelection to their posts on the backs of an added wave of sympathy vote.<sup>313</sup> Irvis later supported Fineman as house

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<sup>310</sup> Pittsburgh Bill No. 735 Resolution on the death of Florence S. Reizenstein, June 4, 1970, *Municipal Record, Minutes of the Proceedings of the Council of the City of Pittsburgh*, Pittsburgh, PA: Park Printing, Inc., 970 Volume CIV, No. 23, June 8, 1970, 290

<sup>311</sup> James Crutchfield, "Elected Black Leader Nixes Appointment," *Pittsburgh Press*, October 25, 1968 in Irvis Papers

<sup>312</sup> "Irvis Elected Caucus Chairman," *Pittsburgh Press*, December 5, 1962, 48 in Irvis Papers

<sup>313</sup> "2 Democrat Leaders Consider Retirement Anti-semitism, Racism Cited," Associated Press, 1967 in Irvis Papers

speaker even as Pittsburgh Mayor Barr touted Irvis for that position.<sup>314</sup> This move would further cement Irvis's reputation for loyalty and his alliance with Fineman. Irvis rose to house majority leader on Fineman's election to speaker.

Using those positions and political capital, Irvis brought benefits back to his district and to all Pittsburgh's African-Americans. Irvis offered up several bills in 1965 aimed at strengthening the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission which did not move past committee.<sup>315</sup> That would change, however, as Irvis strengthened his ties to other legislators and moved up in rank.

Much of the rise in stature came about because he wrote bills which benefited the whole state. As the Pittsburgh African-American newspaper lauded him, "...K. Leroy Irvis is both a citizen of the whole state and a Negro." For example, he co-authored the bills to save the University of Pittsburgh and Temple University by making them state-related institutions. More popularly, Irvis marshaled through a bill to slash tuition at these schools.<sup>316</sup> In addition, he authored and shepherded through bills creating Pennsylvania's junior college system.<sup>317</sup>

By generating good will from white legislators on these measures, Irvis was able to gain greater leadership positions and overcome objections to his civil rights and anti-poverty

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<sup>314</sup> "Irvis Supports Fineman as Speaker," *Harrisburg Patriot News*, November 13, 1968 and Mayor Barr was joined by Allegheny County Commissioners Leonard Staisey and Tom Forrester in that support for Irvis over Fineman. Joseph P. Browne, "Barr Gives Backing to Irvis as Speaker," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, November 19, 1968, in Irvis Papers

<sup>315</sup> Pennsylvania House Bills 1056, 2162, 2222, 2223, 2226, 2227, 2228 in Irvis Papers and Robert Gaitens, "House Gets Rights Bill 'Package,'" *Pittsburgh Press*, November 30, 1965 in Irvis Papers. A reporter for the Pittsburgh Post Gazette charged Philadelphia legislators with blocking two of the 1965 civil rights bills. "Philly Charged With Blocking Rights Bill," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, December 1, 1965 in Irvis Papers

<sup>316</sup> "Irvis Can Stand On Record," *Courier*, November 5-10, 1966, 5A and "Irvis Backs Pitt Tuition Slash Now," *Pittsburgh Press*, March 1, 1966 in Irvis Papers

<sup>317</sup> Pennsylvania House Bill 1401, 1963-4 in Irvis Papers

measures. The precedent had come during the 1963-4 session when Irvis authored the bill making the state pay relocation costs of families displaced by state construction.<sup>318</sup> His Neighborhood Assistance Act gave tax incentives to companies which operated charitable programs or training in impoverished areas.<sup>319</sup> Under another bill, the state forbade municipalities from having less stringent anti-discrimination ordinances than the state's Human Relations Act.<sup>320</sup> Irvis put forward and won passage of six civil rights bills in 1967 alone. One gave the Pennsylvania Human Rights Commission the power to investigate civil tension even where no one had filed a complaint. Another reduced the number of employees a company had to have in order to be covered by Pennsylvania's anti-discrimination laws.<sup>321</sup> Irvis later authored and spearheaded passage of the state's Manpower Act to "Erase impediments ... fostered by discrimination against non-white minorities."<sup>322</sup> As he was about to attain the position of Majority Whip, Irvis knew that, as the holder of that position, he would gain a lot more power as "every budget for every state institution will have to cross my desk."<sup>323</sup> In the 1970s, he would use that position to full advantage for this district and for advancing human rights.

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<sup>318</sup> Pennsylvania HB 825 of 1963-4 in Irvis Papers

<sup>319</sup> Pennsylvania House Bill 1436, p636-637 in Irvis Papers

<sup>320</sup> Pennsylvania House Bill 1699 introduced August 3, 1965 in Irvis Papers .

<sup>321</sup> That summer's racial disturbances in Erie PA appears to have weighed on legislators minds as well. Irvis said of the budget cutting into legislative action on the bills, "The cities are burning now and they are not going to stop burning simply because Governor Shafer has a tax problem." "House Gets Race Strife Curb Bills," *Harrisburg Patriot News*, July 12, 1967. Said one journalist from the *Pittsburgh Press*, there was "general agreement that the less publicity for dissenters the less chance there might be for civil turmoil back home." Patrick Boyle, "Rights Bills in Senate," *Pittsburgh Press*, August 10, 1967

<sup>322</sup> Pennsylvania House Bill 2572 pp 736-738 Approved July 31, 1968 in Irvis Papers

<sup>323</sup> James Crutchfield, "Elected Black Leader Nixes Appointment," *Pittsburgh Press*, October 25, 1968 in Irvis Papers

Growing militancy nationally and locally gave African-Americans another set of voices and a sense of urgency to win reforms and pro-African-American policies. American cities convulsed with cries of Black Power from 1965 onwards, and Pittsburghers joined the fray. Organizers such as Bouie Haden and organizations such as Forever Action Together (FAT) challenged public officials and white businesses alike with provocative tactics and demands. For example, when Mayor Barr failed to consult with militant groups on who he appointed to head the new Pittsburgh Housing Court, Haden thundered in city council chambers, “This causes riots, damn it.”<sup>324</sup> When ACTION-Housing rehabilitated Cora Street, a set of moderate income townhouses in Homewood, FORWARD Grass Roots picketed the site for being beyond the reach of poor families who most needed housing.<sup>325</sup> FAT’s President Canon Carter steered his group towards “efforts toward real and true self-determination” in opposition to “white forces--forces with a vested interest politically and economically in exploitation of black people.”<sup>326</sup>

In Pittsburgh, local politicians, with a fifteen-plus year history of negotiating with protesters, brought these militants to the table. Mayor Barr, for example, appointed Bouie Haden

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<sup>324</sup> Charles C. Robb, “Pittsburgh Slums Win a Vote at Last,” *Pittsburgh Point*, August 24, 1967, 1. Haden and his group United Movement for Progress told local businesses not employing enough African-Americans that they risked violence. Curtis Seltzer, “A New Militancy Grows in Homewood,” *Pittsburgh Point*, June 22, 1967, 1. Rev. Jimmie Joe Robinson, a member of the Citizens Clergy Coordinating Committee (CCCC), also used the threat of impending riots. In a meeting with local church hierarchies about CCCC forming a housing rehabilitation company, he said, “Can the speech. All we’re asking for is a spirit of commitment. If not, there’s going to be bloodshed.” Charles C. Robb, “Church Potentates Ponder Housing Plan,” *Pittsburgh Point*, December 21, 1967, 11

<sup>325</sup> Charles Howard, “Press Release on: ‘The Cora Street Project,’” FORWARD Grass Roots, Pittsburgh PA, n.d in COR . Governor Romney of Michigan happened to visit Cora Street when passing through on a speaking/campaign tour on how to deal with urban unrest. Haden approached telling Romney that Cora Street “should be blown up.” Charles C. Robb, “George Romney’s Hour in the Slums,” *Pittsburgh Point*, October 5, 1967, 1

<sup>326</sup> “FAT Boils Barr's Task Force Report,” *Courier*, July 17, 1968, 1

to the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations.<sup>327</sup> City agencies channeled federal money to Forever Action Together to rehabilitate housing.<sup>328</sup> More importantly, when Haden, Rev. Jimmy Robinson, and Father McIlvane called for a city wide rent strike, the CHR invited Haden and McIlvane's groups to take part in its meetings with realtors. Robinson and Haden charged the realtors with having dealt in bad faith in their meetings without public officials present. They also charged the Barr administration with insufficient measures to fight bad housing.<sup>329</sup> The mayor stepped in to hammer out an agreement on fair lease and rent guidelines with the realtors.<sup>330</sup> When those meetings and guidelines also proved unsatisfactory to Haden, Robinson, and McIlvane, the rent strike moved forward.

Such militancy also made a useful foil. Rep. K. Leroy Irvis would use the specter of riots to end a logjam of amendments that had stalled a package of anti-slum housing bills. Irvis informed his legislative colleagues, "If we don't move with dispatch, we are going to cut the legs out from under responsible civil rights leaders and turn things over to those who want to lead riots."<sup>331</sup> The pressure worked. Mayor Barr made the demands of McIlvane and company into a centerpiece of his legislative package. Other Pittsburgh legislators then took a page from Irvis's play book, predicting that the bills "would stop Pittsburgh's current rent strikes dead in

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<sup>327</sup> Roy McHugh, "Mau-mauing Whitey: It was Bouie Haden's Game," *Pittsburgh Press*, August 1, 1974 in Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh clippings file

<sup>328</sup> "Memo [Charles] Howard to Board Members [of Interfaith Housing Incorporated," Re; F. A. T. incorporation, October 24, 1969. If Mayor Barr and his administrators hoped to co-opt such militants, they failed with Haden. That experience would have taught such political leaders that inviting such leaders to the table would not lessen militants' demands, tone, or level of activities. Thus later political appointments such as the head of FAT's would not have been motivated by a desire to co-opt militants.

<sup>329</sup> Alvin Rosensweet, "Civil Righters Ask City Wide Rent Strike," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, 1967 in Irvis Papers

<sup>330</sup> Charles C. Robb, "Talking Peace Cools a Long Hot Summer," *Pittsburgh Point*, August 10, 1967, 1, 2

<sup>331</sup> Patrick Boyle, "Slumlord Bill Restricted to Big Cities," *Pittsburgh Press*, August 2, 1967 in Irvis Papers

their tracks.”<sup>332</sup> Given the heightened tenor of the debates, Republican legislative leaders also backed the bills, and all three passed unanimously.<sup>333</sup> Barr additionally flew to Washington D.C. to testify before Congress for greater appropriations for federal anti-poverty programs.<sup>334</sup>

Pittsburgh officials’ handling of the riots in 1968 demonstrated the power African-Americans had accumulated in just six years via their growing political network. In Pittsburgh and over a hundred cities across the nation, looters and arsonists set to work in the days following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Pittsburgh’s political leaders exercised great restraint in their handling of the riots. Large portions of Pittsburgh’s Hill District burned, and looters damaged hundreds more buildings in the Manchester and Homewood neighborhoods. Yet no one died in Pittsburgh during the riots whereas hundreds of people died in those riots nationwide.<sup>335</sup> If the death toll elsewhere stemmed from the same causes as in the earlier Watts Riots, this comparative level of fatalities demonstrates how remarkably city officials in Pittsburgh restrained police officers. Thirty-four of thirty-seven people killed in 1965 in Watts died from police fire.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> The bills stiffened Pennsylvania’s rent withholding law, ordered landlords to make repairs in just twelve months, and outlawed eviction of tenants paying into escrow accounts. “Senate Aims Bills at ‘Slumlords,” *Pittsburgh Press*, July 19, 1967 in Irvis Papers

<sup>333</sup> Patrick Boyle, “Slumlord Bill Restricted to Big Cities,” *Pittsburgh Press*, August 2, 1967 in Irvis Papers

<sup>334</sup> “City Talks With the Ghetto,” *Pittsburgh Point*, July 31, 1967, 1, 4. Barr’s testimony was particularly impassioned. “I refuse to believe that this nation isn’t endowed with conviction enough, concern enough, wisdom enough to produce a better response than emergency actions.”

<sup>335</sup> It appears that researchers have not analyzed the causes of death in the 1968 riots. I have searched dozens of scholarly works on the 1968 riots for four years finding no such analysis.

<sup>336</sup> Henry F. Bedford, *Trouble Downtown: The Local Context of Twentieth Century America* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, Publishers, 1978) 180

In Pittsburgh, David Craig, then serving as Pittsburgh Director of Public Safety, worked with his director of Police-Community Relations and Jimmie Joe Robinson, K. Leroy Irvis, and Bouie Haden to keep tempers cooled in Pittsburgh. Throughout that Thursday and Friday, Craig directed police to allow protest marches and simply escort the marchers. Craig counted Byrd Brown as a friend, having been mentored as a young lawyer by Brown's father Judge Homer S. Brown. When Brown and religious leaders called for a memorial march from the Hill through Downtown, many people called Craig, urging him disallow it because marchers would break "every window on Liberty Avenue." Craig consulted with key officers and disagreed. He said later, "I had the conviction" the march would come off peacefully. All during those four days, Craig made certain his officers held their fire.<sup>337</sup> Moe Coleman from the City Planning Department visited Bouie Haden or Byrd Brown every Sunday afternoon.<sup>338</sup> In the context of Craig and Coleman's working relationships with these leaders, David Craig and Mayor Barr readily assented to a request by Haden, Robinson, and Coleman to have neighborhood youths dawn red vests in Homewood and Manchester to keep the peace. Some whites called this action crazy, saying that it was tantamount to giving militants firearms. The Red Vests, however, stopped many looters in Homewood and dispersed potentially violent crowds.<sup>339</sup> All of these official actions took place against the backdrop of phone calls to the mayor demanding that he give shoot-to-kill orders and bring in tanks.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> David Craig, former director of Public Safety for the City of Pittsburgh, interview by Michael Snow, August 28, 1998, 29-38

<sup>338</sup> Moe Coleman, interview by Michael Snow on August 9, 1999, 11, 16, in SLGA

<sup>339</sup> Craig, interview, August 28, 1998, 35-36; Roy McHugh, "Mau-mauing Whitey: It was Bouie Haden's Game," *Pittsburgh Press*, August 1, 1974 in Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh clippings file

<sup>340</sup> Moe Coleman, interview by Michael Snow on August 9, 1999 in SLGA. This was also confirmed by Aldo Colautti, Mayor Barr's executive secretary. Aldo Colautti, interview by Michael Snow, July 31, 1998, p 51

Even when the Pennsylvania National Guard took over, African-American leaders helped restrain official violence. Years of the governor brokering compromises with Hill District Representative K. Leroy Irvis came into play. After talking one mob into dispersing, Irvis joined Governor Shafer in touring the burning area.<sup>341</sup> Irvis's knowledge of the crowd and the neighborhood helped him tell Shafer how to have the Guards handle the crowds.<sup>342</sup> To a great measure, the work of those African-American civil rights activists in those days is why Pittsburgh stood alone among major U.S. cities in that no one died in its riots.<sup>343</sup>

In much the same way that working relations between African-Americans and city officials brought those public servants to bat for African-Americans, so relations in the late 1960s with state government brought the governor's people to intervene on African-Americans' behalf. In 1967, rioters had damaged portions of Erie, Pennsylvania. Just two weeks after those riots in Erie, Governor Shafer announced that, in just another week, his administration would open branch offices in major cities to hear complaints and help poor and minority residents gain government services. The offices proved highly patronized with 2,000 visits in just the first week and a hoped for means of easing racial tensions. The Pennsylvania Justice Department, for example, stationed attorneys there for anyone who felt their civil rights had been violated and placed impartial observers at police stations. More broadly, as the person the governor put in

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<sup>341</sup> K. Leroy Irvis, interviewer unknown, n.d transcript in Irvis Papers and K. Leroy Irvis, interview by Michael Snow, in the Pittsburgh Civil Rights History Project

<sup>342</sup> Irvis even claimed that many city officials left town in shock, basically turning over the running of the City to Irvis and Wendell Freeland from the Urban League. K. Leroy Irvis, interview by Michael Snow

<sup>343</sup> David Craig, interview by Michael Snow, August 28, 1998, 35

charge of the branch offices said, "fifty percent of people in the ghetto who are eligible for city, state and federal voluntary programs don't get them."<sup>344</sup>

The governor, however, would be stung by a resolution from the Pennsylvania NAACP passed in Pittsburgh. Henry Smith of the NAACP said his group opposed the branch offices and their \$700,000 price tag as a duplication of efforts unless the state also committed \$6-7 million to the poor, staffed the offices with African-Americans, and coordinated with existing community action programs.<sup>345</sup> Prodded into action, Shafer agreed to a summit with Dorothy Richardson, an African-American anti-slum housing activist, and civil rights leaders Byrd Brown and Father McIlvane. There they proposed that he commit to full support for civil rights legislation and more inspectors for the Human Relations Commission. They also urged the governor to involve the state in low-income housing and job opportunities.<sup>346</sup> Much of Shafer's later agenda would take up those suggestions, including two measures from 1968. The \$ 6 million appropriated for Manpower Employment and Training in 1968 echoed Brown and his colleagues. State agencies could establish the programs or assist in them. Thus, this measure joined federal programs as a vehicle by which Pittsburgh programs such as Bidwell Training Center and Operation Dig operated.<sup>347</sup> The state also appropriated \$3 million for Community Action Agencies recognized under the Federal Equal Opportunities Act. Of course, one could argue that Shafer responded

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<sup>344</sup> Dr. Thomas Georges, PA Secretary of Health and Public Welfare in "Governor Lists Measures to Ease Racial Tensions in State," *Allentown Morning Call*, August 12, 1967, in Irvis Papers

<sup>345</sup> "Rights Group Hits Shafer Office Plan," *Harrisburg Patrio News*, August 14, 1967

<sup>346</sup> "Shafer Agrees To Visit 3 Negro Areas, Ghetto Crisis Plans Offered," *Post Gazette*, n.d in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks The visit fits with when Shafer met with the UNPC's Jim McCoy, so the article must have been from early September 1967. It must be because in both Shafer says he will tour the neighborhoods. "Shafer Promises To Study Rights Leaders' Demands," *Allentown Morning Call*, September 1, 1967, in Irvis Papers

<sup>347</sup> HB 2592 Approved July 31, 1968, pp 736-738 in Irvis Papers

more to the riots than to his rapport or trust of Richardson, McIlvane, and Brown. But Shafer had begun fighting for the Manpower Bill before the riots began.<sup>348</sup> And it was Shafer's touring of the Hill District with K. Leroy Irvis during the riots, which let the governor see why conditions so angered residents that they set fire to stores and apartments in the area. Thus, it was to the programs put forward by Brown and McIlvane that Shafer's administrators directed money under the laws.

The fight to open trade union jobs to African-Americans intensified both government intervention into civil rights and opposition from whites. The issue started ordinarily enough. The simultaneous construction of Three Rivers Stadium, downtown Interstate highway connections, and several new business headquarters created thousands of construction jobs. Nate Smith found contractors and construction unions unreceptive when he tried to find work in their ranks for graduates of his Operation Dig training program. In June and July 1969, the Commission on Human Relations interceded to mediate between the two sides with no luck. Union representatives and contractors proved willing to risk arrest to ignore summons to come to the hearings.<sup>349</sup> Florence Reizenstein and another member of the CHR then met for several months individually with each side, trying to broker a deal.<sup>350</sup> In the meantime, the Master Builders Association and the Construction Trades Council tried to marginalize Nate Smith by approaching Mike Desmond and Rev. James Robinson's Bidwell Training Center for African-American hirees. Incensed at this ploy, civil rights groups moderate and militant, white and

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<sup>348</sup> "Senate Due Shafer's Riot Control Package," *Harrisburg Patriot*, April 1, 1968 in Irvis Papers in Irvis Papers

<sup>349</sup> James Crutchfield, "Six Face Contempt Charges for Failure to Show at City Job Training Hearings," *Pittsburgh Press*, June 25, 1969, 2

<sup>350</sup> Commission on Human Relations, "Black Community Organizes to Seek Building Jobs," *Human Relations Review*, Fall 1969, Volume 12, No. 3, 1

black, formed the Black Construction Coalition (BCC). Led by nuns and priests, they attempted to march from Bidwell on the Northside to the US Steel Tower in downtown.<sup>351</sup>

While the Commission on Human Relations stepped up its actions on behalf of civil rights, this march also brought an ominous outpouring in some public officials' response. The police under Commander James Slusser beat demonstrators on the Manchester Bridge. One officer maced the president of the Pittsburgh NAACP as he led the peaceful gathering.<sup>352</sup> Rev. Jimmie Joe Robinson said police threw several marchers off the bridge. Police officer Harvey Adams reported the same incidents to the state Human Relations Commission and added that police had destroyed journalists' film.<sup>353</sup> Editorial writers from the *Point*, a left of center newspaper, publicly asked why the police had changed behavior so radically between their restraint shown to arsonists in the Martin Luther King riots and outright violence shown to even nuns and ministers now.<sup>354</sup> Two things appear to have changed police demeanor. First, Slusser and the Fraternal Order of Police had been angered by the previous orders of restraint.<sup>355</sup> Second, African-Americans were now demanding inclusion into working class jobs akin to those from which most police officers came.

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<sup>351</sup> Rev. James J. Robinson, interview by Michael Snow , April 3, 2002, 50 in SLGA and Harvey Adams, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on March 7, 2000, 54-55 in SLGA

<sup>352</sup> "Black Coalition on the March," *Pittsburgh Point*, August 28, 1969

<sup>353</sup> Rev. James J. Robinson, interview by Michael Snow , April 3, 2002, 50 in SLGA and Harvey Adams, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on March 7, 2000, 54-55 in SLGA

<sup>354</sup> Bill Rodd, "What Happened To the Pittsburgh Police," *Pittsburgh Point*, August 28, 1969, 2

<sup>355</sup> Morton Coleman, interview by Michael Snow on August 9, 1999, 17 in SLGA. Slusser began referring to groups such as the United Movement for Progress, the Black Construction Coalition, and the United Black Front as the Black Mafia. He implied that they extorted jobs from businesses under threat of violence. "Black Mafia Theory Hit; Vigilantes Formed," *Courier*, November 22, 1969 in Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Clippings Files

In response to growing violence in this struggle, public officials took extraordinary steps in support of civil rights. Thousands marched in solidarity with people injured at the Manchester Bridge. They turned out over the next several days, surrounding the U.S. Steel Tower construction site. Union members up in the girders responded by tossing at least pennies if not rivets onto the marchers.<sup>356</sup> At this point, Gerald Kaufman, the state senator from Squirrel Hill's 14th Ward Independent Democrat Club, entered the fight on behalf of his NAACP friends, proposing a bill that construction workers would have to pass a state test instead of a union apprenticeship program.<sup>357</sup> Kaufman's bill stood an unlikely chance of passing, acting more as a shot across the unions bows. James Cortes, the director of public safety, acted in a more immediate fashion, owing to his good working relations with civil rights workers. Cortes blunted Slusser by having him join John Kelly, the director of police-community relations, in working with BCC leaders. Cortes also called for the City to shut five construction sites.<sup>358</sup> Some of Slusser's officers, however arrested Byrd Brown and 235 other marchers. Brown realized that, with himself and a couple of other moderate leaders in jail, the demonstrations might tend towards chaos, and he used this threat as a bargaining chip, refusing to pay bail.<sup>359</sup> Mayor Barr, fearing violence, came to Brown in his jail cell. Years of their working together, forged when Barr had been Brown's father's state senate colleague, came into play. In jail, Barr refused Brown's demand to release all the arrestees, saying he lacked the power, but Barr did

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<sup>356</sup> Rev. James J. Robinson, interview by Michael Snow, April 3, 2002, 50 in SLGA

<sup>357</sup> "Kaufman Asks State Testing on Craft Jobs," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, August 27, 1969 in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks in Brown family residence

<sup>358</sup> Thomas Hritz, "March Causes Shutdown of 10 Building Sites," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, n.d. in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks in Brown family residence.

<sup>359</sup> *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, August 28, 1969 in Brown Scrapbooks in Brown family residence

agree to take an unprecedented step of halting construction in order to force negotiations.<sup>360</sup> Mayor Barr one-upped Cortes and shut eleven downtown construction sites in order to avert violence.<sup>361</sup>

Because of the severity of white workers' opposition to these measures, civil rights supporters had to call in help from state and federal officials. The unions formed a counter march, demanding the right to work in the face of Barr's work stoppage order. Formal negotiations resumed after the mayor mediated between the two sides, but they again bogged down. Given the huge outpouring against his order, Barr could have backed down betraying his commitment to civil rights leaders. Instead, he honored the strength of his working relationship with them calling in help from higher authorities. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor Mediation Service stepped in to no avail. The U.S. Department of Labor sent in negotiators at Mayor Barr's request. Still, the two sides could not agree on the number of African-Americans to be let in, nor would unions relinquish to black groups control over some apprentice programs.<sup>362</sup>

In response to the civil rights supporters' strongest demonstration, the CHR issued its strongest challenge to the unions' refusal to open work to African-Americans. On September 15, 1969, what Pittsburghers coined Black Monday, between 4,000 and 9,000 demonstrators marched in support of the BCC's demands.<sup>363</sup> Finally, the Commission on Human Relations, in

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<sup>360</sup> "Brown Honored at Unity Ball," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, December 1, 1996, B-8

<sup>361</sup> Commission on Human Relations, "Black Community Organizes to Seek Building Jobs," *Human Relations Review*, Fall 1969, Volume 12, No. 3, 1

<sup>362</sup> Commission on Human Relations, "Black Community Organizes to Seek Building Jobs," *Human Relations Review*, Fall 1969, Volume 12, No. 3, 1

<sup>363</sup> Commission on Human Relations, "Black Community Organizes to Seek Building Jobs," *Human Relations Review*, Fall 1969, Volume 12, No. 3, 1

October, withheld approval of city construction contracts unless the contractors participated in “training programs as affirmative action in compliance with city requirements.”<sup>364</sup> In response to the scope of this order, the unions and contractors returned to the table and agreed to accept some trainees. They constantly found ways to thwart hiring, leaving this fight to linger into the mid-1970s.

Towards the end of the 1960s, civil rights progress nationally faced a gathering threat in the form of what scholars have called a backlash. In Pittsburgh, the truth is more subtle. It is not as if opposition to integration was new to the area. Disorganized mobs of whites had assaulted the first swimming pool integration parties. Elite groups, such as the realtors association, had been the primary forces organized against civil rights laws. The majority of Allegheny County residents also opposed such measures, but they had no organization to articulate such things. Organization of grassroots racism in Pittsburgh only took its first baby steps in the 1960s. In 1961, Harvey Johnston, a Pittsburgh area realtor, told newspapers that the Fair Housing Law would lead to miscegenation. He said so as if this offended the sensibilities of both races, “Owners of black boarding houses would not want to see their grandchildren possessing sallow skins.”<sup>365</sup> Additionally, though the newspaper accounts did not cover this occurrence, Byrd Brown remembered active white resistance in opposition to civil rights demonstrations. The marchers against Duquense Light encountered John Birchers with placards at Market Square. People with Nazi insignias also heckled those civil rights demonstrations.<sup>366</sup> While the riots in Pennsylvania, overcame many legislators’ opposition to further civil rights measures, others

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<sup>364</sup>Commission on Human Relations, “CHR Denies Approval to Construction Bids,” *Human Relations Review*, Fall 1969, Volume 12, No. 3, 1

<sup>365</sup> “Fair Housing Bill Awakens Dixie Bias,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 18, 1959, clipping in Irvis Papers

<sup>366</sup> Byrd Brown, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on October 20, 1998, in SLGA

balked as if African-Americans had gone too far. In the slumlord rent withholding debate, Senator George Wade from Camp Hill argued,

It would appear or seem that the legislation before us could be classified as appeasement or at least justification to those of either race who have in the past weeks abused or violated in several cities.

He went on to argue, "Slums are never built. They become that way because of those who occupy them."<sup>367</sup>

While Wade lived far from Pittsburgh, he spoke a symbolic language growing in Pittsburgh. When George Wallace came to speak at the Amen Corner's traditional dinner with conservative speakers, thousands of civil rights supporters rallied outside against his message, but several organized groups turned up to hear him. The Penn Hills Women for Wallace and the John Birch Society supported Wallace. Wallace went on to a strong showing in Allegheny County's Democratic Presidential Primary the next year.<sup>368</sup> In 1969, Harvey Johnston formed the National Association for the Advancement of White People and ran for state representative on a platform against school busing and integrated public accommodations.<sup>369</sup> Johnston remained a pariah, but school integration already stirred legislators to block government civil rights action. Five state representatives from Pittsburgh and one from the suburbs offered an amendment in 1967 to prohibit the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission from ordering

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<sup>367</sup> "Rights Bill Package Approved in Senate, Wade Scores Again," *Harrisburg Patriot*, August 30, 1967 in Irvis Papers

<sup>368</sup> Byrd Brown, interview by Michael Snow, October 20, 1998 in SLGA

<sup>369</sup> National Association for the Advancement of White People, "A Vote For Harvey F. Johnston, Fall 1970, in Ephemeral Political Materials Collection, AIS

school integration plans.<sup>370</sup> While their bill failed in 1967, in the 1970s conservative grassroots organizations emerged in Pittsburgh to fight civil rights gains on that exact field of battle.

#### **D. WOMEN IN THE 1960S**

When activist and political women finally turned their attentions to fighting for women's legal rights in the late 1960s, the lessons which they had learned in other movements aided them. However, most Pittsburgh women, including most women activists, did not view their individual problems as being ones arising from the subordinate status of their sex. A sizable proportion of women in the city continued to identify that status as a natural outgrowth of their biological differences from men. To build a movement to expand legal rights and improve conditions for all women, women's rights advocates in Pittsburgh would have to convert more women into feminists. The resurgence of the women's movement and feminist literature nationally gathered steam in the mid-1960s, helping women's rights advocates in Pittsburgh convince other women to identify their problems as ones arising on account of their sex. The formation of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the National Organization for Women and the establishment of KNOW in the late 1960s gave women the institutions by which to do that proselytizing. As a result, the women's rights movement began to make gains for all women as women by the end of the 1960s in Pittsburgh, but for the most of the decade women's activism had maintained the pattern from the 1950s.

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<sup>370</sup> Representatives Joseph Rigby, Donald Bair, Raymond Wilt, Charles Caputo, Joseph Zord, and Edward Zemprelli. Pennsylvania House Bill 1922 in Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *History of the House Bills, 1967-8*, 188 in Irvis Papers

For the most part, women continued throughout the 1960s “working for everyone else’s liberation but their own.” The bulk of the YWCA’s public policy advocacy, for example, focused on African-American civil rights. The YWCA Teen Club launched new campaigns with the Human Relations Commission against roller rinks which excluded African-Americans. Boycotts and letter writing to chain stores operating segregated lunch counters in the South followed.<sup>371</sup> Others organized letter writing to expand the Fair Employment Practices Commission to cover all employers of six or more people.<sup>372</sup> YWCA Public Affairs Committee stalwarts Molly Yard and Jan Neffke even served as the major organizers of transportation for Pittsburghers attending the 1963 March on Washington.<sup>373</sup>

The omission of women from the groups supported by the YWCA did not come about because of a fear of tackling controversial subjects or pioneering in such areas. The Metro Public Affairs Committee resolved in favor of abolishing the House Un-American Activities Committee.<sup>374</sup> Ahead of much of the nation on the Vietnam War, YWCA members went to the 1965 Peace March. Those returning from surrounding the Pentagon reported back on corruption of land reforms in Vietnam.<sup>375</sup> And they called for legalized abortion and family planning as early as 1966.<sup>376</sup> Overall then, Pittsburgh’s women activists devoted tremendous amounts of time fighting for farm laborers, dissenters accused of communism, and Vietnamese peasants, but not specifically for the civil rights of women.

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<sup>371</sup> Minutes of the Metro Public Affairs Committee, January 10, 1961 YWCA Records, HSWP

<sup>372</sup> Minutes of the Metro Public Affairs Committee, March 14, 1961 YWCA Records, HSWP

<sup>373</sup> Minutes of the October 11 Meeting of the March on Washington Committee, in YWCA Records

<sup>374</sup> Minutes of the Metro Public Affairs Committee, April 11, 1961 YWCA Records, HSWP

<sup>375</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, December 8, 1965 in YWCA Records, HSWP.

<sup>376</sup> Report on the Impact of Technology on the Family in Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, January 21, 1966 in YWCA Records

Women also worked for the benefit of other women, just not for women's legal rights. By 1960, a member of the Public Affairs Committee of the Pittsburgh YWCA had already met with the woman serving as director of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. They discussed the needs of women reentering the workforce or holding a first job. The committee called for a course of action in cooperation with the American Association of University Women (AAUW) by that fall as a result of that meeting. Predating Betty Friedan's proposals in *The Feminine Mystique* by three years, Pittsburgher Molly Yard enjoined the University of Pittsburgh and other schools to emphasize retraining and brush up courses.<sup>377</sup>

Members of the YWCA also fought to reform public policy for women, but mostly in terms of economic benefits. In 1960 for example, Mrs. Duane Ramsay proposed minimum wage standards for women and children.<sup>378</sup> Here she was perpetuating the YWCA's long tradition of supporting differential or protective treatment of women under the law in terms of work. The YWCA was, however, slowly changing on that aspect in the 1960s. Evidence of that shift came first when women passed over for jobs at the Pittsburgh Post Office wrote to Molly Yard and the YWCA for help. The committee wrote to the head of the Pittsburgh office to find out if his office had discriminated against them as women in failing to hire these women who had passed the civil service exam. Here Pittsburgh's women activists expressed some timidity, offering the benefit of the doubt to the post office instead of to the women beseeching them. The committee

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<sup>377</sup> The discussion in which this proposal came up also shows that Friedan was hardly alone in formulating such proposals. Yard and the rest of the committee had the discussion of the issue in response to the proposed National [YWCA] Public Affairs Program. And Yard built her recommendations from a speech given by Pitt Chancellor Litchfield in which he noted "the large reservoir of women with training in the 40-50 year old group." Other members foreshadowed Friedan's other proposals. Most clearly, one member, listed as Mrs. Jackson, highlighted the need for greater numbers of nursery schools so that unwed mothers could go to work. Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, December 13, 1960 in YWCA Records

<sup>378</sup> Minutes of the Metro Public Affairs Committee, October 18, 1966, YWCA Records, HSWP

came to no conclusion of what to do if the post office did not satisfactorily answer their questions.<sup>379</sup> They took a more clear stance when the national and local YWCA's pushed for equalizing Social Security benefits for married women.<sup>380</sup>

By 1965, Pittsburgh's women activists had become well organized in fighting to level the playing field for women at least in terms of government anti-poverty benefits. Most prominently when the War on Poverty's Jobs Corps program targeted only young men, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), the AAUW, and the YWCA fought for a similar program for young women. Frieda Shapira, long-time champion of African-American civil rights, spearheaded this drive. Together, these Pittsburgh women devoted tremendous volunteer resources overseeing the nation's first federal program geared towards training hard-core unemployed young women.<sup>381</sup> These activists from the YWCA also called for a Guaranteed National Income by 1968 but did not come out for legal protections for all women under the law until 1971.<sup>382</sup>

In many cases, the focus on just women's economic status was a conscious rejection of work done by the National Women's Party and by others advocating for full legal equality for all women. The Pittsburgh YWCA, the most active and vocal of Pittsburgh's women's groups, followed along with the line established by its national board.<sup>383</sup> The national YWCA resolved

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<sup>379</sup> Minutes of the Metro Public Affairs Committee, January 9, 1962 in YWCA Records

<sup>380</sup> Minutes of the Metro Public Affairs Committee, June 19, 1962, YWCA Records, HSWP

<sup>381</sup> Unfortunately, the program proved much smaller than the men's one and much much smaller than the need. Of 750 young women applying in 1965 only 150 proved eligible and only 50 received the training. Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, February 9, 1965, Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, December 8, 1965 and Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, January 6, 1966 in YWCA Records, HSWP and Frieda Shapira, interview by Michael Snow, November 2, 1999 in SLGA

<sup>382</sup> Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, November 18, 1968 in YWCA Records

<sup>383</sup> Part of this statement on the YWCA's prominence derives from the preponderance of sources preserved by the YWCA. In revising this dissertation I plan to refine that assumption. To do that, I will consult three interviews in

to work for “equal employment opportunities for women, and equal pay for equal work (while opposing the so-called Equal Rights Amendment)[original punctuation retained].”<sup>384</sup> While rejecting the ERA, this position of the YWCA reflected a softening of the organization’s stance, both nationally and in Pittsburgh on women’s civil rights laws. In the 1950s, average members of local YWCA branches routinely had chosen Equal Pay as an issue for the Public Affairs committee to tackle, only to have the Metropolitan Public Affairs Committee choose for the branches to work on every issue but women’s rights and equal pay for women.

While YWCA and many women’s groups had not yet begun fighting actively for women’s rights as women, their activities in the 1960s did lay the ground work for later victories. Members of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee with their constant stream of correspondence and office visits demonstrated tenacity to local politicians. Politicians knew that they could not brush aside these women’s demands lightly thinking that their interest in the issues would go away. More importantly, hundreds if not thousands of Pittsburgh women attended workshops put on by the YWCA on lobbying. As early as 1960, they gained skills from women such as Mary Denman in sessions titled “Effective Citizen Action in the State.” Molly Yard taught them in sessions such as “Making Your Voice Heard in Washington.”<sup>385</sup> Many maverick and liberal politicians even owed their start in public office to Molly Yard’s yearly workshops on “Practical Politics.”<sup>386</sup> Thus local politicians knew that they had to listen when

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the National Council of Jewish Women’s oral history project and browse the records of the Pittsburgh branch of the League of Women Voters and the Women’s Club of Pittsburgh

<sup>384</sup> Publication Services National Board YWCA, “National Public Affairs Program, A Program of Study and Action, 191-1964,” Adopted May 8-13, 1961, in YWCA Records

<sup>385</sup> Minutes of the Metro Public Affairs Committee, October 18, 1960

<sup>386</sup> Ivan Itkin, interview by Michael Snow in SLGA

Pittsburgh women came knocking on politicians' doors in the late 1960s, asking that women have the same protections as racial and religious minorities.

Some women stirred with questions about women's legal status, but they had not gelled their thoughts into outright demands or crystallized them into a call to action. The only momentary blip on the radar came in the Public Affairs Committee of the Pittsburgh YWCA. There the future president of NOW, Molly Yard, asked an impertinent question in a discussion of the deadlock over the state Fair Educational Opportunities Bill. The bill would protect racial, religious, and ethnic minorities from discrimination. Molly Yard asked why the bill did not include discrimination based on sex.<sup>387</sup> Even she did not follow up on the issue. The author of the bill, K. Leroy Irvis, remembers no correspondence from Molly Yard about including women.<sup>388</sup> The Public Affairs Committee sent many letters in support of the bill in the following months but did not press to expand it to cover women.<sup>389</sup> Yard also failed to include mention of having advocated equal protection for women in her lengthy report to the group on all of the legislation which she had discussed with U.S. Senator Clark. Clark and Yard's three decades of work together would have made Yard comfortable enough to bring up such a subject. She must not have thought it high on her priorities at least not in the mid-1960s.<sup>390</sup>

The process by which the women of the Pittsburgh YWCA groped towards advocacy of laws requiring equal treatment of women parallels that of the national movement, one which would reverberate back on Pittsburgh. The broad outlines of that history have changed little since Betty Friedan first sketched them out. At the urging of prominent members of the

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<sup>387</sup> Minutes of the Metro Public Affairs Committee, April 11, 1961 YWCA Records, HSWP

<sup>388</sup> K. Leroy Irvis, interview by Michael Snow, June 12, 2003

<sup>389</sup> Minutes of the Metro Public Affairs Committee, May 9, 1961 YWCA Records, HSWP

<sup>390</sup> Minutes of the Metro Public Affairs Committee, February 13, 1962 YWCA Records, HSWP

Americans For Democratic Action such as Eleanor Roosevelt, President Kennedy had supported the formation of the President's Commission on the Status of Women and the passage of the Equal Pay Act. Frustrations with delays in the release of that commission's report led women to press for their rights. The publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* crystallized for millions of American women, societal problems which they had previously chalked up to individual short comings. Southern Congressmen then handed women's groups an inadvertent victory when they tried to kill the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by adding an "absurd" clause, Title VII, protecting women in addition to racial minorities. When federal authorities thwarted the work of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) enforcing gender equality under that clause, those same women then founded the National Organization for Women with the express purpose of enforcing the law.<sup>391</sup>

The NOW 20 Year Chronology corrects some of the oversights in that history by pointing out the active role that state-based women's rights groups played in the expansion of women's legal protections. Many states, though not Pennsylvania, formed their own commissions on the status of women in response to the federal one and its finding of pervasive discrimination and a need for clarification of the legal status of women. The fact that these groups had networked in Washington D. C. right before the introduction of Title VII allowed them to press Congressional allies of women's rights and fence sitters into passing Title VII. A second national conference of those same commissions and delegations from states without commissions such as Pennsylvania in 1966 then called for the formation of an advocacy group. Betty Friedan, UAW leader Caroline Davis, EEOC Commissioner Aileen Hernandez and a handful of other prominent

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<sup>391</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (NY: Dell Publishing, 1963), Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*, (NY: Viking, 2000)

women founded the National Organization for Women four months later.<sup>392</sup> Pittsburghers wanting to advance women's rights as women then organized the nation's third chapter of NOW in 1967.<sup>393</sup> Unfortunately, much of the history of the motivations and actions of the original founders died with their memories since the records from that time have not been preserved. From second hand accounts, we do know that Wilma Scott Heide had participated in those earliest discussions founding the national NOW and brought back the ideas to the city.<sup>394</sup>

Events organized in Pittsburgh by this nascent chapter of the National Organization for Women, paralleling the slower process undergone by the local YWCA, helped Pittsburgh's women activists realize their need for legislative action. Local activists launched a campaign against gender segregated want ads in the *Pittsburgh Press*. In this matter, they took their cue from the national offices of NOW which coordinated protests around the nation against similar ads in other papers. However neither negotiations with the leaders of the *Pittsburgh Press*, nor subsequent moral suasion from the streets changed the paper's policy, unlike those of papers elsewhere.<sup>395</sup> Leaders of the *Pittsburgh Press* refused to budge telling Wilma Scott Heide and

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<sup>392</sup> "NOW 20 Year Chronology" in Joann Evansgardner and Gerry Gardner Papers

<sup>393</sup> "What Will Women Contribute to the Renaissance City's Next Decade," in "10 ... total equality now," Program for the Tenth Organizing Convention of Pennsylvania NOW, 1983 in NOW Papers

<sup>394</sup> Jo Ann Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow on November 7, 2001, 14 in SLGA.

<sup>395</sup> The *New York Times*, *New York Post*, and the *Village Voice* discontinued the practice in December 1968. "NOW Twenty Year Chronology," n.d. (circa 1982 ) in Evansgardner Papers. Pittsburgh Chapter Vice President Anne B. Mast sent a letter to the *Press* citing recent EEOC Guidelines banning the sex-segregated want ads. Gerry Gardner spoke to the media about how the separation of want ads into sections "for men" and "for women" gave women a feeling of inferiority (c.f. Kenneth Clarke's work on the effect of segregation on the psyche of African-American children cited in *Brown vs. Board*). Gardner also outlined how only exceptional women would even think to apply to an ad listed as "for men." Still the executive editor of the *Press* responded to such letters and meetings saying that the guidelines were being challenged in court and that the *Press* would "await[] the final

others from NOW that its ads violated no law. Consequently, Pittsburgh NOW members looked for ways to work through the judicial and political process.<sup>396</sup> NOW members also publicized the continued discovery of ways in which other businesses blocked women's equality despite Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. When Betty Friedan came to town, she led local NOW members in an invasion of the Hilton Hotel's men-only restaurant.<sup>397</sup> The next year the group documented a bar which refused to admit unescorted women. Officers from the local chapter then asked if any members would volunteer to "test the public accommodations law."<sup>398</sup> Frustration of women's groups nationwide with the shoddy enforcement of that federal statute led them to call for more effective state and local women's rights bodies in addition to federal reforms. Locally at a platform hearing in Forest Hills, Ann Heuer of NOW demanded that the Democratic Party include better enforcement of Title VII in its 1968 Presidential Platform. Nationally, NOW actually sued the federal government to force it to enforce the laws banning separate want ads.<sup>399</sup>

The push towards "identity formation" by which Pittsburgh's women became self-identifying "feminists" owed a lot to the formation of Pittsburgh NOW's Speakers Bureau and,

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adjudication" instead of bowing to pressure on the matter. "Women's Group to Picket Press on Separate Help Wanted Ads," *Pittsburgh Press* clipping in Evansgardner Papers

<sup>396</sup> Phyllis Wetherby, interview, 68

<sup>397</sup> Maggie Patterson, "Battle Lines Little 'Hazy' In Women's Fight For Equality," *Pittsburgh Press*, Today Women Section, November 6, 1968, 64

<sup>398</sup> Again NOW coordinated nationwide protests of men-only bars and restaurants in an action called Public Accommodations Week. "NOW Twenty Year Chronology," n.d. (circa 1982 ) in Evansgardner Papers,

<sup>399</sup> The National Organization for Women itself had grown out of a national conference of state women's commissions where attendees expressed outrage with the EEOC's lack of enforcement. "NOW Twenty Year Chronology," , n.d in Evansgardner Papers. "McCarthy Forces Hear Citizen Views," *The Progress*, Wednesday, August 14, 1968, 1, 2. Maggie Patterson, "Battle Lines Little 'Hazy' In Woman's Fight For Equality," *Pittsburgh Press*, Today's Woman Section, November 6, 1968, 64

more critically, KNOW. In those early days before the advent of women's studies programs, before *Ms. Magazine* began publication, women cast about almost in vain for feminist information on the role of women in society. The beginnings of these two community institutions, therefore, went a long way to countering negative stereotypes of women, building readers' self-confidence, and spreading the movement's message. They were akin to what the *Courier* did for African-Americans. Wilma Scott Heide proved incredibly adept at wrangling invitations for NOW to speak at other groups' events and recruiting members with the words, "You sound like a NOW member." She hooked Phyllis Wetherby and Jo Ann Evansgardner in that way.<sup>400</sup> A wider audience followed the public television station's airing in 1968 of "Choice: Challenge for Modern Woman." The speakers bureau received five requests in three months after it aired, a significant amount for a new group groping for publicity and used to pleading with other organizations for the opportunity to address them.<sup>401</sup> In the following weeks, they spoke to the state Girl Scouts Council, a journalism sorority, American Women in Radio and TV, and several church groups.<sup>402</sup> By late 1969, NOW members held filmed TV practice sessions with members pretending to be antagonistic and supportive interviewers. To disseminate printed information NOW members, in the beginning, used mimeograph machines at their workplaces to make leaflets and to copy information on women's issues. Sitting around one night, NOW members discussed how their employers were likely to fire them for running off so many copies of NOW leaflets and feminist articles. When Barbara Evans Crawford at first talked an acquaintance into footing \$1,000 for an off-set press, the group offered to give that

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<sup>400</sup> Phyllis Wetherby, interview by Michael Snow on December 4, 2001, 32-33 for SLGA, Jo Ann Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow on September 19, 2001, 38 for SLGA

<sup>401</sup> Pittsburgh NOW, Report of NOW Activities since November 1968, January 22, 1969

<sup>402</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, March 19, 1969 and October 15, 1969 in Evansgardner Collections

man, Kimball, the honorific first initial of the name of the non-profit. His offer fell through, but the group kept the name KNOW. Wetherby purchased a multilith machine, donating \$6,000 to the cause. Jo Ann Evansgardner and Gerry Gardner donated the use of their garage in Shadyside for printing facilities.<sup>403</sup> The masthead stated the founders of KNOW's philosophy as follows: "we believed that you can't have a revolution without a press."<sup>404</sup> Many NOW members then carried around postcards with lists of articles which KNOW sold as reprints. They handed out the cards at women's rights and professional women's conventions around the country.<sup>405</sup>

Within two years of that 1967 founding of the Pittsburgh branch of the National Organization for Women, organizers for women's rights won a major local victory in this arena through their established relationships with civil rights leaders. Spurred by the *Press* saying that no law forbade segregated want ads, Wilma Scott Heide and Ann Mauk approached the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations to sponsor just such a law.<sup>406</sup> In January of 1969, a legislative committee made up of NOW members in Pittsburgh pressed for the passage of a women's rights ordinance.<sup>407</sup> Several of the committee members had cut their teeth in the civil rights movement; others sought guidance from civil rights leaders.<sup>408</sup> The mark of the lessons

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<sup>403</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, June 18, 1969 and July 16, 1969 and Phyllis Wetherby, electronic communication to Michael Snow in response to follow up questions, February 8, 2002 in SLGA Jo Ann Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow, September 19, 2001, 41 in SLGA, Jo Ann Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow, November 7, 2001 in SLGA, 1-5

<sup>404</sup> KNOW Catalog of Articles 1971 in Pittsburgh National Organization for Women Papers

<sup>405</sup> Jo Ann Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow, November 7, 2001 in SLGA, 1-5

<sup>406</sup> Wetherby, interview, 68

<sup>407</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, January 8, 1969 and Phyllis Wetherby, interview by Michael Snow, December 4, 2001, 68 in SLGA

<sup>408</sup> Wilma Scott Heide had joined marchers in Selma Alabama. Jo Ann Evansgardner and Gerry Gardner had joined the NAACP several years before joining NOW. Phyllis Wetherby had first become active while promoting

learned from that other movement stands out clearly from the similarity and sophistication of tactics which the group deployed. Like the Allegheny County Council on Civil Rights in the late 1950s, the group knew that it needed a large coalition behind the bill and plotted out people to testify for the bill before city council. In addition to women's groups, civil rights groups and the ACLU all headed the list. Members of the NOW legislative committee, in the fashion of the civil rights movement, had already done research on the impact of discrimination and watched city council meetings for months to determine what parliamentary tactics they would need. One of the lessons even a casual observer would notice was that every bill brought to a vote passed without opposition, debate, or even much discussion.<sup>409</sup> Women already ensconced within the machine and liberal male allies of women's rights would have readily told supporters of the bill that they had to win over city department heads and the mayor not just city council members. The president of Pittsburgh NOW called in some political favors to meet with the city solicitor.<sup>410</sup>

It helped that Assistant Solicitor Marion Finkelhor was also a member of NOW. Their next actions then built on the previous experiences from the struggle of African-Americans in Pennsylvania to win legal protections. Based on the previous fracas between the realtors and the

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racial integration in Forest Hills. Pat Miller had served on the East End Education Committee fighting for integrated public schools. Phyllis Wetherby electronic communication to Michael Snow based on follow up questions February 8, 2002 in SLGA, Jo Ann Evansgardner interview by Michael Snow, on September 19, 2001, 54 Phyllis Wetherby, interview by Michael Snow, December 4, 2001, 31-33 in SLGA and Helen Seager, to Frank Zabrosky, Curator Archives Industrial Society, January 7, 1993 in East End Education Committee Records

<sup>409</sup> In 1969, council members only recorded their discussion and dissension on a bill memorializing Congress and the President to end direct U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam. Even it passed 8 to 0. *Municipal Record, Proceedings of the Council of the City of Pittsburgh*, Vol. CIII, Pittsburgh Park Printing, 1969, 327, 544, 630, 122

<sup>410</sup> Heide had a longer history before joining NOW. Future researchers may gain access to the transcript of an oral history interview done with her as part of the Tully-Crenshaw Feminist Oral History Project. It is held by the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College at Harvard but currently closed.

supporters of protections for racial minorities, these women sought letters of support for the bill from employers in the city. They also knew that businesses would more likely support the bill if they could tie it to their bottom line. In soliciting such letters, they spoke about the impact of endorsing on recruiting talented women to the company. Under the influence of Florence Reizenstein, a long-time champion of African-American civil rights, the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations sought advice from leaders of local NOW chapters. Of course, the members of NOW and other women's groups did the bulk of the grassroots lobbying to pass the bill, but African-American civil rights leaders such as David Washington from the commission advised these feminists on the most effective timing for such letter writing and visits to council members.<sup>411</sup> Wilma Scott Heide made an impassioned speech highlighting the ways in which women faced discrimination, teaching the commissioners that they truly did need the law.<sup>412</sup> In the end, the commission asked city council to create and enact the bill which was introduced by Councilman Lou Mason, the former head of the commission.<sup>413</sup>

Victorious in fighting for protection under the City's civil rights ordinance, Pittsburgh's NOW members then immediately fought to make the law effective. They filed suit against the *Pittsburgh Press* under the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations just two weeks after the law passed. While waiting to see if the new law would help Pittsburgh's women in ways that

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<sup>411</sup> Letter Writing Group Notes, Jean Whitter Chair, in Evansgardner Papers

<sup>412</sup> Evansgardner, interview September 19, 2001, 40

<sup>413</sup> "Law Pushed By City Panel," *Pittsburgh Press*, June 30, 1969, 10. The exact mechanisms by which NOW members persuaded commissioners to support the bill remain obscure because members of the NOW letter writing committee have died or forgotten about their involvement in the struggle. In addition, neither minutes of city council nor the local press covered the details. The commission's reports from that period are not yet available to researchers.

public opinion campaigns and the use of the EEOC had not, Pittsburgh NOW declared a cease fire in continued demonstrations against the *Press*.<sup>414</sup>

In this case, NOW reached out to older women's groups, getting some of them involved for the first time in a major way in the fight for all women's rights. At NOW's request, the YWCA, for example, sent out information on sex-segregated ads via its mailing list.<sup>415</sup> While the commission deliberated on the legality of separate want ads, Wilma Scott Heide and other members of Pittsburgh NOW began educating the public on how to use the law. Like the work on African-Americans rights done by the Allegheny County Council on Civil Rights, the NAACP, and the YWCA to publicize the earlier civil rights act, NOW members most likely had a twofold goal. First, they knew that for the law to have teeth, women had to bring forward cases for adjudication. Secondly, they hoped in publicizing the law that more employers would think twice before discriminating against women.<sup>416</sup> In just the first year of the law's existence, Pittsburgh women responded overwhelmingly, filing 18.6 percent of all employment cases brought before the commission.<sup>417</sup> Publicity increased exponentially when NOW held a press conference on the want ads case and one commissioner found the *Press* out of compliance with the law, setting the stage for the case to go forward.<sup>418</sup>

The combination of a pro-civil rights atmosphere, liberals gaining seats in the legislature, and women's growing political skill, all worked together to make Pittsburgh NOW members

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<sup>414</sup> Minutes of NOW, July 16, 1969 in Evansgardner

<sup>415</sup> NOW Minutes October 15, 1969 in Evansgardner

<sup>416</sup> "LAWS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AFFECT YOU!," Flyer for an Information Seminar at the Mellon Institute, to be held August 20, 1969, in Evansgardner Papers,

<sup>417</sup> City of Pittsburgh, *The Commission on Human Relations Report*, 1969-1972, 1972, 6

<sup>418</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, September 17, 1969 and November 19, 1969 in Evansgardner Papers

swiftly victorious in their fight to expand such legal protections by fighting for similar state laws. The opportunities mushroomed when Governor Shafer appointed Pittsburgh NOW President Wilma Scott Heide to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.<sup>419</sup> From that post, she advocated for adding women to the groups of people covered by the state's civil rights laws. She plotted strategy with the governor's legislative representative and supplied him with information gathered by NOW on the need for such laws.<sup>420</sup> Consummate Democratic insider, Judge Genevieve Blatt then pressed the Republican governor to do more, telling a large group of women in Harrisburg, "Get out of the kitchen and into the cabinet." Behind Blatt's pun lay the serious charge that the governor had done little to advance the legal status of women in light of recent changes in women's role.<sup>421</sup> Pushed from within in and without, the Pennsylvania HRC backed legislation adding sex to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Fair Educational Opportunities Act.<sup>422</sup> Women legislators figured prominently among the sponsors of these bills, but so did Eugene Kaufman, the state representative elected through campaigning of the 14th Ward Independent Democrats.<sup>423</sup> Throughout the spring and summer of 1969, the Pittsburgh NOW Chapter supplied the lobbyists from the Pennsylvania HRC with various pamphlets in order to win over legislators. "Why ERA" and "Exploding the Myths" figured prominently.<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Given the party affiliations of his appointments, Shafer appeared to want to break Democrats' control of the Commission, with Heide serving as a token independent. Patrick Boyle, "Boyer Refuses 'Lesser' Post," *Pittsburgh Press*, January 7, 1969

<sup>420</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, February 20, 1969 in Evansgardner Papers

<sup>421</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, March 13, 1969 in Evansgardner Papers

<sup>422</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, May 1, 1969, in Evansgardner Papers

<sup>423</sup> "HB 1064, Copies Sent To All NOW Members, Please Write," leaflet from Pittsburgh NOW, circa May 1969 in Evansgardner Papers,

<sup>424</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, May 1, 1969, in Evansgardner Papers

In the meantime, every member of NOW in the Pittsburgh area received copies of the language of the bills and detailed instructions on effective letter writing.<sup>425</sup> As these bills moved through each stage from committee to committee and house to house, NOW updated its members and allies.<sup>426</sup> The strategy worked. The bill amending the Human Relations Act passed with only two representatives voting against it.<sup>427</sup>

On the heels of this victory, NOW members pushed into high gear to amend the state constitution to grant equal rights to women as well. Kaufman met with NOW members, who secured his willingness to sponsor such a measure even before he had signed onto protecting women from discrimination via the Human Relations Act. The NOW legislative committee then contacted a host of legislators they considered supportive in order to find co-sponsors. In pressing for the amendment, they gained help from the ACLU's legislative chairman. Under Pennsylvania's constitution, amendments took longer to pass than simple legislative bills, meaning that the members of NOW would have their work cut out for them for the next two legislative cycles. They responded to the challenge from Kaufman's first introduction of the bill in October of 1969.<sup>428</sup> The same workshops which Wilma Scott Heide and others launched to educate the public about the Pittsburgh Women's Rights Ordinance also asked for support for the Pennsylvania Equal Rights Amendment.<sup>429</sup> By December, legislative committee member Nancy

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<sup>425</sup> "HB 1064, Copies Sent To All NOW Members, Please Write," leaflet from Pittsburgh NOW, circa May 1969 in Evansgardner Papers,

<sup>426</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, June 18, 1969, in Evansgardner Papers

<sup>427</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, May 21, 1969, in Evansgardner Papers

<sup>428</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, October 15, 1969, in Evansgardner Papers

<sup>429</sup> ("LAWS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AFFECT YOU!," Flyer for an Information Seminar at the Mellon Institute, to be held August 20, 1969, in Evansgardner Papers,

Bowdler had assembled statistics and facts for supporters to include in their letters to politicians.<sup>430</sup>

Feminists and civil rights leaders came together most critically in the fight to end racial discrimination at Sears. NOW's help in that fight then changed the minds of some major civil rights leaders about feminism and launched fruitful cooperation. In fact, Alma Fox, then the executive secretary of the Pittsburgh NAACP, at first rebuffed attempts by her friends in NOW, Ina Braden and Wilma Scott Heide, to get her to join NOW. Fox, however, felt "I didn't need another revolution especially one to get middle class white women out of kitchens" and told them so.<sup>431</sup> Then NOW joined the YWCA, Women in Urban Crisis, the NAACP, and Bouie Haden in picketing the Sears store in East Liberty, a rapidly integrating neighborhood. The store had just twelve African-Americans working there out of 500 employees.<sup>432</sup> Managers at Sears also refused to put African-American mannequins in its windows. Day after day in a bitterly cold winter, the groups walked side by side. Picketers then staged a sit-in. When police vans pulled up to arrest the protesters, officers made moves to arrest only African-Americans. NOW leaders Gerry Gardner and Jo Ann Evansgardner called out, "We want to be arrested too." According to Gerry Gardner, civil rights leaders "saw it as genuine support for no gain."<sup>433</sup> Alma Fox concurred, "Sitting on the floors with NOW, I discovered that women were discriminated against." Fox previously had seen the fight as one to get jobs for African-

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<sup>430</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, December 10, 1969, in Evansgardner Papers

<sup>431</sup> Alma Speed Fox, "Pittsburgh Women of Conviction: Civil Rights Activists" Panel Discussion, The Civil Rights Movement in SW Pennsylvania Conference, at the Senator H. J. Heinz II History Center, Fall 2001

<sup>432</sup> Jan Neffke, "Pittsburgh Women of Conviction: Civil Rights Activists" Panel Discussion, The Civil Rights Movement in SW Pennsylvania Conference, at the Senator H. J. Heinz II History Center, February, 2000 and Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, November 19, 1969 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>433</sup> Jo Ann Evansgardner and Gerry Gardner, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on January 18, 2002, 3-5, 10

American men. She had not thought that women needed the jobs that much. Then her conversations with NOW members about women as heads of households changed her mind.<sup>434</sup> Standing together for all those months, the groups won. Sears agreed to increase its percentage of African-American employees by 30 percent.<sup>435</sup> Pittsburgh's lesbians and gays would not be so vocal nor so successful.

### E. SEXUAL MINORITIES, 1960-1970

During the 1960s, gays and lesbians secured only the most basic freedom to associate, leaving them all but unable to build institutions for greater advances. The portrayals of homosexuality in the national media in the 1960s changed enough that younger gays in Pittsburgh watching them realized early in life that they could find a community of people like themselves. This media coverage helped counter the contradiction which had continued from the 1950s in which American culture both rendered homosexuality invisible and slurred gay youth. In the late 1980s, sociologist Tony Silvestre captured the recollections of almost two dozen gays in Pittsburgh. Several had their "difference" pointed out to them by other boys even before they entered their teenage years. Thus, the society harassed young gay men as "sissies" even while overtly hushing up the existence of a separate sexual orientation. A *Life* article caused a great crack in this contradictory visage. For one African-American interviewee, seeing a picture in the article of "two guys walking hand in hand down some street in a Michigan town was real affirmative." It helped him overcome the isolation he felt stemming from when other students

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<sup>434</sup> Alma Speed Fox, "Pittsburgh Women of Conviction: Civil Rights Activists" Panel Discussion at H. J. Heinz II History Center, Pittsburgh, February, 2000

<sup>435</sup> Jan Neffke, "Pittsburgh Women of Conviction," discussion

yelled “faggot” when he walked down the halls in high school.<sup>436</sup> Even the overall negative and titillating portrayal from the *Life* article helped bring Pittsburgh gays together. In a piece of scandal mongering, the article mentioned that such men met their sexual partners at Greyhound stations. For one Pittsburgh teenager struggling with parents and a school counselor trying to cure him, the article thus gave him entry to the larger set of gays and lesbians. He met someone at the Pittsburgh station who took him to his first gay bar.<sup>437</sup> While these two interviewees alone do not prove a trend, they do provide a tantalizing hint of such a trend that might be confirmed as further informants come forward. Thus, even a negatively distorted portrayal all the same represented an affirming improvement over the all-gays-as-child-molesters-or-murderers coverage of earlier years.

While a smoking gun linkage between a liberalized atmosphere and gays’ self-empowerment remains elusive, the timing of gays’ first community building in Pittsburgh provides evidence of such a connection. During the mid-1960s, African-Americans and neighborhood organizations reached the crescendo of their challenges to unfair treatment by public officials. At the height of this period, a Pittsburgh man finally opened a successful gay-owned gay bar, one not permanently closed within a few months. The change in ownership also changed the character of the place, allowing the bar, called the Trucking Company, to act as a space for community building.<sup>438</sup> Randy Forrester reports that friends from New York City enjoyed visiting this gay-owned bar and the gay bars owned by straights which had improved

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<sup>436</sup> “David,” interview by Tony Silvestre, May 3, 1989

<sup>437</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Tony Silvestre, July 6, 1987, 9, 12

<sup>438</sup> Bar Owner Z, interview, 10, 18. His history of interaction with previous owners of gay bars allowed him the opportunity. After years of his bartending at their places, one set of owners came to him asking him to buy them out.

after the gay-owned one opened. Experiencing an atmosphere where staff did not abuse patrons, several actually moved to Pittsburgh from New York.<sup>439</sup> Watching other groups fight their oppressors appears to have rubbed off on Pittsburgh gays and lesbians. Raids continued, but they did not ruin bars in the late 1960s because the police system no longer abused gays and bar goers finally united enough to stand up for themselves. When for example, the police showed up at Pittsburgh's AVA bar with buses and TV crews, the staff and patrons had on hand papers bags to conceal their identities. Perhaps because of this unified response or perhaps because African-American civil rights actions had already brought scrutiny of the police for mistreatment of other groups, the police did not check identification at the station.<sup>440</sup> In that situation and in the context of late 1960s rebellion, those arrested that night took full advantage of this easing of restrictions and turned the evening into what they called the Police Christmas Party. They signed their fictitious names on a legal pad, paid a ten dollar fine, and continued the party after the raid.<sup>441</sup> As shown in earlier pages, heavier police actions in a time of greater societal repression meant that such a raid killed patronage of earlier bars. In the late 1960s, gays and lesbians resisted the police in more overt fashion too. Men looking to pick up one another for sex and students too young to enter the bars in the cruising ground of Mellon Square figured out who the undercover cops were and taunted them. "How are things down at [Precinct] Number One?" they asked the officer, laughed at his denial, and waved later when an unmarked car picked him up at the end of his shift. The aura of late 1960s social experimentation and counter culture had rubbed off on them.<sup>442</sup> Hippies and university students lived in large numbers in the

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<sup>439</sup> Forrester, interview July 6, 1987, 23

<sup>440</sup> Forrester, interview July 6, 1987 Tape 1, 22. Patrons labeled the raid the Police Christmas Party.

<sup>441</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Tony Silvestre, 1987, Tape 1, 23

<sup>442</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Tony Silvestre, 1987, Tape 1, 22

neighborhood of Shadyside. There gays could now walk down the street and say to someone they fancied, “Hey man, you wanna ball?”<sup>443</sup> No one would have dared ask such a question in the early 1960s, but student activism and civil rights agitation had lightened the atmosphere in the late 1960s by causing people to question long-held assumptions and mores.

In addition to the improved climate of openness, bar owners had also developed a *modus vivendi* with the leaders of the police vice squad improving conditions somewhat for gays and lesbians in public. While working as a bartender for straight-run lesbian and gay bars, one gay bar owner, who wished to remain anonymous, had grown acquainted with several police officers. Routine interaction led him and other bar managers to establish a working relationship with the Vice Squad. In other cities, Martin Duberman and others have shown that the bars routinely paid off the police and failure to make payments led to raids.<sup>444</sup> One Pittsburgher who worked as a bartender in the period does recall seeing a beat cop come by hat in hand, but more was at work. The gay men now running their own bars had more emotional investment in their patrons in contrast to Mafiosi running bars in other cities. Thus, they worked with the police on behalf of the patrons. They established rapport with the police, not just a relationship born from corruption or victimization. Officers received gifts of free booze at Christmas; the owners spoke openly with the head of the Vice Squad. One gay bar owner reports that the wife of the captain of the Vice Squad actually started patronizing one establishment. For whatever reason, the police in Pittsburgh eased their enforcement of harsh Liquor Control Board regulations and no longer launched so many raids.<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Michael Snow, 2003

<sup>444</sup> Martin Duberman, *Stonewall*, 115-117, 162 and Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, 17-18, 52-54

<sup>445</sup> Bar Owner Z, interview by Tony Silvestre, 26-27. Bar Owner X, interview by Michael Snow June 3, 2003

With the greater freedom from the fear that they would be arrested for living semi-openly, Pittsburgh gays and lesbians actually rented a ballroom at Webster Hall, a residential hotel near the universities, to hold a large dance in the late 1960s. The response was so great that the attendance overwhelmed the staff at the hotel. The wife of the Vice Squad's captain actually attended. Not only was the community willing to make such a public foray, but they used the strength it brought them to stand up for themselves. When students from Pitt and Carnegie Mellon got wind of the ball, they began hitting patrons and trying to invade the hall. The gay bar owner, his staff, and many dancers then proceeded to fight off their taunters. When drag queens tore off their gowns and wigs to join the fray, they especially caught the fraternity boys unawares.<sup>446</sup> Again, the changes and the link to their origins were subtle but crucial. Because homophobia continued and because laws categorizing homosexual behavior as lewd conduct remained, police raids of gay establishments did not end. Still, the more liberalized atmosphere and rapport between bars and the police made those raids and the enforcement of those laws less repressive.

In addition, where those improvements fell short of ending poor treatment by city authorities, the gay community finally banded together in an organized way to help its members. Bar owners and some patrons also organized a legal defense fund to ameliorate problems with harassment from individual police and from continued raids. The fund paid bail for gays and lesbians arrested in raids and even for some folks charged with lewd conduct.<sup>447</sup> One bartender

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<sup>446</sup> The year and month of this ball escapes the memories of the three attendees interviewed by Tony Silvestre or Michael Snow. Interviewees place it sometime in the late 1960s. Bar Owner Z, interview by Tony Silvestre, 26-27. Bar Owner X, interview by Michael Snow June 3, 2003

<sup>447</sup> Bar Owner Z, interview by Tony Silvestre. and Bar owner X, interview by Michael Snow, June 3, 2003

from the period also reported that gay agents in the Liquor Control Board tipped off bars before they would be raided.<sup>448</sup>

Spurred by a growing gay rights movement elsewhere, younger gays formed a local organization to pursue gay rights. As a college student, Randy Forrester traveled frequently to New York City where he encountered the Mattachine Society. With bar owner Lucky Johns and three other men, he hatched the idea of creating a Pittsburgh chapter of the Mattachine, even before the Stonewall Riots took place New York City in June 1969. Johns called his list of contacts to bring together a larger group.<sup>449</sup> The Holiday Bar even threw the first fundraiser for Pittsburgh Mattachine, holding a car wash across the street.<sup>450</sup> Coverage of the Stonewall Riots with their explosion of gays standing up for themselves appears to have infected Pittsburghers as indicated by the timing of this growth. Within a few months, over a hundred people flocked to meetings. The group launched a hotline for people seeking information, and a gay businessman gave them office space.<sup>451</sup>

Even with the explosive growth of the Mattachine, the community's level of repression and the newness of its sense of self-dignity constrained Pittsburgh Mattachine's goals. Its chief founder said of it "The goal [was] to exist as a culture not necessarily to change the world." Most calls to the hotline involved people seeking sympathetic counselors. The group wanted a

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<sup>448</sup> Bar Owner X, interview by Michael Snow, June 3, 2003

<sup>449</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Tony Silvestre, July 6, 1987 Tape 2, 14 and Randy Forrester, interview by Michael S now, August 14, 2003

<sup>450</sup> Bar Owner X, interview by Michael Snow July 3, 2003. Randy Forrester, interview by Tony Silvestre, July 6, 1987 Tape 2, 16 and Randy Forrester, interview by Michael S now, August 14, 2003

<sup>451</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Tony Silvestre, July 6, 1987 Tape 2, 14 and Randy Forrester, interview by Michael S now, June 3, 2003

library with information people could retrieve on being gay and lesbian.<sup>452</sup> And they made the remarkable leap forward of appearing on radio call in shows as gays and lesbians. In those shows, the Mattachine even became very adept at lining up people to counter negative callers. But Mattachine members' goals remained about gays and lesbians repairing their society-wounded psyches. They barely sought societal change in the form of greater tolerance. That was a great leap forward from merely accepting the indignity of slurs without an organized response, but it was a far cry from demanding legal reform, let alone full equality. In sum, as Randy Forrester said of the group, "We wanted gay rights, but we were not sophisticated enough to enumerate them."<sup>453</sup>

Despite its meteoric rise, Pittsburgh's Mattachine Chapter just as quickly dissolved because community members lacked the skills necessary to move the organization forward. It only lasted eight to nine months. Forrester had very little experience as a community organizer. The group grew too fast without adequate direction, and input into decision making, and rules. Personal power struggles racked the group. By month six, members ousted all of the leadership. The organization then folded within eight to twelve weeks. The next step in the Pittsburgh gay community's march towards civil rights would take three more years for potential community leaders to regroup. In the meantime though, the local public media discussion about homosexuality, which Mattachine had spearheaded, survived Mattachine's demise.

The work of all these movements in the 1960s came together forcefully in two developments at the end of the decade: Byrd Brown's race for Congress in 1970 and Black Monday in 1969. Brown's challenge to U.S. Representative William Moorehead stood as the latest push for African-Americans to have greater influence over Pittsburgh politics. A few

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<sup>452</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Tony Silvestre, July 6, 1987 Tape 2, 14-17

<sup>453</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Michael Snow, June 3, 2003

months before Brown announced his candidacy, dozens of African-American groups from civil rights, militant, religious, and neighborhood groups had responded to the NAACP's Operation Political Black Power. They formed the Black Political Caucus in order to coordinate voting for two African-American candidates for city council.<sup>454</sup> Defeated in that race, they looked for a candidate with greater appeal. Candidate Algia Gary had run too narrowly on race and lost.<sup>455</sup> Race still did matter in this campaign. Brown as head of the NAACP had the name recognition to fit the bill. The *Courier* endorsed him because they still found "the Democratic Party irresponsible [sic] to the people." Liberals such as Americans for Democratic Action and Molly Yard Garrett endorsed Brown saying that Congress needed African-Americans "to speak to the real problems facing us in the cities."<sup>456</sup> But Byrd Brown also had worked on other movements and brought those credentials on other issues to the table too. Brown had served as national co-chairman for the Spring Mobilization for Peace in 1968 and on the board of the ACLU. He pulled in feminist and welfare organizers by calling Nixon's Family Assistance Plan insultingly low.<sup>457</sup> Byrd Brown had also led the Black Construction Coalition in support of the Hospital Workers strike.<sup>458</sup> For these reasons, Brown won endorsements from the Oakland Democratic

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<sup>454</sup> "Black Political Caucus Next Week," *Courier*, October 18, 1969, CLP Clippings File on Homewood.

<sup>455</sup> "Brown Can Win In May ... If" *Courier*, March 21, 1970 in in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks, in Byrd family residence

<sup>456</sup> "ADA Chapter Endorses Brown for Congress," *Pittsburgh Point*, April 2, 1970, in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks, in Byrd family residence

<sup>457</sup> Editorial, "Byrd Brown for Congress," *Courier*, May 16, 1970 in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks, in Byrd family residence

<sup>458</sup> Byrd Brown letter to the editor, "Black Coalition and 1199P" *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, March 26, 1970 in n Byrd Brown Scrapbooks, in Byrd family residence

Club, the Tenth Ward Independent Democratic Club, and the 7-11 Independent Democrats.<sup>459</sup> Such groups had been searching for a combined African-American and white liberal political force to “stand together and take over the political machinery of this town.” William H. Rodd, an organizer from the former Allegheny Alliance, said that by doing so they could make mayors appoint African-Americans to council to fill vacancies rather than the usual labor cronies and they could end the beatings of “black and white youths” at Number Nine Police Station.<sup>460</sup> Brown’s campaign fit the bill of a candidate able to unite various groups on those terms. While his campaign failed to win a seat in Congress, his results were good enough for one local political commentator to declare that they “reflected the disintegration of the regular Democratic Party.”<sup>461</sup> African-Americans continued to grope towards a powerful unified political voice and continued to work with white liberals to do so. In the meantime, the outpouring of groups present in the streets on Black Monday worked through politics by other means.

Dozens of organizations from all the movements covered in this chapter joined civil rights organizers that day in 1969, surrounding the U.S. Steel building. The usual suspects of the NAACP and the successors of the United Negro Protest Committee definitely led the way, but militants such as Rev. Robinson, members of the Mayor’s Commission on Human Relations marched beside them.<sup>462</sup> Staid women’s groups such as the YWCA and the National Council of Jewish Women fit this activism perfectly into their traditional support for African-American civil

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<sup>459</sup> “Irvis Endorses Byrd Brown for Congress,” *Courier*, April 18, 1970 in in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks, in Byrd family residence

<sup>460</sup> “Black White Political Unit Is Proposed,” newspaper clipping from March 4, 1968 paper (unknown probably the *Pittsburgh Point*) in Irvis Papers

<sup>461</sup> William Robinson, “Liberal Vote Fails Byrd Brown,” *Courier*, May 20, 1970 1, 5 in in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks, in Byrd family residence

<sup>462</sup> Alma Speed Fox, interview, James J. Robinson, interview.

rights.<sup>463</sup> Additionally, newer feminist groups valued the cause and risked violence that day too, including two chapters of the National Organization for Women and Women in Urban Crisis.<sup>464</sup> Even two openly gay members of Duquesne University's chapter of Students for Democratic Society joined them.<sup>465</sup>

Even if these groups had not been able to come together in these two campaigns, they were still conjoined. For fifteen years African-American civil rights protests had made Pittsburghers receptive to other groups' claims for social equality. They prepared the ground for women and gays, as the civil rights movement called for America to honor its pledge of equal rights and social justice. For almost a decade, neighborhood organizers had fought to make American urban policy more geared to what average citizens needed. In doing so they exposed the need for reform in the big city American politics. As a result, American voters and legislators proved more receptive audience to women's claim for equality. They showed this receptivity in how quickly they passed women's rights laws in Pennsylvania once women's groups advocated for them. Sexual minorities had not yet staked a claim for equal treatment in Pittsburgh, but even they showed the effect of African-Americans' demands, fighting for a right to self-dignity. Dozens of gays and lesbians in Pittsburgh yearning to breathe freely took the first step of shrugging off their fears in that last year of the 1960s.

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<sup>463</sup> Frieda Shapira, interview

<sup>464</sup> Greater Pittsburgh Area Chapter Newsletter, August-October, 1969 in Pittsburgh NOW Papers , JoAnn Evansgardner interview by Michael Snow on January 18, 2002, 5 in SLGA

<sup>465</sup> Personal Conversation with John Michael Curlovich, Fall 1998

#### IV. AFRICAN-AMERICANS, 1970-1980

When the wave hits the shore, does it crash through the break water? Or does it barely shift the drying particles of sand on the beach? Does it reconfigure entire coastlines? Or does it mix its waters with the tidal marsh, leaving an environment changed only in ways the eye does not notice? Social movement scholars speak in metaphors of the wave, but which is correct?

The analysis that follows in this chapter shows that the metaphor of the wave proves too imprecise. Those who use it to describe the civil rights movement in the 1970s too often fail to address which reforms won and why, given that African-Americans achieved gains nationwide in the 1970s even after the level of their agitation subsided.<sup>466</sup> Piven and Cloward's argument that poor people make the greatest gains when they are the most threatening is not a simple straw man argument here. Others such as Anthony Oberschall and Jo Freeman continued to use it right into the 2000s. According to this whole school of thought, the "Movement" lost power over politicians and policymakers as the level of agitation and militancy subsided.<sup>467</sup> On a slightly

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<sup>466</sup> Even as President Nixon told aides to "flush" the War on Poverty, the number of Americans receiving welfare benefits increased dramatically in the early 1970s. In addition, federal affirmative action guidelines forced employers to open hundreds of thousands of new jobs to minorities and women by the late 1970s. Nixon as quoted John Ehlichman, notes of a meeting with Nixon, November 14, 1972 as in Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land, The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (NY: Vintage, 1992,) 218, For the growth of welfare rolls see William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*, third edition, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1995) 440. For the impact of affirmative action on minority hiring see the case study of Atlanta's airport. Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* (NY: Bantam Books, 1991) ch. 31

<sup>467</sup> Anthony Oberschall, "The Decline of 1960s Social Movements," in L. Kriesberg (ed.), *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, vol. 1 Greenwich, CONN: JAI Press, Inc., 1978 reprinted in Anthony Oberschall, *Social Movements: Ideologies, Interests, and Identities*. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993), Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, (NY: Pantheon, 1977), Jo Freeman, "Introduction," in Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson, *Waves of Protest, Social*

different tack, another interpretation of “the wave” holds that African-Americans won control over local level politics only to lose control over urban and social welfare finances in the 1970s with the loss of liberalism’s power in Washington D.C.<sup>468</sup> Yet another school looks at the 1970s as a killing field for civil rights progress in which white ethnic backlash turned urban politicians’ sympathy away from the civil rights movement.<sup>469</sup>

The trajectory of civil rights in Pittsburgh in the 1970s took a different course from any of those three interpretations. In Pittsburgh, African-Americans demanded better community police relations, more low-income housing, and desegregated schools. These fights proved bitter and bruising as some white Pittsburghers organized to counter such demands and as some politicians began stoking that fire. Despite these obstacles, the city’s African-Americans consolidated the strength of the community in civil rights organizations and a political network in the 1960s. By the 1970s, several African-American members of that network, most especially K. Leroy Irvis, had amassed formidable power in the state legislature and in the school system. The experience they had gathered along the way helped them to articulate reform solutions and bring benefits to their communities. Other civil rights advocates diversified the parties and political bodies to which they looked for help. By the 1970s, African-Americans could use those blossoming relationships with Republicans at all levels of government to declare some independence from Democratic politicians. Even with that power and with the community’s

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*Movements Since the Sixties*, (Lanham, MA: Rowman, Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999), Sydney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

<sup>468</sup> Thomas Jackson, “State, The Movement, and the Urban Poor: The War on Poverty and Political Mobilization in the 1960s,” Ch 12 in Michael Katz, *The Underclass Debate*, (Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton Press, 1993)

<sup>469</sup> Thomas Byrnie Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991), Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), J. Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* ( NY: Vintage Books, 1986)

organizations, African-Americans lost some of their key battles in the 1970s, but they won others despite tremendous obstacles. The wave of African-American civil rights activism had subsided in Pittsburgh in terms of sheer numbers active and tenor of agitation, but the linkages had matured. The growth and development of their political network allowed the community and its members to preserve many victories and win others by fighting in multiple levels of government.

#### **A. CONTRADICTIONARY TRENDS IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN ECONOMIC STATUS**

The overall economic status of Pittsburgh's African-Americans in the 1970s distorts the reality of the Movement's success rate. The economic picture makes it appear that government policies were failing, when in fact the overall economy declined. The unemployment rate did increase for the city's minorities from 8.8 percent in 1970 to 17.0 percent in 1977.<sup>470</sup> Scholars easily misplace all of the blame for this increase by faulting government anti-poverty programs, cut backs in them, or betrayal by civil rights leaders.<sup>471</sup> The overall unemployment rate in the city of Pittsburgh nearly doubled in those years as well. It jumped from 5 percent to roughly 8 percent.<sup>472</sup> Held back by a last-hired, first-fired heritage, urban African-American workers in many ways acted as an indicator species for industrial America. Constrained to unskilled jobs or

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<sup>470</sup>Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Bureau of Employment Security, "Unemployment of Blacks in the City of Pittsburgh," 1978.in RLT Papers . See Table 1 for Poverty Rates in Three Historically Black Neighborhoods. See Ralph Bangs and Jun Hyun Hong, *Economic Benchmarks: Indices for the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County*, (Pittsburgh: University Center for Social and Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh, October 1994), 11

<sup>471</sup> Charles V. Hamilton, "1992 Afterword," in Charles V. Hamilton and Kwame Ture, *Black Power: the Politics of Liberation*, (NY: Random House, 1967; reprint NY: Vintage, 1992), Milton Kilson, "Problems of Black Politics Some Progress Many Difficulties," *Dissent*, 36 (Fall 1989) 526-34

<sup>472</sup> See Ralph Bangs and Jun Hyun Hong, *Economic Benchmarks: Indices for the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County*, (Pittsburgh: University Center for Social and Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh, October 1994), 11

lacking seniority, or dependent on odd jobs linked peripherally to the industrial sector, working class African-American felt the first pinch of manufacturing's outmigration.<sup>473</sup> They foreshadowed the plight of the Rustbelt working class. John Hinshaw has well documented the decline in steel industry jobs in Pittsburgh. Between 1960 and 1978, total employment in the industry in the region declined by 31,000 jobs.<sup>474</sup> Perhaps in the face of such a decline, African-American activists should have demanded government policies to address deindustrialization, but they did not.

Instead, civil rights activists concentrated on opening opportunities in education and jobs, and such efforts showed signs of working in the 1970s. High school completion rates increased in Pittsburgh's African-American neighborhoods, and the percentages of adults completing college increased dramatically.<sup>475</sup> Following on the successes of fights against restrictive covenants, discrimination in mortgage lending, and discrimination in entrance to professions, middle-class African-Americans began mimicking whites in moving to suburbs and the Sunbelt.<sup>476</sup> As a result, three predominantly African-American neighborhoods in Pittsburgh lost on average 33 percent of their population between 1970 and 1980.<sup>477</sup> If Pittsburgh mirrored the national trend, increasing access to jobs for African-Americans in teaching, government, and business gave many of those residents the ability to move to more affluent areas. And many of them owed their livelihood to the previous and continuing work of the civil rights movement.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> Laurence Glasco, "Double Burden," 76-79, 88-91

<sup>474</sup> John Hinshaw, "Dialectic of Division: Race and Power Among Western Pennsylvania Steelworkers, 1937-1975," Ph.D. Diss., Carnegie Mellon University, 1995, 273

<sup>475</sup> See Table 2 and Table 1.

<sup>476</sup> Lemann, 280, William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978; 2nd edition 1980)

<sup>477</sup> See Table 3.

<sup>478</sup> Lemann, 284, 347-348

Thus, the civil rights movement continued to bring benefits to the community despite the deterioration of employment conditions for the poorest element of the community.

## **B. CUTBACKS MOBILIZE AFRICAN-AMERICAN VOTERS**

African-American activists and liberals on city council fought vigorously to defend the budgets of government programs aimed at that segment of the community, but they lost most early battles. Elected members of the Model Cities board denounced Flaherty, pointing out that his staffing cuts jeopardized federal funding for Pittsburgh's Model Cities program in 1972. A Washington-brokered compromise led to some staff replacements. Then Flaherty weighed in on the program's side to restore federal funds when President Nixon disbanded the Office of Economic Opportunity. He came away stating that he had assurances that the federal government would preserve the social welfare funds until localities had federal revenue sharing programs in place with which they could replace these funds. Less trusting, City Council member Richard Caliguiri, Flaherty's opponent for reelection, called for the City to reopen the budget and devote funds to anti-poverty agencies to cover the shortfall. Citing the promise of maintained funds, Flaherty refused to declare an emergency, the necessary step to reopen the budget. Then when the City received federal-revenue sharing funds, Flaherty earmarked them for police and tax cuts.<sup>479</sup>

At first, Flaherty claimed his hands were tied, saying that Congress had mandated such funds just for these purposes, but the *Post Gazette*, city council members, and African-American leaders contradicted his statements. Editorial writers recorded that the State and Local

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<sup>479</sup> Tony Klimko, "Political Ironies," *Valley News Dispatch*, September 7, 1974 in RLT Papers

Assistance Act said cities could designate the funds for policing, tax cuts, or other programs. When Flaherty appeared at a local Model Cities board meeting, a board member told him “you’re insulting our intelligence.” Heading towards the Democratic mayoral primary, some of Flaherty’s liberal former campaign workers defected to his opponent’s camp over this issue. In fact, Caliguiri carried the predominantly African-American wards in the primary election.<sup>480</sup> Still Pittsburgh voters handed Flaherty the election overwhelmingly. He won the Democratic primary by 10,000 votes and, moreover, won the Republican primary as a write-in candidate by 9,000 votes.<sup>481</sup> Flaherty went on to use federal revenue sharing funds only for police and fire departments for each of the next five years.

In the wake of such actions, Flaherty’s tallies in the 1973 mayoral race caused his critics great dismay. In the summer of 1973, pundits considered what it would take to defeat Pete Flaherty since he had won reelection despite both papers, his own party, and the labor unions all backing his opponent. Dane Topich, whose firm Opinion Research had advised Caliguiri, pointed out, more importantly, that Flaherty lost the Hill District by just 700 votes and won five precincts in Homewood. Caliguiri’s campaign manager concluded from his candidate’s surge in public opinion polls in the final week that greater advertising of the issues was crucial.<sup>482</sup>

African-American political activists too slowly drew that same lesson. Even Flaherty’s role in the demise of the Model Cities program the next year did not dampen his electoral pull in the African-American wards in his U.S. Senate race, at least in the primary. In January 1974, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allocated no money to Pittsburgh’s

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<sup>480</sup>.Klimko, “Political Ironies”

<sup>481</sup> Nikki Lewy, “Can Pete Be Beat? Does a Chicken Have Lips?” *Renaissance Pittsburgh*, summer 1973 p 21 in RLT Papers.

<sup>482</sup> Lewy, “Can Pete Be Beat?,” 23-24.

program, citing its failure to spend \$7 million previously given it. Johnnie Grice, chairman of the Model Cities board, charged that Mayor Flaherty had rejected too many “workable proposals” for using those funds. For example, Flaherty’s rejection had doomed the \$1 million holding company for businesses in the Model Cities neighborhoods as another board member, Father McIlvane, noted.<sup>483</sup> The fact that Flaherty oversaw three years of cutbacks in the budget and staffing of the Mayor’s Commission on Human Relations did not appear to sway Pittsburgh’s African-American voters against Flaherty. He handily defeated his opponents to become the Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate race.<sup>484</sup>

Mindful of such numbers, African-American leaders responded by greatly increasing their efforts to inform members of their community about the candidates. During the run-up to the general election in 1974, African-American leaders struck back at Flaherty. Pittsburgher Phil Carter, the newly elected chair of the Pennsylvania Black Political Assembly, declared that Pittsburgh African-Americans were unaware of the Democratic candidate’s stands on African-American issues and therefore had propelled Flaherty to victory. Carter planned to send detailed information to 5,000 members of the assembly’s mailing lists. The group also launched political conferences, campaign trainings, and voters registration drives amongst African-Americans.<sup>485</sup> For example, State Representative Joseph Rhodes lauded incumbent U.S. Senator Richard Schweiker’s pro-civil rights voting record in a series of speeches to the NAACP.<sup>486</sup>

To successfully demonstrate African-Americans’ electoral strength these leaders had to work strategically. They knew that Flaherty as a favorite son carried more weight among

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<sup>483</sup> “Model Cities Cut Blamed on Pete,” *Pittsburgh Press*, January, 13, 1974.

<sup>484</sup> See Figure 1.

<sup>485</sup> “Black Vote Credited in Pete’s May Win,” *Pittsburgh Press*, August 22, 1974.

<sup>486</sup> Sherley Uhl, “Blacks Here Lag On Campaign Support for Pete,” *Pittsburgh Press*, October 18, 1974.

Pittsburgh whites. To keep from alienating white voters in Pittsburgh, African-American political activists, therefore, stopped short of denouncing Flaherty or endorsing Schweiker.<sup>487</sup> Two weeks before the before the general election in 1974, the Republican candidate came to Pittsburgh for a discussion sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania Black Political Assembly.<sup>488</sup> Usually, a network of African-American ministers, leaders of fraternal organizations, and union officers delivered the community's vote to Democratic party. They traditionally paraded the Democratic candidate through a circuit of their church services, festivals, and meetings. That network appears to have sat out this election as a deliberate strategy to demonstrate African-American anger without raising white Democratic voters' ire by appearing disloyal to the party or to Pittsburgh.

As a third major part of this electoral strategy, Pittsburgh civil rights leaders greatly increased their level of political coordination with their counterparts across the state. While Phil Carter and his cohort informed Pittsburgh African-Americans about the issues and simply hosted Schweiker, Carter directed the actions of other branches of the Pennsylvania Black Political Assembly. In other parts of the state, the assembly could do more work for the Republican. In Philadelphia, two local leaders of the civil rights movement, Rev. Leon Sullivan and Dr. Allen, led Schweiker in a motorcade through African-American neighborhoods and endorsed him.<sup>489</sup> The strategy was not to have African-American voters switch party allegiances; nor did it need to be. Flaherty had calculated that he would need to win Philadelphia by 200,000 votes to win the election.<sup>490</sup> He failed to do both.

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<sup>487</sup> Sherley Uhl, "Blacks Here Lag On Campaign Support for Pete," *Pittsburgh Press*, October 18, 1974.

<sup>488</sup> Sherley Uhl, "Schweiker Slaps Pete's 'Non-record,'" *Pittsburgh Press*, October 20, 1974.

<sup>489</sup> Ewart Rouse and Wendell Rawls, "Schweiker Gets Aid of Dr. Allen and Rev. Sullivan," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 3, 1974.

<sup>490</sup> Wendell Rawls, Jr. "Flaherty Tells Backers That I'm a Good Loser," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 6, 1974.

In the days after the election, Democratic leaders showed that they had received the message. The election postmortems from one of Flaherty's critics and likely opponents for a third term as mayor also heralded that Flaherty had won Pittsburgh but not convincingly. They noted that Flaherty's running mate, Governor Shapp, beat his Republican opponent by 50,000 votes, compared to Flaherty's margin of just 18,000 votes in a city where Democrats outnumbered Republicans four to one.<sup>491</sup> Thus, Pittsburgh's Democratic politicians paid homage to the electoral power that a scorned African-American community could wield.

For their part, Republicans rewarded African-Americans' political work with greater funding for minority-targeted jobs programs. Senator Schweiker, while sharing Flaherty's disdain for school busing, followed the election by seeking \$75 million in appropriations for the Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC) founded by Rev. Sullivan.<sup>492</sup> With its large share of the amount which Schweiker won for the OIC, the branch in Pittsburgh greatly added to the work of Pittsburgh's other African-American jobs training centers.

### **C. A HUGE VICTORY ON HOME IMPROVEMENT FUNDING**

After these election results and probably influenced by them, Flaherty then moved forward on pro-African-American programs at least in terms of bricks and mortar in the next few years of his second term as mayor. Pressure from African-American civil rights and neighborhood groups helped push the mayor to expand greatly a city-led program in the face of a federal moratorium on subsidized housing. On account of both who advocated it and who benefited from it, the Home Loan Revolving Fund stands as victory of the civil rights movement. The

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<sup>491</sup> Philip Baskin, Letter to Editor "Mayor Charged With Rigged Budgets," *Pittsburgh Press*, November 15, 1974.

<sup>492</sup> "Schweiker Asks House to Give OIC \$75 Million," Bulletin Harrisburg Bureau, RLT papers, n.d.[1974?]

program began without Flaherty's help as a pilot project in the city's Hill District and Oakland neighborhoods under the auspices of the Model Cities Agency in 1971. Community Action Pittsburgh, the remaining institution of the City's Great Society program, awarded the agency \$1 million. The program's initiators sought to end a drought in which builders had not completed new housing construction in the two neighborhoods. The program set up a revolving fund for low and moderate income housing construction.<sup>493</sup> Elsewhere in the nation in 1973, President Nixon's policies threw into disarray the efforts of non-profit and community groups to build low-income housing. He imposed a moratorium on subsidies which the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) gave to such groups.<sup>494</sup> Where many other cities cut their housing programs in the face of the moratorium, Flaherty's administration held "numerous neighborhood hearings" on housing. The mayor might have stopped at just such hearings and cited lack of funds for inaction, had it not been for his poor showing among African-Americans in the 1974 U.S. Senate race. After that defeat Flaherty broadened the revolving housing fund.<sup>495</sup> The mayor's office turned a revolving fund limited to just two neighborhoods into a Neighborhood Housing Program benefiting all the city's low-income neighborhoods. In addition, the expanded program coped with federal austerity by leveraging private money into inner city housing stock.

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<sup>493</sup> Proposal to Interfaith Housing Incorporated from Benjamin Banneker Homes, February 25, 1971.

<sup>494</sup> Richard M. Nixon, "Special Message To The Congress Proposing Legislation and Outlining Administration Actions To Deal With Federal Housing Policy," in The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/pppus.php?admin=037&year=1973&id=264>

<sup>495</sup> The mayor proposed spending a total of \$16.9 million in 1976 for a Community Development Program which included a bulk for housing programs and much lesser amounts on senior centers, recreation programs, and commercial district revitalization. Pete Flaherty, "The Mayor's Report to the People," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, December 4, 1975

Under it, the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) loaned buyers the difference between the cost of the building and what banks were willing to loan them.<sup>496</sup>

In addition to assistance with mortgages, the Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority provided grants and subsidized loans to low-income homeowners for housing repairs. Low-income renters benefited through the Landlord Repair Program. When HUD took an interest in making the program a national model, the federal government finally provided moneys by 1975 that rivaled the anti-poverty and urban redevelopment funding levels, which Pittsburgh had enjoyed in the late 1960s. For the next three years alone, HUD enabled the City to budget \$44 million in housing programs, of which \$21 million had been spent by the end of the third year. Between 1975-1977, the City thus helped residents improve 1400 units. Almost as crucial as the initial investment was what the URA did with it. The Urban Redevelopment Authority set up a revolving fund under which interest paid by recipients of subsidized loans underwrote loans and grants to other recipients.<sup>497</sup> In doing so, the URA insulated a good part of the program from the vicissitudes of political winds in Washington D.C. should the president and Congress decide again to turn against urban redevelopment.

Unfortunately, statistical reporting from these projects does not allow researchers to break down the recipients by race or sex, so we cannot tell how much the program directly impacted African-Americans for the better or if it shifted anti-poverty programs to whites. Three of the Neighborhood Housing Program's characteristics indicate that it did benefit African-Americans. First, the program also originated as an initiative of the Central Northside Citizens

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<sup>496</sup> Jim Jubak, "Building Blocks: In Pittsburgh, neighborhood control has led to the rebirth of a community," *Environmental Action*, September 1982 in Robison Papers

<sup>497</sup> Urban League of Pittsburgh Housing Department, *Performance Evaluation Community Development Block Grant Program of the City of Pittsburgh*, April, 1978, 7, 25; in RLT Papers; Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, *Housing*, Annual Report, 1984,

Council, a neighborhood organization which had long served as a wellspring for African-American civil rights agitation.<sup>498</sup> Secondly, Pittsburgh African-Americans disproportionately suffered from dilapidated housing. Most War on Poverty era neighborhood programs had just covered eight targeted neighborhoods, most with sizable African-American populations, earning these programs a place as civil rights initiatives. Mayor Flaherty, his administration, and liberal city planners, seeing resentment from poor whites jealous of programs aimed “just at blacks,” universalized the Home Loan Program to cover all poor Pittsburghers. That does not mean the program shifted money away from African-Americans, and no evidence suggests that it did. By benefiting low-income homeowners, the Home Loan Program stood to serve African-Americans in numbers disproportionate to their share of Pittsburgh’s overall population. Crucially too, the Home Loan Program served as a vast improvement in urban redevelopment. It rejuvenated aging housing stock without 1950s style slum clearance which had dislocated thousands of mostly African-American families. Under the Neighborhood Housing Program, the URA vastly increased the number of scattered site housing improvements that urban renewal planners yearned for in the late 1960s. And it did so, without condemning renters’ homes the way too many late 1960s building code enforcement programs had done. Thirdly, the universality of the program across races sequestered it in such a way that it escaped the battles which stymied most programs in the city for school integration. For these reasons, it became a national model. In the field of combating police brutality and corruption, African-Americans had less success.

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<sup>498</sup> See Chapter 2 for Northside community activists’ role in civil rights agitation.

#### D. A DRAW ON POLICE BRUTALITY CASES

Civil rights activists found allies in this fight in the U.S. Department of Justice and in the Flaherty administration but no quick or full victory. African-Americans, after W.W. II, found the Pittsburgh police either lax in enforcing laws in their neighborhoods or abusive in confronting even innocent young African-American men. In the late 1960s, efforts to improve policing had proceeded under Director of Public Safety David Craig's police-community liaisons and Professor Christine Altenberger's police training classes at the University of Pittsburgh.<sup>499</sup> The goodwill generated by those improvements evaporated when the Tactical Police Force under Superintendent Slusser attacked peaceful civil rights demonstrators in 1969. In one of his first acts, Mayor Flaherty fired Slusser. Supporters of Superintendent Slusser actually picketed Flaherty's inaugural, but the mayor held firm. Slusser's replacement, Robert Colville attempted to wipe out police corruption by firing officers tied to shakedowns in the numbers racket and petty vice. These firings helped police-community relations by removing some of the "tainted" officers who had cash incentives to mistreat criminal elements in the neighborhoods and to make false accusations against innocent residents.<sup>500</sup>

These reforms emanating from the city's leaders joined a struggle launched by the Guardians. An organization formed by African-American police officers, the Guardians worked to stop police abuse of African-American community members. From the late 1960s, the group also fought to gain advancement for African-American officers. The Guardians also tipped off civil rights organizers when some officers spoke about wanting to harm demonstrators.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Christine Altenberger interviewed by Michael Snow for SLGA; David Craig, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA

<sup>500</sup> Bob Colville, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA.

<sup>501</sup> Harvey Adams, founder the Guardians, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on March 7, 2000

Despite Colville and Flaherty's initial efforts, the actions of their police subordinates forced the African-American community to demand greater reforms. In the summer of 1971, community police relations reached a boiling point. An officer shot and killed a Homewood man because he resembled an escaped murderer. Some 350 residents marched in protest, met with Mayor Flaherty, and demanded a Civilian Police Review Board.<sup>502</sup>

City and federal judicial authorities heard these voices. U.S. Attorney Richard Thornburgh, a Republican and a former board member of the Urban League, prosecuted the first cases of police brutality in the Federal District in Western Pennsylvania, serving as a warning to other cops that misbehavior would be punished.<sup>503</sup> Superintendent Colville responded in 1971 by transferring Commander William "Mugsy" Moore, an African-American, to oversee the police station covering East Liberty to Homewood. The police department officially denied the influence of community demands over this and several linked transfers, perhaps to deflect criticisms from the ranks. However, the timing and Moore's background demonstrate that the community had influenced that transfer. Moore had served as community liaison officer in the Hill District before the transfer. Black leaders in East Liberty, moreover, had been asking for his presence there for two years.<sup>504</sup> The next year, Hill District leaders met with Mayor Flaherty forcing him to have the police launch a sweep against drugs.<sup>505</sup>

Still, while Hill District residents spoke of an overall improvement in how the police force treated them, African-Americans angered at the system for handling misconduct by

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<sup>502</sup> "Blacks Demand Community Control of Police," *Pittsburgh Forum*, July 2, 1971, p. 2.

<sup>503</sup> "Black Voters Have a Real Choice For Governor This Year," Richard L. Thornburgh for Governor Campaign 1978, in RLT Papers, Box 923, FF 6:60.

<sup>504</sup> George Lies, "Police Report IV: Analysis, 'The Day They Shook Up the Old Precinct,'" *Pittsburgh Forum*, September 10, 1971, p1.

<sup>505</sup> Mary McShea and Bob Connolly, *Pete Flaherty Politician*, unpublished manuscript n.d. [1973] in Robison Papers.

individual officers. From 1951 onwards, a body called the Pittsburgh Police Trial Board adjudicated cases when citizens accused officers of wrongdoing. The Police Trial Board's name misleads. It was not a permanent body as much as an ad hoc panel formed for each specific case. By the 1970s, activists and their political allies decried this system as weighted towards accused officers. The reformers charged such panels with bias because every member of a panel was drawn from the police force and no member came from watchdog or community groups. Moreover, the accused officer chose one third of the pool of potential panelists. Balance supposedly came in this system when the public safety director and the superintendent of police submitted the other two-thirds of the names to be chosen at random to fill the panel.<sup>506</sup> By the 1970s, Pittsburghers had evidence that this system favored police, not their accusers. In 1971, a citizens group released a study of the Pittsburgh Police Trial Board finding that the board had dismissed no officer since 1963 despite the fact that complaints had "increased dramatically."<sup>507</sup>

The study spurred action from the grassroots and public officials. African-American families, with the aid of Neighborhood Legal Services, responded to these findings by bypassing the trial board and going straight to criminal courts. They launched eight cases there against officers.<sup>508</sup> For its part, the Flaherty administration responded by trying to suspend some officers whom citizens accused of using excessive force. The powerful state representative from the Hill District, K. Leroy Irvis proposed in 1972 a bill to create an oversight body less weighted towards the police. The director of public safety would choose twelve members of a new Police Trial Board Council. Only six of those members could be police officers. The Mayor's Commission on Human Relations (CHR) would choose the remaining six members of the trial board. Irvis

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<sup>506</sup> K. Leroy Irvis Press Release, Office of Legislative Information, n.d. in Irvis Papers

<sup>507</sup> George Lies, "Are Controls of Police Meaning Less?" *Pittsburgh Forum*, August 27, 1971, p. 3.

<sup>508</sup> George Lies, "Are Controls of Police Meaning Less?" *Pittsburgh Forum*, August 27, 1971, p. 3.

sought to sway pro-police decision makers arguing that his board would help officers otherwise suspended while awaiting trial.<sup>509</sup> The Commonwealth Court dealt a blow to both the mayor and Irvis's effort, ruling that the mayor could not suspend officers for more than ten days under the 1951 police trial board law. City Solicitor Ralph Lynch countered by calling the ruling "lamentable" and appealing it to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The *Post Gazette* weighed in urging movement both on Irvis's bill and Flaherty's appeal.<sup>510</sup>

Such work by both the political reformers and the grassroots proved insufficient to win completely on this issue. According to one political observer, intense lobbying by the powerful police union blocked Irvis's bill as it did every other attempt to overhaul completely the Police Trial Board for the next 25 years.<sup>511</sup> Irvis could only gather co-sponsors for his bill in the most likely of places. Two state representatives from Pittsburgh added their names, Ivan Itkin from the Fourteenth Ward Independent Democrats, and Joseph Rhodes, a former student civil rights activist. Their bill died in committee in three separate legislative sessions.<sup>512</sup>

Even as they failed to win the complete overhaul that they sought for the Police Trial Board, African-American groups showed that they had gained ground. The major newspapers covered the protests, an improvement over days when only journalists from the *Courier* wrote about such incidents. Dick Thornburgh's intervention stood as another unprecedented step forward for African-Americans in Pittsburgh. And finally Superintendent Colville's efforts to

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<sup>509</sup> K. Leroy Irvis, "The Irvis Report," Harrisburg: Legislative Information Office, n.d, in Irvis Papers

<sup>510</sup> Editorial, "Police Board Confusion," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 20, 1972 in Irvis Papers.

<sup>511</sup> Interviewer's notes for an Interview of Nello Giorgetti for the State and Local Government Oral History Project, transcript closed

<sup>512</sup> Pennsylvania House Bill 2044 in Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *History of the House Bills and Resolutions, 1971-1972*, A299, HB 1247 in Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *History of the House Bills and Resolutions, 1973-1974*, A173, and HB 843 in Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *History of the House Bills and Resolutions, 1975-1976*, A117,

improve community-police relations improved the dialogue over the days when Superintendent Slusser had called civil rights leaders extortionists. Even as Irvis's Police Trial Board bill was mired in committee for a second time, one contemporary observer noted that conditions had improved between the police and African-Americans. Writing on the environment in the Hill District five years after the riots, a *Post Gazette* reporter found that residents perceived the police as less racist.<sup>513</sup>

### **E. VICTORIES ON TRAINING PROGRAMS**

While the Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) blocked the most sweeping reforms proposed on police community relations, the increasing power of Pittsburgh's African-American elected officials allowed them to win moneys directed at leveling the economic playing field for African-Americans. In the arena of social services for example, civil rights activists elected to the Model Cities Agency used \$95,000 to build Hill House, "a supermarket for social services."<sup>514</sup> By the early 1970s, Irvis as house majority leader wielded increasing power because other legislators came to him seeking how they should vote on the 3,000-plus bills that came before them each year. Irvis built a reputation for honesty. Indeed he told members from more conservative districts that they should vote against measures he and the Democratic Party favored. They respected that and trusted him enough to vote for his other measures. In May 1977, Irvis won

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<sup>513</sup> Stephen Franklin, "The White Side" part of "The Hill District... Five Years After the Riots," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, March 26, 1973.

<sup>514</sup> Stephen Franklin, "The White Side" part of "The Hill District... Five Years After the Riots," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, March 26, 1973.

election as speaker of the house. With this vast power and prestige, other legislators voted along with measures serving his district and his community in order to win Irvis's favor.<sup>515</sup>

K. Leroy Irvis won the Hill House another \$13,000 in 1975 to provide a database and staff to direct residents and neighborhood businesses to the correct government and non-profit agencies for all the benefits for which they qualified. Similarly, African-American elected officials won grants for the United Black Front (UBF) in its efforts to rebuild the Hill District's economy. Civil rights militants and moderates had formed the United Black Front after the riots in 1968 in order to pressure Pittsburgh corporations and city government to rebuild the damaged neighborhoods. They succeeded in establishing the Community Food Mart, and Irvis won for them training money to hire local residents to run it. Furthermore, the UBF opened and ran a nail factory under a grant from the state's Neighborhood Assistance Program, which Irvis had created. In addition to outright state funding for such economic development programs, the state leveraged private donations through tax breaks. Irvis and his allies in the state legislature twice expanded the Neighborhood Assistance Program to this end. With such incentives, they enticed ALCOA to lease high-speed nail makers to the factory run by UBF and Pittsburgh National Bank to loan it \$180,000.<sup>516</sup> In the field of training African-Americans for better job opportunities, Irvis won \$10,000 in state funding in 1972 for the Hill District alone for the Opportunities Industrial Center for training in business education, graphic arts, and auto mechanics.<sup>517</sup> Irvis in 1973 won \$45,000 for Bidwell Incorporated, the training program run by Reverend James Robinson on the city's Northside. Irvis also won backing for the Hill Phoenix

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<sup>515</sup> Irvis interviewed by Michael Snow for Pittsburgh Civil Rights History Project, August 15, 2003

<sup>516</sup> "Black Business: One Note of Progress," *Pittsburgh Forum*, April 20, 1970.

<sup>517</sup> K. Leroy Irvis, "News Release," Legislative Information Office, June 2, 1972 in Irvis Papers.

Shopping Center. When the center opened, it brought a larger grocery and other businesses back to the section of the Hill burnt during the riots.<sup>518</sup>

## **F. DEFEATS AND ULTIMATE SUCCESS IN DESEGREGATING SCHOOLS**

African-Americans fighting for equality in Pittsburgh faced an increasing challenge in the field of integrating the public schools. In this fight, civil rights leaders and their allies in state and city human relations commissions moved forward, albeit much more slowly than they wanted. The first setback arose unrelated to racial divisions.

For several years in the late 1960s, the Pittsburgh School Board had labored under the assumption that its Great High Schools Plan would bring it into compliance with Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) rulings. The commission had ordered Pittsburgh public schools to come up with a desegregation plan in 1968.<sup>519</sup> Pittsburgh schools hoped to draw together all the students from across neighborhood racial boundaries by building gigantic new high schools accommodating between 6,000 and 10,000 students apiece. To entice white parents and students, the plan included amenities such as air conditioning and educational programs unavailable in smaller segregated schools. In 1971, the board dropped the Great High Schools Plan because of the massive costs of the building campaign and the questionable workability of the gigantic campuses and open classrooms, not because of race or desegregation. Its failure

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<sup>518</sup> Irvis, interview, Pittsburgh Civil Rights Oral History Project, June, 12, 2003.

<sup>519</sup> Harry Boyer, Chair of the PHRC to Sidney Marland, Superintendent of the Board of Education, February 2, 1968 in Richard D. Gutkind, "Desegregation of Pittsburgh Public Schools, 1968-1980: A Study of the Superintendent and Educational Policy Dynamics," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1983, 31

delayed integration but did not outright defeat civil rights leaders.<sup>520</sup> The school board then created the Reorganization Advisory Committee (RAC), a group of citizens from divergent viewpoints on desegregation. The board authorized the RAC to find common ground in devising desegregation plans.<sup>521</sup>

Though the RAC and the school board stumbled several times due to opponents of desegregation, it would be a mistake to call the organizing done by Pittsburghers against integration in the 1970s a “backlash.” Using that word implies that opposition to civil rights was something brand new. Long before the 1970s, racism found adherents in a wide swath of the Pittsburgh populace along with scattered supporters in elected office. Mobs had attacked integrated swimming pool parties in the 1940 and 1950s. Public opinion polls in Allegheny County had run strongly against the first State Human Relations Act. And crowds of John Birchers had jeered civil rights pickets downtown. Some legislators, furthermore, sounded tones in the late 1960s akin to those of Southern segregationists. During the 1968 riots, some business leaders demanded that police use tanks against looters. Racism had a long track record in Pittsburgh history.

What was new in the 1970s instead were the rhetoric and the level of institutionalized “grass roots” organizing against school integration. Opponents of integrating public schools gained a new language and strategy early in 1970 when the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court upheld a Florida school system’s decision to assign pupils to the closest district. President Nixon applauded the ruling saying, “To the extent possible the neighborhood school should be the

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<sup>520</sup> S. P. Marland, “The Education Park Concept in Pittsburgh,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, 48 (March 1967), 329 and *Report to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission* (Pittsburgh: Board of Education, 1968), 1-3 in Gutkind 31-33 and Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for June 19, 1970 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers, and Collauti, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA

<sup>521</sup> Gutkind, 42-44

rule.”<sup>522</sup> With neighborhood schools as their rallying cry, activists against integration copied the strategies and tactics of their civil rights opponents--petitions, litigation, and boycotts, followed finally by an electoral strategy. First, a few white parents testified about conditions and why they sent their children out of the district. Then, parents of forty white children brought suit against the school system over the physical deterioration of the predominantly African-American facilities to which their children were sent. The white parents also charged that other pupils were physically assaulting their children in the predominantly African-American school to which the school board had transferred them. Showing that this resistance to desegregation was not just an ad hoc development but a nascent social movement, the parents’ spokesperson revealed that the parents received financial backing from the VFW, the Fraternal Order of Police, neighborhood businessmen, and a neighborhood community organization.<sup>523</sup> In the streets, first 75 white parents picketed against mandatory school busing. When that did not sway the RAC, the opponents of school busing upped the ante; a school board hearing in April faced 450 picketers outside with 250 protesters inside the hall. Concurrently, a boycott by white students in the city’s South Hills area led to 89 percent absenteeism amongst white pupils.<sup>524</sup>

Such initial demonstrations against desegregation proved potent, but the greater threat to desegregation plans arose when Mayor Flaherty sided with the neighborhood schools crowd because he saw fractures in the pro-civil rights coalition. Militant civil rights activist Bouie

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<sup>522</sup> President Richard Nixon as quoted in the Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for February 19, 1970 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers ,

<sup>523</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, October 20, 1971 in Gutkind, 59 and *Pittsburgh Press*, November 4, 1971 in Gutkind, p 60

<sup>524</sup> Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for March 27, 1972 and April 19, 1972 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers ,

Haden told the press in April 1972 that he opposed busing for desegregation purposes.<sup>525</sup> Two weeks later, Mayor Flaherty wrote to School Board President Gladys McNairy, an African-American, expressing his opposition to busing.<sup>526</sup> Under Pittsburgh's Progressive Era reforms, city officials had no legal authority over the workings of the school system. Mayor Flaherty showed up anyway at a May 1972 school board meeting and called on it to drop any integration plan which involved "forced busing." Flaherty announced that even African-American parents had expressed to him their opposition to busing.<sup>527</sup> The school board shelved plans for desegregating that fall within one week of the mayor's appearance.<sup>528</sup> When the board and RAC prepared to unveil a system-wide desegregation plan in November 1972, Mayor Flaherty again intervened. At two school hearings within one week, Flaherty urged the school board to defy the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission's "paper order." Flaherty said he was against busing but not integration. He advocated in his statement for magnet schools, he cited the tax burden busing might cause, and he cited the desire of parents of all races to send their children close to home.<sup>529</sup> Flaherty's statement at those November 1972 hearings further eroded a civil rights consensus around busing. The day after Flaherty's second appearance, School Board

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<sup>525</sup> Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for April 19, 1972 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers ,

<sup>526</sup> Mayor Pete Flaherty to Mrs. Gladys B. McNairy, Pittsburgh on official City of Pittsburgh stationary, May 3, 1972 in YWCA Papers in HSWP

<sup>527</sup> Statement by Mayor Pete Flaherty to the Public Hearing, Pittsburgh Board of Education, Tuesday May 16, 1972 in YWCA Papers in HSWP

<sup>528</sup> Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for May 24, 1972 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers ,

<sup>529</sup> Brad Vinocur, "Mayor Cheered In Stand At Alma Mater Allegheny," *Pittsburgh Press*, November 21, 1972, 2 and David Nilsson, "Pete Renews Attack As Busing Is Topic of 2 Hearings," *Pittsburgh Press*, November 21, 1972 in YWCA Papers in YWCA Papers. Flaherty also said that parents chose the home they bought because of the schools, and he said parents would move out of the city. Flaherty appears to have been proven right on this last point. He asked the district to improve the quality of existing schools

Member John Conley, an African-American, introduced an anti-busing resolution, called to appeal the PHRC decisions, and rejected the RAC plan. Another African-American member of the board joined Conley in voting for this resolution. Together with those of the original opponents of busing on the board, their votes then stopped the RAC's plan to integrate the public schools by 1973.<sup>530</sup>

Civil rights leaders tried to regroup to challenge the impact of Mayor Flaherty's interventions at each turn with only some success. Board member and veteran civil rights leader, Rev. LeRoy Patrick immediately called Flaherty's May 1972 comments "gratuitous and self-serving."<sup>531</sup> After fifty local clergy members added their moral authority demanding school integration, the school board changed its position and allowed the RAC again to continue drawing up plans.<sup>532</sup> At the November 21, 1972 school board hearing, Pittsburgh NAACP officer Alma Fox challenged Flaherty for using racist "code words." She said the real issue was race not neighborhood or cost.<sup>533</sup> Unfortunately for Fox's cause, two African-Americans helped

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<sup>530</sup> Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for November 22, 1972 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers, Board of Public Education, Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting, 21 November 1972 in Gutkind, 66

<sup>531</sup> Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for May 17, 1972 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers and Rev. Leroy Patrick, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on February 18, 2002,

<sup>532</sup> Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for May 24, 1972 and June 6, 1972 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers,

<sup>533</sup> Nilsson, 2 Was Fox accurate in saying that Flaherty hid his racist intentions? His motivations are not so clear. Flaherty could have said, "We want integrated schools in the neighborhoods." He could have said, "improve the appalling disparity in the quality of predominantly black school buildings and teaching materials." He did not. On the other hand, Flaherty did say, "I have seen some fine black schools."

form the majority in shelving the RAC's system-wide plan for integrating the whole school system through busing.<sup>534</sup>

While foes of school busing stymied efforts in Pittsburgh, splits in the statewide pro-civil rights coalition could have destroyed the struggle for desegregation if K. Leroy Irvis and Governor Shapp had not recommitted wavering supporters. The state house of representatives passed a bill to take away the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission's power to order school integration plans. Several of Pittsburgh's white Democratic legislators split from their former civil rights allies to vote for this bill making the bill's tally 104-88. They did so despite Irvis and his allies' attempts to destroy the bill with contradictory amendments. Given the bill's margin of victory in the state house, it looked likely to pass the state senate as well. The senate majority leader, a Democrat representing Pittsburgh, had already introduced a similar bill forbidding the PHRC from ordering busing. Other senators had penned bills forbidding the PHRC from issuing any desegregation orders. Irvis forcefully struck back, repeatedly telling the press that Democratic Governor Shapp promised to veto such bills.<sup>535</sup> Probably wanting to avoid weakening their own party in an override vote, state senators, led by the Democrats, stalled their push for their version of the bill.<sup>536</sup>

With system-wide desegregation plans shelved, pro-integration forces appealed to yet more government venues to force the school system to desegregate. The Pittsburgh Commission

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<sup>534</sup> Board of Public Education, Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting, 21 November 1972 in Gutkind, 66 David Nilsson, "Pete Renews Attack As Busing Is Topic of 2 Hearings," *Pittsburgh Press*, November 21, 1972 in YWCA Papers and Rev. Leroy Patrick, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on February 18, 2002,

<sup>535</sup> David Runkel, "House Strips Power of PA Rights Unit," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, June 14, 1972, 1, 6 "How They Voted on Rights Bill," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, June 14, 1972, 6

<sup>536</sup> William Deibler, "Antibusing Bill Faces Slowdown in Senate," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, June 19, 1972. 8

on Human Relations denounced Flaherty's anti-busing stand as divisive.<sup>537</sup> African-Americans from East Liberty and the East End Education Committee appealed to the City Planning Commission to approve plans for the East End Middle School as a means to reduce overcrowding.<sup>538</sup> As a compromise around busing, the school would sit on the border between African-American and white neighborhoods. In the face of similar appeals, the Pittsburgh School Board won an extension for desegregation from the PHRC after committing to a two-year shifting of attendance patterns and another revival of portions of the Great High Schools plan. They planned to build a very large high school in the southern portion of the city to draw students from many white and African-American neighborhoods.<sup>539</sup> In Harrisburg, K. Leroy Irvis joined Homewood's Representative Joseph Rhodes in proposing a bill to award incentive grants to schools for assistance in desegregation, but the bill remained as stuck in committee as did three more bills attempting to strip the authority of the PHRC to order desegregation.<sup>540</sup>

At this point Democratic Governor Shapp tried to broker a compromise solution for his key legislative ally, Irvis. Shapp appointed a Citizens' Committee on Basic Education to recommend breaking the district into smaller districts with elected boards.<sup>541</sup> The goal of such

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<sup>537</sup> Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for December 8, 1972 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers ,

<sup>538</sup> Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for December 6, 1972 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers ,

<sup>539</sup> Pittsburgh Reorganization Plan (Pittsburgh: Board of Public Education, 1973), 1-12 in Gutkind 68 and Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for December 6, 1972, January 22, 1973, June 18, 1973, June 27, 1973 and September 15, 1973 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers ,

<sup>540</sup> Pennsylvania House Bill 1061 in Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *History of the House Bills and Resolutions, 1973-1974*, A149; Pennsylvania Senate Bills 1976, 411, 880 in Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *History of the House Bills and Resolutions, 1973-1974*, A253, A52, A117

<sup>541</sup> Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for April 23, 1973, in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers

decentralization was to make citizens feel they had greater access to decisions within the school system and hopefully defuse some of the tensions over such decisions.<sup>542</sup> As consultants and the board studied decentralization, however, the PHRC declared that the attendance shifting plans moved too slowly and with too few schools. Given that school board members acted within four days of the ruling, they must have been prodded by the PHRC. They passed a resolution committing to build the two massive integrated schools and sped up the process of accepting bids from contractors.<sup>543</sup>

While piecemeal efforts chipped away at segregation, opponents of desegregation turned once more to local politicians, this time, winning a major delay. Under the district's original 1973 desegregation plan, the district planned to remodel Herron Hill Junior High and make it an integrated middle school. As the date for breaking ground on Herron Hill neared, critics noted that new residential patterns meant the school would only be integrated if the school system bused in white students. Mayor Flaherty then used his influence on the City Planning Commission to hold up zoning permits for this construction project.<sup>544</sup> The planning commissioners insisted on seeing the attendance zones before okaying the plans, something the district's lawyers contended was an abuse of the planning commission's authority. In response, city council called a hearing to look into the commission's actions. One of the Flaherty's critics on city council angrily denounced the planning commission for meddling as if it were a "super school board." But even city council voted to delay intervening.<sup>545</sup> Civil rights allies struck

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<sup>542</sup>Helen Faison, interview by Michael Snow for the Pittsburgh Civil Rights History Project, on September 18, 2003, video tape held by Media Services of the University of Pittsburgh

<sup>543</sup> Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project, press notes for June 14, 1973, June 18, 1973, and September 15, 1973 in Pittsburgh School Desegregation Project Papers

<sup>544</sup> Rev. Leroy Patrick, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA, February 18, 2002

<sup>545</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 31 July 1974 in Gutkind, 75

back with House Speaker K. Leroy Irvis holding a press conference denouncing the mayor as “Anti-black.”<sup>546</sup>

Even with the board’s waffling and its prohibition against desegregation through busing, the school district’s piecemeal efforts made some progress under the watchful eye of its pro-integration members. The new Brashear High School opened in the fall of 1976. Its 2200 student body integrated students from the predominantly African-American Knoxville and Gladstone junior highs with the mostly white student body of the former South Hills High School. To diffuse tensions before the school opened, the district had mixed groups of parents and students tour the facility over the summer. Some students came away declaring “they’re not that different.” Others saw pluses in Brashear’s air conditioning, six lane swimming pool, television studio, and upscale chemistry labs and drama facilities. True to the dreams of the authors of the Great High Schools Plan, the amenities attracted students to the school. One touring student noted, “I wish we could have gone here last year.”<sup>547</sup>

In contrast to this equanimity at Brashear, the grass roots opponents of school busing seized a major victory as the school board switched from being one appointed by a Common Pleas judge to one elected by residents. Voters put in power a majority intent on stopping desegregation plans, but even here the state courts and civil rights activists, joined by federal authorities thwarted such actions. While major African-American leaders had seen the initial proposals for the elected board as a threat to integration, their public warnings proved powerless

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<sup>546</sup> David Leher and Thomas Hritz, “Flaherty Anti-Black,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 16, 1975, in RLT Papers

<sup>547</sup> Thomas P. Benic, “Touring Student Leaders Take to Brashear High,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, June 4, 1976, 1 Sec. 2

to stop it.<sup>548</sup> Opponents of school busing erupted in hearings as Superintendent Olson unveiled a School Feeder Plan. Thus, they energized their supporters to head to the polls. Voters elected to the board such opponents of school desegregation plans as Jean Fink. Fink had leaked original RAC plans to the press, helping to derail desegregation plans in 1972. She gained greater notoriety in 1976, by saying at a public hearing that “I’ll bet my house and my car that almost 95 percent of the people will send their children to schools closest to their homes.”<sup>549</sup> Intent on running this experiment, Fink and the anti-busing majority on the board proposed an Open Enrollment Plan in the face of evidence that, above all, Reizenstein Middle School was becoming racially imbalanced.<sup>550</sup> More ominously, the board resolved in 1977 that, given the changeover in the board selection, any PHRC order against the formerly appointed board and could not apply to the newly elected board.<sup>551</sup> Thus emboldened, the new board hired outside counsel to appeal the Commonwealth Court order that it finally comply with PHRC rulings. And it rejected Superintendent Olson’s latest desegregation plans. Speakers in board meetings particularly singled out for attack Olson’s plan for magnet junior and elementary schools.<sup>552</sup> Grassroots opponents of school busing unmasked their larger goal as they opened fire on such measures first proposed as a compromise alternative to busing.

The new board and its anti-integration constituency may have succeeded in rolling back Pittsburgh’s piecemeal efforts at desegregation to this point had it not been for four events propelled by civil right leaders. First civil rights leaders succeeded in appealing to the U.S.

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<sup>548</sup> Douglas Smock, “Plan Racially Inspired, Leaders Say, Blacks Hit School Board Elections,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, March 3, 1973, and David Nilsson, “Caliguiri, Pete Raise Hands in School Debate,” *Pittsburgh Press*, March 2 1973, in YWCA Papers, in HSWP

<sup>549</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 3 December 1975 in Gutkind, 86

<sup>550</sup> Gutkind, 92-3

<sup>551</sup> Board of Public Education, Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting, 26 January 1977, 166 in Gutkind, 92

<sup>552</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 3 June 1977 in Gutkind, 98

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). HEW denied the district \$2 million in federal funds because the district had failed to come up with a citywide desegregation plan.<sup>553</sup>

Second, Justin Johnson, an African-American, used his retirement ceremony from his position as solicitor for the school board as an opportunity to speak unmuzzled. Damningly, he told a journalist,

From 1970 to 1977, I cannot recall four open, sincere discussions on integration. The board always moved away from it... Part of the problem is racial prejudice.<sup>554</sup>

Such a powerful insider speaking in such terms greatly strengthened the PHRC's case against the school board, charging it with malfeasance in implementing integration. Third, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court agreed with the lower court in 1978 that the district had to submit a more comprehensive desegregation plan.<sup>555</sup> And fourth, asked by the higher court for clarification, the Commonwealth Court ordered the district to submit a revised desegregation plan by July 1979.<sup>556</sup>

Prodded by these orders and further legal maneuvers by African-American parents, the board and district moved faster. Within weeks of the HEW decision, the board passed a resolution finally to begin exploring establishing magnet school programs.<sup>557</sup> Based on past behavior, especially the five years of silence about board member Conley's original suggestion of magnet programs, the board and district could have continued a delaying pattern for months, if not years. Instead, within two months of Justin Johnson's statements, the board selected

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<sup>553</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 14 August 1977 in Gutkind, 98

<sup>554</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 30 January 1978 in Gutkind, 99

<sup>555</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 12 August 1978 in Gutkind, 102

<sup>556</sup> *Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission v. Board of Education of the School District of Pittsburgh*, Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania, No. 568, 8 November 1978 in Gutkind, 103

<sup>557</sup> Board of Public Education, Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting, 23 November 1977, 904 in Gutkind, 98

Pittsburghers from every corner and ethnic group to serve on a Magnet School Advisory Committee.<sup>558</sup>

Perhaps not wanting to be burned by a process in which the committee would draw up desegregation plans only to have the board reject them, a set of parents filed a class action lawsuit. In 1978, twenty-seven parents and children accused board members, the school district, and the superintendent of racial discrimination. Their lawsuit accused the defendants of promoting racial segregation by, among other things, assigning pupils in ways which reflected residential segregation based on past housing discrimination.<sup>559</sup> Tellingly, after the parents filed their suit, the board empowered the district to draw up its own magnet proposals. In these proposals, administrators were to include mandatory desegregation proposals, signaling that the board had softened its position of only relying on voluntary transfers.<sup>560</sup>

True to form though, under pressure from white parents, the board began chipping away at elements of the desegregation plan which staff from the district submitted to it. But this time supporters of system-wide desegregation disrupted board hearings and found federal allies. The board rejected Superintendent Olson's suggestions such as pairing schools near one another, deciding to rely only on enrollments in magnet programs.<sup>561</sup> When the board president told two critics of the plan to leave the podium, over a hundred African-Americans stood up en cue and rushed the speaker.<sup>562</sup> This action drew the attention of U.S. Civil Rights Commission, which, within three weeks, responded asking the Justice Department to file an amicus brief in the class

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<sup>558</sup> *The Pittsburgh Desegregation Plan* (Pittsburgh: Board of Public Education, 1979) 6 in Gutkind, 104

<sup>559</sup> *Carletta Washington, a minor et al. v. School District of Pittsburgh et al*, Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County G.D. 78-229990, 28 September 1978 in Gutkind 103

<sup>560</sup> *The Pittsburgh Desegregation Plan* in Gutkind, 104

<sup>561</sup> Doris M Leader, "Report of Hearing Panel Re: Pittsburgh School Desegregation," Pittsburgh, 1979, 1-2 in Gutkind, 113

<sup>562</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 17 April 1979 in Gutkind, 110

action lawsuit against the school district.<sup>563</sup> Over the summer, parents opting for the voluntary enrollment plan appeared to be making good on the PHRC's doubt that a voluntary program would not work. Since sixty percent of the students enrolling in the magnet programs were African-American, the Pennsylvania Department of Education sent a team of investigators to Pittsburgh to examine the plans and proposed magnet sites and to conduct interviews. Their report recommended withholding support for the plan, excoriating the board for placing "politics" ahead of "educating students."<sup>564</sup> The U.S. Office of Civil Rights followed suit with its own investigation into why the district had failed to desegregate.<sup>565</sup> Pro-civil rights voters drew tremendous momentum from these successes in drawing state and federal support and in the grass roots activism.

Therefore, the second election for Pittsburgh's public school board brought a great victory for civil rights forces. Much of the reason lay in disgust with board actions. Olson's plan would have standardized schools so that all students would attend middle schools instead of elementary and junior high schools of varying grades. By consolidating the grade structure, the percentage of students attending segregated schools would have fallen from 51 percent to 39 percent.<sup>566</sup> At first the board approved the grade structure by one vote; then two board members offered four separate resolutions, increasingly strident against middle schools.<sup>567</sup> This outrage further galvanized African-American voters and white liberals to turn out in droves. Bucking national trends, Pittsburgh voters defeated the three board members who had been the strongest

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<sup>563</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 8 May 1979 in Gutkind, 110

<sup>564</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 27 June 1979, and Pennsylvania Department of Education Visitation Report, "Pittsburgh City Schools: Desegregation Effort," Pittsburgh, 1979 in Gutkind, 111-113

<sup>565</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 2 September 1979 in Gutkind, 115

<sup>566</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, October 16, 1979 in Gutkind, 117

<sup>567</sup> Board of Public Education, Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting, 24 October 1979, in Gutkind, 117-119

opponents of school busing and mandatory reassignment of students. More importantly voters replaced these three with candidates who had run on a platform of fully desegregating the district, Frances Viti, David Engel, and Rev. Jimmie Joe Robinson.<sup>568</sup> Robinson's victory especially signaled a twinning of moderate civil rights messages with the re-entry into electoral politics of voters previously adhering to more militant strains calling for separation. Robinson had brought his training with Malcolm X and the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) to Pittsburgh's Northside. During the riots and organizing of the Black Construction Coalition, he had served as a go-between for militant youth and African-American elected officials.<sup>569</sup> Hence Robinson's election radically shifted in the composition of the new board.

With that shift in composition, the board also radically shifted its tone towards system-wide desegregation plans. Before even assuming office, seven of its members wrote a letter to the head of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission announcing their intention to comply with the commission's order. At its first meeting, the new board passed Engel's resolution that the district would "develop a legally compliant desegregation plan." The new board in a second resolution wiped away most doubts about a return to years of haggling and shell games by adopting "a uniform grade structure" with middle schools through out the district.<sup>570</sup> It quickly established a Community Advisory Committee to amend the previous plan into a full desegregation plan and gave it just three months to submit a plan to the PHRC. In addition, the new board reined in the potential community pressure on that body by mandating that the committee only choose between those parts of four plans drawn up by the staff and in

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<sup>568</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 7 November 1979, in Gutkind, 120

<sup>569</sup> Jimmie Joe Robinson, interview

<sup>570</sup> Board of Public Education, Minutes of Special Board Meeting, 5 December 1979, 3, in Gutkind, 123

accordance with guidelines set out by the PHRC.<sup>571</sup> In accordance with the committee's recommendations and with the plan the board adopted, buses prepared to start rolling through Pittsburgh's streets in 1980, many for the sole purpose of correcting racial imbalances in schools.

Although the eventual plan left all sides in the dispute unsatisfied, it did bring far greater desegregation than what the district had done before, an artful compromise. The proponents of total desegregation felt slighted because the Community Advisory Committee had not made a definitive system-wide proposal, leaving the board little mantle of community decision making in its final call. The boycotts by 6000 white students, pickets by parents, and raucous testimony then divided the pro-integration majority on the board. Six days after the boycott, the board rejected the pairing of elementary schools by one vote.<sup>572</sup> By rejecting pairing, the board prevented total desegregation, according to the PHRC and the Minority Report put out by dissenting board members. The plan did not fully desegregate the Pittsburgh schools, but nor did it prohibit busing or allow every student to enroll openly wherever parents chose. In essence, it did not cave to the neighborhood schools crowd. Jean Fink, a member of the school board and of the National Association of Neighborhood Schools, said as much stating, "I've gone beyond what my constituency would like as it is." While the PHRC filed suit, it lost. So too did the National Association of Neighborhood Schools' suit.<sup>573</sup>

The appeals judges' rulings made a great deal of sense, allowing Pittsburgh's desegregation project to take a great, though incomplete, step forward and see what happened. Commonwealth Judge Wilkinson, for example, declared that more deliberation and planning

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<sup>571</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 16 January 1980 in Gutkind, 124-128.

<sup>572</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 6 February 1980 in Gutkind, 129

<sup>573</sup> Gutkind 145-149 and *Pittsburgh Press*, 18 September 1980 in Gutkind, 154

would just delay any large-scale desegregation plan by yet another stretch of years.<sup>574</sup> This judge and those on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court above him preferred a school district with 60 percent of students attending integrated schools than the 50 percent before the amended plan. And in actuality some of the PHRC's criticisms of the plan ring false or at least sound like an overly staunch first bargaining position. For example, the PHRC argued that the plan did not include future improvements.<sup>575</sup> But even the plan adopted committed the board to greater recruitment for magnet programs and the option to close a high school in two years if enacted measures were not succeeding.<sup>576</sup>

A tranquility brought on by fatigue descended on the fight as the buses began to roll. The organizations opposed to the plan on both sides pledged not to disrupt schooling with boycotts or demonstrations.<sup>577</sup> Squad cars stood ready, but police found the day boring. As students headed to the magnet programs of their choice, the school nearest them, or the school to which they had been assigned, the absences stood at a normal level.<sup>578</sup> The schools had survived their first district-wide attempt at desegregating. Though it had taken twelve years of fighting to get there, the percentage of Pittsburgh students attending segregated schools fell from 79 percent to 40 percent.<sup>579</sup> When African-Americans and the allies of civil rights stood together and clear on their goals, they fought off a grass roots counter movement and its political supporters.

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<sup>574</sup> *Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission v. Board of Public Education of the School District of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania*, Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania, No. 568 C.D. 1971, 23 July 1980 in Gutkind, 149

<sup>575</sup> Homer C. Floyd to Elinor Langer, President Pittsburgh School Board, Harrisburg, 3 April 1980 in Gutkind, 140-1

<sup>576</sup> Board of Public Education, Minutes of the Regular Meeting, 27 February 1980, 226-231 in Gutkind, 132

<sup>577</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 31 August 1980 in Gutkind, 152

<sup>578</sup> *Pittsburgh Press*, 2 September 1980, in Gutkind, 152

<sup>579</sup> *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, February 21, 1973 in Gutkind, 69 and *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, February 28, 1980 in Gutkind, 132.

## G. VICTORIES FOR TENANTS AND TRAINEES

Outside of what he was able to do in terms of helping school desegregation efforts, Irvis's increased power also helped African-Americans gain through his intervention in negotiations of the Metropolitan Tenants Organization (MTO) with the Pittsburgh Housing Authority (HACP). In the MTO, the mostly African-American residents of Pittsburgh's public housing projects joined the momentum of the civil rights movement. Individual tenants' councils in Pittsburgh had formed the MTO in February 1970 after finding that the HACP had failed to involve tenants in drawing up the proposed Modernization Program of the housing authority. The ten initial member councils, united in the federation, realized that individually they pulled less weight tackling their complaints with the authority.<sup>580</sup> Tenants complained of arbitrary evictions and abusive inspections of their apartments. Under the leadership of Bernice Crawley, the MTO demanded reforms in eviction and leasing policies and greater employment of residents by the authority. They also asked that a tenant be appointed to the board of the housing authority.<sup>581</sup> Within an astonishingly short three months of its formation, the Metropolitan Tenants Organization won a great victory. Backed by the Urban League, Father Donald McIlvane, and the United Black Front, they won recognition from the Housing Authority as the primary bargaining agent for public housing residents.<sup>582</sup> Then the MTO began hashing out a formal agreement. This work took longer and greater skill. In March 1972, Irvis negotiated for HACP officials to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the MTO formalizing the relationship.

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<sup>580</sup> Donald D. Saxton Jr. of Neighborhood Legal Service Association to Charles Howard, Director of Interfaith Housing Incorporated, May 20, 1980 in COR

<sup>581</sup> Metropolitan Tenants Organization, "Tenants' Rights: A New Birth of Freedom: Better Living for Low-income People." pamphlet n. d. and Metropolitan Tenants Organization, "A New Birth of Freedom: Tenants' Rights Rally," flyer October 24, 1970 in Robison Papers

<sup>582</sup> MTO Rally Program, [1970]. in Robison Papers.

Under this memorandum, the housing authority gave the MTO an office and supplies. HACP officials also had to meet with MTO representatives at least once every three months to review resident proposals. The memorandum also contractually obligated the HACP to send administrative reports and financial statements to the MTO.<sup>583</sup>

That same year, Irvis helped make certain that MTO representatives served on advisory committees for the new HACP social services department. The programs of the department signaled a victory in and of themselves, bringing vocational training to residents, but Irvis's help also gave tenants greater self-determination over the program. The contract that he helped negotiate between the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, HACP, and the Allegheny County Board of Assistance stipulated such representation.<sup>584</sup> In both the initial memorandum and the contract, Irvis's stature and power over state appropriations helped persuade housing authority officials to give greater say to the tenants. Beyond providing training for residents of public housing, civil rights leaders, especially Irvis, fought to defend and expand training.

When city officials threatened to seriously harm, if not destroy, the Pittsburgh Plan by stopping its major source of funds, civil rights leaders leveraged their allies in state government to end the threat. The civil rights organizations and Black Power activists had forced the City and federal authorities to intervene with building trades unions in 1969. For decades, contractors had refused to hire African-Americans, and racial discrimination from union apprenticeship programs had effectively frozen African-Americans out of jobs at most closed shops. Under the Pittsburgh Plan, the various parties in the dispute agreed to make a good faith effort to employ

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<sup>583</sup> Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, "Memorandum of Understanding" in K. Leroy Irvis papers, AIS

<sup>584</sup> Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, "1972-1973 Contract for the Establishment of a Social Services Department" 2 and Appendix IX in K. Leroy Irvis Papers, AIS

African-American workers after they received training from local African-American-run training centers.<sup>585</sup> The U.S. Department of Labor provided funding for the training program.<sup>586</sup> Over the course of the early 1970s, African-Americans previously shut out of the industry began to reap gains. By 1975, 933 minority trainees had gone through the program. Almost 100 received journeyman status, and the Steamfitters Union accepted its first eleven minority members.<sup>587</sup>

The threat came in 1976. Continuing a national pattern of replacing direct federal programs with block grants, the Ford administration asked the City of Pittsburgh to administer the moneys for the Pittsburgh Plan out of federal funds it received through the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). City officials decided to discontinue funding for the Pittsburgh Plan.<sup>588</sup> In response, K. Leroy Irvis, whose district housed two of the training centers, launched a committee to investigate Pittsburgh's entire \$16 million grant from CETA funds. Additionally, enough veterans of the civil rights movement had slogged their way up career paths to give this oversight committee "blue ribbon" heft. On it sat David Epperson by that point Dean of the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work, State Representative Joseph Rhodes, and Norman Johnson, Associate Dean of Urban and Public Affairs at Carnegie Mellon University. Irvis's official press release played further hard ball by noting the 40 percent unemployment rate of young African-American men in Pittsburgh. In contrast to the City's

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<sup>585</sup> Otto Davis, et al, Study of the Pittsburgh Plan (Washington, US Department of Labor, 1976) 162-168 as in Richard Goff, "Reconstructing the Building Trades: Race, Class, and the Making of the Pittsburgh Plan," paper presented at the African-Americans Organizations in Pennsylvania Conference, H. J. Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh, April 6, 2001, 2-3

<sup>586</sup> Press Release, House of Representatives Office of Legislative Information, June 15, 1976 in K. Leroy Irvis Papers

<sup>587</sup> Davis, 83 as in Goff 32

<sup>588</sup> Press Release, House of Representatives Office of Legislative Information, June 15, 1976 in K. Leroy Irvis Papers

proposed cuts in training programs, Pittsburgh businessmen, Irvis noted, pledged to create summer jobs for minority youth. Ominously, the committee would see if the city jobs program met state guidelines for minority-oriented programs.<sup>589</sup> Additionally, John Pittenger, the state secretary of education, wrote the Ford administration in 1976 urging that it “continue direct funding from Washington.” Irvis’s tactic worked. Only ten days later, under Irvis’s negotiations and the governor’s aid, the City and Allegheny County agreed to release the \$252,000 to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Department of Education then contracted with the administrative committee of the Pittsburgh Plan to continue the training program.<sup>590</sup>

## **H. HOLDING POLITICIANS ACCOUNTABLE**

When Dick Caliguiri became Pittsburgh mayor in 1977, civil rights groups did not sit idly hoping that he proved himself a more consistent supporter for their efforts than Mayor Flaherty had been. They pressured Caliguiri to live up to the promises he had made when he had joined them in 1973 criticizing Mayor Flaherty’s record on housing African-Americans. They did so by highlighting the inadequacies of the Flaherty administration’s housing innovations, even as the programs served as a great step forward in dealing with the city’s aging housing stock. The Urban League later criticized the program as focusing inadequate attention on African-Americans. It argued that the programs focused too much money and effort on homeowners when African-Americans predominantly lived in rental units. This may not be a fair criticism since the program helped more African-Americans become homeowners. The 1978 Urban

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<sup>589</sup> Press Release, House of Representatives Office of Legislative Information, June 5, 1976 in K. Leroy Irvis Papers

<sup>590</sup> Press Release, House of Representatives Office of Legislative Information, June 15, 1976 in K. Leroy Irvis Papers

League report on Pittsburgh's Community Development Block Grant Program put pressure on the Caliguri administration to tinker with the Neighborhood Housing Program in ways that better served African-Americans. It urged affirmative action to boost minority participation through greater outreach about the programs to African-Americans. By noting the poor participation rate in the Landlord Repair Program, it asked the agencies to cut bureaucratic red-tape and investigate if rent controls prevented landlords from making, at the very least, the subsidized improvements.<sup>591</sup>

Mostly, the report served notice to city politicians that civil rights leaders would not tolerate a pattern in which city administrators starved anti-poverty programs in order to give out tax cuts. The Urban League publicized the number of housing projects which city agencies had not completed within three years of the programs' inception. The City proposed in 1975, for instance, to help low-income homeowners rehabilitate 4,000 existing units in three years through loans and grants, but only 1,400 units had been completed by 1978. More importantly, the Urban League noted that city agencies had spent only 5 percent of funds earmarked for the Small Landlord Repair Program.<sup>592</sup>

The report's authors overstated their case that the City had not or could not meet its obligations, but their errors in logic are less important than the impact of their words. The URA did take longer than expected to rehabilitate homes. That tendency did not mean, however, that it was unlikely to meet long-term goals owing to malfeasance or deliberate delays. The report's authors assigned blame to the wrong culprits. Many obstacles slowed housing remodeling. The discovery of initially unsuspected damage to structures, the relocation of utilities, and the

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<sup>591</sup> Urban League of Pittsburgh Housing Department, *Performance Evaluation Community Development Block Grant Program of the City of Pittsburgh*, April, 1978, 21, 28-34

<sup>592</sup> Urban League of Pittsburgh, *Performance Evaluation*, 25, 11

incorporation of public comments into planning, all slowed public remodeling projects. While incorrect on assigning blame, the Urban League's report put city politicians on notice that the League intended to watch agency expenditures like a hawk. It would not tolerate a return to the pattern displayed during Pete Flaherty's years as mayor. The Urban League alerted Mayor Caliguiri that it was watching his budgets to see if he went under budget on anti-poverty programs in order to use surpluses to cut taxes.

Crucially, the report suggested ways to improve the number of contracts awarded to minority firms. It noted that large and heavy construction projects often precluded minority firms which lacked the "large investments in equipment, engineering skills, and organizational structure." In response, the report urged city agencies to award contracts to small and medium sized firms, not just large construction companies. While noting how capital requirements had served to block minority contractors, the report applauded the City's pilot bonding program for minority contracting as a solution. The authors called on African-Americans to use federal regulations as a political lever to gain more minority hiring wherever "regulations give citizen's groups a sign off role in land use decisions." And they called on the community to combat the "notoriously lax" enforcement of minority hiring regulations on federally insured or federally funded programs. K. Leroy Irvis had taken up these efforts in the state-mandated hiring programs for contractors working on the new convention center and on other state-funded construction programs. As a result, the Pennsylvania Department of General Services set a goal that minorities would make up 30 percent of workmen hired (exclusive of laborers) and would make up 30 percent subcontractors for the project.<sup>593</sup>

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<sup>593</sup> Urban League of Pittsburgh, *Performance Evaluation*, 33, 32; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of General Services, "News Release," May 20, 1977 and K. Leroy Irvis, "Subject of Concern," *Courier*, October 1, 1977 in Irvis Papers

The Urban League's report on Pittsburgh housing programs also showed growing sophistication in researching the complexities of racial inequality and offering ways to remove barriers to equality. For example, the authors of the report used the federally mandated reporting forms to check the number of people employed by city departments expending federal CDBG funds. The Pittsburgh Urban League's housing department then cross checked the number of employees by their income status. In so doing, the authors were able to show that the percentage of African-Americans decreased with each step up the income scale. African-Americans made up forty-four percent of the employees making under \$7,500 a year as compared to six percent of the employees making over \$15,000 a year. Furthermore, the Urban League investigation of housing projects uncovered holes in statistical reporting. It urged the City to increase its recording of data on targeted populations in the annual performance reports. The league also increased the stakes by stating that federal programs required such reporting on the number of African-American, low-income households, and female headed households served. In essence, the report acted as a shot across the bow of city administrators and politicians as a rallying cry to African-American and women's organizations. Activists signaled their willingness to use federal CDBG regulations to leverage greater pressure on local politicians to build and remodel homes for African-Americans and women.<sup>594</sup>

Such whistle blowing and cajoling appears to have paid off. URA reports showed that the Home Loan Programs mushroomed after 1978. During 1984 alone, the URA financed 3000 loans on 3800 units, including 1,844 units rehabilitated. The URA also underwrote landlord renovations to 229 units. All told, the loan programs led to \$171 million invested in housing in

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<sup>594</sup> Urban League of Pittsburgh, white paper on housing programs 1978, 31, 37

the City between 1970-1985 with 42 percent invested just between 1982 and 1985.<sup>595</sup> In addition, neighborhood groups particularly in mixed race neighborhoods gained a greater hand in directing rehabilitation efforts. Most prominently, after four years of pestering from community organizations about the slow pace of home restorations in the Northside, the City turned over administration of the project to the United Manchester Redevelopment Committee.<sup>596</sup>

In all, Pittsburgh's civil rights organizers faced huge challenges in the 1970s. The older challenges of some politicians' opposition to pro-African-American policies and widespread racial ill-will from many white Pittsburghers remained in place. Civil rights leaders in the 1970s also had to outflank an organized grassroots movement hampering African-Americans' efforts to desegregate the Pittsburgh school system. The flow of federal funds to Pittsburgh to ameliorate poverty and racial disparities had lessened. The point, however, is that even in a climate more difficult for African-American leaders to bring benefits back to their community, they did win create government programs to continue improving conditions for Pittsburgh's African-Americans. The political network which the civil rights movement had built up in the late 1960s came into its own in the 1970s. Leaders such as K. Leroy Irvis, Justin Johnson, and Rev. James Robinson had gained enough influence and rank within local and state government to use their positions to blunt and sometimes defeat the growing power of forces opposed to school desegregation. African-American organizations helped sway courts and government civil rights commissions with their testimony, court briefs, and position papers. The NAACP, Operation Dig, and other groups, furthermore, had built relations with Republicans in the late 1960s. In the 1970s, they successfully called on Republicans in federal agencies such as HUD and HEW to

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<sup>595</sup> Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, "Housing," 1986

<sup>596</sup> Jim Jubak, "Building Blocks: In Pittsburgh, neighborhood control has led to the rebirth of a community," *Environmental Action*, September 1982

help them win police brutality cases, more money for housing, and minority hiring. Not every victory came easily for African-Americans in this period, but none ever had. Because its political network had diversified and its members grown strong, Pittsburgh's African-American community stood ready to face the difficult challenges ahead of it as it entered the 1980s.

## V. WOMEN'S LIBERATION CATCHES ON IN PITTSBURGH, 1969-1980

“We whose hands have rocked the cradle, are now using our heads to rock the boats,”  
---Wilma Scott Heide, President National Organization for Women<sup>597</sup>

Ever the wordsmith, Wilma Scott Heide delivered that line repeatedly all around the U.S. and internationally. As one of three women from Pittsburgh to serve as the national president of NOW, Heide helped Pittsburgh women have a disproportionate influence over gender relations in the United States. She and other Pittsburgh NOW members started “rocking the boat with their heads” by greatly increasing the compilation and spread of information on women’s conditions. With such information and the help it brought NOW from local officials, Pittsburgh NOW won a precedent-setting victory over newspapers which had perpetuated women’s economic inferiority by advertising separate jobs for men and for women. NOW assembled a cohort of activists and organizations for tireless amounts of letter writing, research, and hundreds of office visits in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Through that work, Pittsburgh feminists gathered enough supporters in the Pennsylvania legislature to easily succeed in passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. The opportunity cost of some of their strategic choices then worked for and against Pittsburgh feminists. Fighting to help women in other states win passage of the ERA, Pittsburgh feminists diverted labor they could have spent getting their allies into office. Their choice to focus on abortion and sexism in the labor movement additionally brought

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<sup>597</sup> Wilma Scott Heide, pamphlet for New Feminist Talent Associates, NY, NY, n.d. circa 1974, in Evansgardner Collections

the movement opponents in state and local politics. Pittsburgh feminists mostly fought measures put forward by these opponents in the courts, a strategy with mixed results. Overall, because they had so quickly established political maturity and won quick victories with it, Pittsburgh's women rights advocates could expand their fight beyond state and local legislation but not without paying a heavy price.

#### **A. DISSEMINATING IDEAS ABOUT WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND OPPRESSION**

Pittsburgh feminists in the 1970s still faced an obstacle in identity formation, but KNOW and women's liberation groups greatly stepped up their attempts to overcome that barrier. KNOW and the other groups helped many more women see that they were linked by oppression directed at all members of their sex. KNOW, the feminist printing house formed by leaders of Pittsburgh NOW, became instrumental in such recruitment to the feminist cause. In classic social network form, Wilma Scott Heide coaxed a co-worker from the psychology department at the Pennsylvania State University at McKeesport to join NOW. The colleague, Jo Ann Evansgardner gathered into KNOW's catalogue of publications an impressive array of papers on the sociological and psychological aspects of gender relations.<sup>598</sup> KNOW's work joined in this task of identity formation with the "consciousness raising" of the city's nascent Women's Liberation movement. Rooted both in Maoist practices and civil rights movement "rap sessions," consciousness raising sessions brought women together to share experiences, identify their common problems, and become active.<sup>599</sup>

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<sup>598</sup> Evansgardner, November 7, 2001, 3-4

<sup>599</sup> Alice Echols, "Nothing Distant About It: Women's Liberation and Sixties Radicalism," in David Farber ed., *The Sixties From Memory to History*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994) 163-167 Robin

Both KNOW and the work of Women's Liberationists greatly succeeded in recruiting to feminism Pittsburgh women of both enough numbers and of enough skills to push the movement forward. In the most spectacular case, KNOW's literature won a new convert who quickly rose to lead the women's movement nationwide. In the city's South Hills, a young graduate student named Eleanor Smeal lay recuperating from surgery for several months. Her husband brought her dozens of books and tracts to read, many of them on women's rights.<sup>600</sup> In 1971, Smeal showed up at KNOW's printing office in Evansgardner's house to pick up some Earth Day flyers, saw the NOW newsletters, and joined on the spot.<sup>601</sup> KNOW, consciousness raising, and other activities by NOW greatly boosted the number of people involved in NOW in the Pittsburgh Area. Nationwide NOW chapters grew on average by 50 to 70 percent.<sup>602</sup> By 1977, Southwestern Pennsylvania boasted twenty-two NOW chapters.<sup>603</sup> In those numbers, KNOW demonstrated its power to bring the movement hundreds of hands to help do the work necessary to secure women's rights.

Those publications from KNOW built not only membership rosters in feminist organizations but also the network of scholars collaborating on women's issues and their

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Morgan, "Introduction," in *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from Women's Liberation*, (NY: Random House, 1970) xxiii

600 Deborah Sieger, personal conversation, October 24, 2004. Sieger replaced Smeal as Executive Director of Pennsylvania NOW when Smeal moved up to the national office.

601 Evansgardner, November 7, 2001,

602 Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, (NY: Longman, 1975), 57 as in Paula Giddings, *When And Where I Enter, The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*.(NY: Bantam Books, 1984, 3<sup>rd</sup> printing, 1988) 306

603 Know Inc., Dear Friends of Equal Rights, August 1977 in Evansgardner Collection.

influence. Its work kick-started the field of women's studies around the country.<sup>604</sup> KNOW's catalog branched out from movement pamphlets and psychological works after a national women's conference where a member of KNOW met Sheila Tobias, a professor from Cornell. Tobias had launched one of the first women's rights conferences at Cornell and one of the first ones in the nation. Through that Cornell conference, Tobias had collected items which professors at other schools taught on women's issues as segments of their courses on other subjects. Together their materials formed the basis for Tobias to put together a whole college course on women's studies. Tobias allowed KNOW to reproduce all of its materials. KNOW then disseminated many of these same course curricula for years.<sup>605</sup> At a time when publishers balked at printing many such works and husbands pressured writers to withdraw articles, KNOW performed an invaluable service to the movement.<sup>606</sup> During the 1970s, KNOW supplied a lot of the course readings of the burgeoning women's studies field.<sup>607</sup> For instance, KNOW published Jo Freeman's *The Women's Liberation Movement: Its Aims Structures, and Ideas*, a 1975 work which historian Ruth Rosen listed as one of the earliest and most influential histories of the movement.<sup>608</sup> In these ways, KNOW recruited even more college students to join the ranks of feminist activists and voters. It additionally gave Pittsburgh feminists the research they needed to push forward their reform proposals. From the works KNOW printed, NOW and allied activists created talking points, speeches, testimony, and court briefings.

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<sup>604</sup> Ellie Smeal, as head of the Feminist Majority Foundation, credited KNOW with as much in the 1990s Smeal as in Wetherby, electronic communication, February 8, 2002

<sup>605</sup> Evansgardner, November 7, 2001, 3-4

<sup>606</sup> Morgan, *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, xiii-xvii

<sup>607</sup> Wetherby, February 8, 2002

<sup>608</sup> Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 401

## B. FIGHTING FOR THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT, 1969-1975

By giving such evidence on women's rights to legislators and by meeting with them repeatedly face-to-face, NOW members thrust forward the fight to pass the Pennsylvania Equal Rights Amendment. In 1969, Nancy Bowdler and the NOW legislative committee had built fact files on discrimination against women and talking points to give to legislators and constituent lobbyists alike, while Wilma Scott Heide coordinated with the governor's legislative representatives.<sup>609</sup> The Equal Rights Amendment took on extra importance because the NOW Employment Committee under Thelma Isaac pointed out that, while the percentage of women and married women working had increased in the 1960s, women's income relative to that of men had decreased. Isaac informed the group that women tended to earn low salaries in low paying jobs and, more importantly, women had lower salaries than men of the same level of education and qualifications. Isaac argued that the trend had worsened between 1960 and 1969 because government agencies were not enforcing laws or enforcing protective laws which held women back. Pittsburgh NOW members additionally circulated newspaper articles saying that "despite the law requiring equal pay, the sexual salary gap is widening."<sup>610</sup>

Armed with those facts, NOW members set about changing the trend through the ERA. The legislative committee had heard from legislative staffers that elected officials had to receive twelve letters on an issue before they paid any attention. Therefore, Gerry Gardner and Jo Ann Evansgardner hosted letter writing parties almost every week from 1969 to 1978. At each party between five and fifteen NOW members congregated to fire off letters, having secured

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<sup>609</sup>Minutes of the First Pittsburgh Chapter of National Organization for Women, December 10, 1969 and Minutes February 20, 1969 both in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>610</sup>Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, June 18, 1969 and Vera Glasser, "Women Demand a New Role," Miami Herald, March 17, 1969, 1E in Evansgardner Collection,

permission to write on their friends' behalf in order to boost the numbers. They also varied the paper used to make the letters look more spontaneous. NOW also organized a full busload of Pittsburghers to trek to Harrisburg for lobbying. Each member visited two to three legislators. They delivered packets with two to three articles in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment assembled and printed by KNOW. NOW tables in the courtyard then served as staging areas with members reporting back how legislators responded and encouraging one another.<sup>611</sup>

Additionally, Jo Ann Evansgardner's 1971 race for city council drew upon the existing political and corporate ties of NOW members, using most of the race as an opportunity to speak about ERA and NOW. The whole idea came about because NOW was having trouble getting media coverage that treated their issues in a fashion more deeply than "look what the little ladies are up to now." Members were scrounging for ways to get the message out. Carrol Burris suggested that running someone for city council was as good a way as any. Burris then helped Evansgardner file her candidacy. As a registered Republican, Evansgardner became the likely candidate because the Democratic nominations still looked too closed off. Evansgardner called upon her neighbor Nelle Dressler, a leader in the Allegheny County GOP, to bring together Republican women to meet and hear Evansgardner, if not to raise some funds. NOW member Pat Miller, moreover, put Evansgardner in touch with associates in advertising. The campaign's brochures provoked readers with the slogan "Don't Call Me Lady." Those advertisers borrowed the line from one of Evansgardner's arguments at an American Psychological Association Convention. Dozens of NOW volunteers carried those brochures to homes all over East Liberty, Squirrel Hill, Shadyside, and Oakland. Others procured for Evansgardner speaking invitations to women's groups such as Zontas and the American Association of University Women. NOW

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<sup>611</sup> Joann Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow, Part 3, November 7, 2001, 19-22 in SLGA

member Bosanka Evosevich offered her mother's restaurant on the Southside for a fundraiser. Burris also gave the campaign ideas on how to get the word out with little money.<sup>612</sup>

Creativity and provocative acts in the campaign spread the word on NOW. At Burris's suggestion, Evansgardner and her supporters handed out literature to passersby at downtown street corners, especially outside department stores. Evansgardner jumped onto and off buses with literature using the downtown free fare zone to spread the word. Many of those same buses carried her advertisements, saying "JoAnn Evans, NOW." Like Pete Flaherty's mayoral billboards which only said "Pete!," the vagueness of this slogan would have caused a buzz with people wondering what it meant. The curious found out more about the National Organization for Women. Other brochures said, "Put this woman in her place." The double meaning clearly captured a main message of the NOW, teaching about women being put down for expressing their minds and, at the same time, about proving their capabilities to lead. People drawn in by that first hook read more inside about discriminatory conditions women faced.<sup>613</sup> Another act not directly related to the ERA garnered attention for obstacles to women's equality. The chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh rebuffed NOW requests to set up childcare facilities for students, staff and faculty. In response, Evansgardner and her campaign volunteers set up an impromptu childcare facility in the middle of the hallways and elevator lobby of the Cathedral of Learning. Every passerby received a flyer saying, "this is a poor excuse for a daycare facility."<sup>614</sup>

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<sup>612</sup> At the time Evansgardner still went by the last name Evans. Jo Ann Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow, Part 2 on October 23, 2001, 1-13, 19

<sup>613</sup> "Jo Ann Evans for City Council," in Pittsburgh NOW Papers

<sup>614</sup> Evansgardner, October 23, 2001, 3, 10-12

Moreover, Evansgardner's novelty as a candidate brought her dozens of appearances on talk shows. Few Republicans earnestly campaigned for city council in the city and a woman doing it drew all the more attention. Every time Evansgardner took to the airwaves, she held forth on feminist issues.<sup>615</sup>

The nature of a campaign also drew crowds to hear Evansgardner at candidates forums. Instead of haranguing audience members about taxation and zoning, Evansgardner told them about the need for equal protections. Instead of literature on building new playgrounds or putting up stop signs, audience members received four page pamphlets on the need for an Equal Rights Amendment, printed courtesy of KNOW.<sup>616</sup> The campaign focused so much on NOW and women's rights that questions on city council and its powers stumped Evansgardner at first. Carrol Burriss again came to the rescue, using her knowledge of the inner workings of council to teach Evansgardner how to answer such questions. This aid came handy when Evansgardner's stock answer "Well I'd approach that issue as a woman discriminated against," proved unsatisfactory. At the time, Allegheny County GOP Chair Elsie Hillman disliked having a firebrand feminist running for office on her ticket. When Evansgardner tried to recruit Hillman into NOW, Hillman asked back, "Well, what have women ever done for me?" On the other hand, some Republican women came up to her saying, "We're so glad you're in our party."<sup>617</sup>

All of the publicity and stumping done by NOW helped win passage of the ERA in Pennsylvania, but so did the behind the scenes work NOW members did to bring other organizations on board. In that fight, they called upon their personal friendships to change the positions of the League of Women Voters and the ACLU. At the national convention of the

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<sup>615</sup> Evansgardner, October 23, 2001, 3-4, 9-13

<sup>616</sup> Evans for Council, Equal Rights Amendment pamphlet in Jo Ann Evansgardner file in SLGA

<sup>617</sup> Evansgardner, October 23, 2001, 9

League of Women Voters held in Pittsburgh's suburbs in 1971, NOW member Ellie Smeal saw a notice for a small caucus about the ERA. She immediately called NOW officer Phyllis Wetherby, and, together at the meeting, they learned of some league members' dismay at the national staffers' position. Staffers simply told ERA supporters in the league that they had not studied the policy and therefore would not bring it to the floor for debate. It angered these members that league volunteers handed literature to voters on everything from conservation to disarmament but not women's equality. As treasurer for the Allegheny County League of Women Voters, Smeal gained the ear of the league's president, who explained how to introduce something from the floor. Wetherby phoned NOW members in the league who served in other states' delegations. Several of them also were frustrated that the league had "not been doing anything but studying." By the end of the convention, they had leaned on their friends in the organization to have the League of Women Voters switch from defending legislation offering women special protections in the workplace to supporting the Equal Rights Amendment. Smeal and her allies had won such a change in policy.<sup>618</sup>

When the American Civil Liberties Union would not support the Equal Rights Amendment, Wetherby called her colleague Marty Wekselman who served on the national board. At first, he declined to see the issue as important, but Wetherby worked on him through his wife and daughter. Wekselman became instrumental in changing the ACLU's policy.<sup>619</sup> At the polls that May, voters received literature in favor of the ERA handed to them by members of the League of Women Voters, the ACLU, in addition to NOW. Such work paid off.

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<sup>618</sup> Phyllis Wetherby interview, December 4, 2001, 70-1

<sup>619</sup> Wetherby, interview, December 4, 2001, 71-2

Pennsylvania voters, in May of 1971, approved the amendment to Pennsylvania's Constitution by a two-to-one margin.<sup>620</sup>

That victory also brought other women's groups into the fight for a federal amendment with powerful results. Pittsburgh's League of Women Voters supported this fight in an even larger way. The league then joined several other groups in distributing, for NOW, 7,000 KNOW-printed pamphlets on the Equal Rights Amendment. That effort also involved the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Pittsburgh Women's Political Caucus, and two Unitarian churches. NOW and the other groups timed that publicity campaign for full effect, just one week before the state senate held hearings on the federal ERA.<sup>621</sup> Furthermore, Jeanne Fee, president of the League of Women Voters, urged all readers of the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* to contact their state senators. Fee said, "The League of Women Voters, is proud to join albeit belatedly the thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations now working to end discrimination against the majority minority, women."<sup>622</sup> A representative from the Pittsburgh YWCA, probably because of the group's three decades of work advocating before the state legislature, actually testified at the hearing. YWCA testimony had added effect because of its shift in stance on the amendment. From the 1920s to 1971, the YWCA had opposed the ERA as a threat to laws which protected women from long hours on the job and hazardous working conditions. The YWCA addressed this shift head-on saying that protective labor laws for

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<sup>620</sup> *The 1972-3 Pennsylvania Manual*, 987

<sup>621</sup> Minutes of the Board of First Pittsburgh NOW, May 24, 1972 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>622</sup> Jeanne C. Fee, President League of Women Voters of Mt. Lebanon, letter to the editor, "Let's Be 17th on the List of States," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, Saturday, May 20, 1972, 6

women ought to be extended to cover men.<sup>623</sup> With such a forceful groundswell, state senators released the amendment for a vote. Later that fall as the full legislature considered the amendment, Virginia Hoover, the president of the Greater Pittsburgh YWCA, wrote letters to every member of the Allegheny County legislative delegation asking them to support the national Equal Rights Amendment. And she encouraged individual letters from YWCA members.<sup>624</sup> In the wake of all these groups' work, the state ratified the federal constitutional amendment on September 20, 1972, making Pennsylvania the twenty-first state to do so.<sup>625</sup>

The work NOW and other groups had done to counteract discrimination in education helped them figure out where legislators stood on the ERA issue. Several legislators, including civil rights leaders turned legislators K. Leroy Irvis and Sarah Anderson, had re-introduced an amendment to the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act in May of 1971. They sought to add sex to the list of protected categories.<sup>626</sup> It had stalled in committee the first time in 1969, teaching NOW members and other supporters how opponents could use parliamentary tactics to kill a bill.<sup>627</sup> Two years later, as the bill moved through committees, the earlier votes allowed ERA supporters to see where legislators stood on women's issues before they took a vote on the U.S. Constitutional amendment. They then knew whom they had to target for harder lobbying. Nine days before the Pennsylvania Senate Committee on Constitutional Changes and

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<sup>623</sup> The testimony read "We feel the time has come for both men and women to be treated equally under the law. This amendment will outlaw discrimination against women as a class, while at the same time no longer allow them special privileges which are denied to men." Pittsburgh YWCA, "Testimony Prepared for the Pennsylvania Senate Public Hearings on the Equal Rights Amendment," June 1, 1972 in YWCA Records

<sup>624</sup> Minutes of the Public Affairs Committee of the Metropolitan YWCA, September 6, 1972 in YWCA Records.

<sup>625</sup> First Pittsburgh NOW, Newsletter, November 6, 1976 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>626</sup> HB 1000 of 1971 in Irvis Papers

<sup>627</sup> HB 1064 April 29, 1969, Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, June 18, 1969 in Evansgardner Collection

Federal Relations held hearings on the ERA, NOW members returned to Harrisburg.<sup>628</sup> It was not coincidental that dozens of NOW chapters descended on the unlikely town of Irwin, Pennsylvania for an emergency rally in support of the ERA the week before the hearings began. Irwin lay at the heart of a committee member's district.<sup>629</sup>

Pittsburgh NOW members had a large impact even on the federal level fight for ERA. They started two traditions in fighting for the ERA's passage in Congress. First, Pittsburgh board members hounded members of Congress and kept members and allies educated and informed about even minute developments as it worked through Congress. Members then blitzed Congress with letters and visits.<sup>630</sup> As a member of the national board of NOW, Wilma Scott Heide had access to such information and shared it widely. Heide also led twenty NOW members to disrupt U.S. Senate hearings on an unrelated constitutional amendment, the one lowering the voting age to eighteen. Senator Byrch Bayh later disclosed that these placard-waving activists prompted him to hold the first hearings on the ERA in fourteen years.<sup>631</sup> Other NOW leaders from around the country recognized Heide's leadership in that protest and in Pittsburgh NOW's immense level of activity by electing her chair of the national board, a little over a month after that protest. Second, Pittsburgh NOW members traveled down to Washington D. C. to lobby for the ERA. Phyllis Wetherby thought it better if they go down together and rented the bus out of her own pocket.<sup>632</sup> Pittsburgh's various chapters sent members to

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<sup>628</sup> Minutes of the Board of First Pittsburgh NOW, May 24, 1972 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>629</sup> Minutes of the Board of First Pittsburgh NOW, May 26, 1972 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>630</sup> Minutes of the Pittsburgh NOW, May 21, 1969 and October 15, 1969, Minutes of the Board of First Pittsburgh NOW, March 1, 1972

<sup>631</sup> "NOW 20 Year Chronology"

<sup>632</sup> Joann Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow, November 7, 2001, 5 in SLGA

Washington once a month for several years to keep up the pressure.<sup>633</sup> The strategy paid off as did all of the work going on nationwide in states such as Pennsylvania. Congressional representatives passed the measure without amendment in October of 1971 by a lopsided margin of 354 to 23. The U.S. Senate passed the bill 84 to 8 in March of 1972.<sup>634</sup>

Success in their fight for such equal rights under the law in Pennsylvania meant that Pittsburgh's women rights advocates could devote their attention to helping women's rights advocates in other states pass the ERA. Provocatively, NOW members from several Southwestern Pennsylvania chapters organized a blood drive selling their blood to raise money for efforts in other states in 1972. The effort, as did many things undertaken by NOW, showed that women far removed from the more liberal portions of the city were highly motivated too. Chapters from outlying communities in Westmoreland and Beaver Counties joined the usual suspects from First Pittsburgh NOW and South Hills NOW.<sup>635</sup> Defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in state legislatures in New Jersey and New York alarmed Pittsburgh feminists in 1975. In the wake of such defeats, the Central YWCA alerted its branches that anti-ERA forces in some states even were gearing up to revoke ratification. The public affairs staff began planning programs for such an eventuality in Pennsylvania.<sup>636</sup> First Pittsburgh NOW in the meantime concentrated on passage in other states. Its members sold ERA-themed medallions to raise money for other states and sent members to participate in leafleting outside the White House and to the Women's Equality March and Rally 1976.<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>633</sup> Wetherby, electronic communication, February 8, 2002, in SLGA in AIS

<sup>634</sup> "NOW 20 Year Chronology" in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>635</sup> Barbara Kowalski, "Bloodletting for the ERA," NOW Press Release, circa 1972, in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>636</sup> Memo, YWCA Greater Pittsburgh To: Program Units, November 13, 1975 in YWCA Records

<sup>637</sup> First Pittsburgh NOW Newsletter, Summer 1976 in Evansgardner Collection.

The biggest event however was the National Walk-a-thon for Equal Rights. Twenty-two chapters in Western Pennsylvania alone held such events to raise money for the fight in Congress and in state capitols.<sup>638</sup> As the deadline for ratification neared, Pittsburgh NOW chapters sent members to the Capitol every Thursday to fight for an extension. Molly Yard and her colleagues at the YWCA and the Americans for Democratic Action harkened back to their civil rights days and launched a March on the Post Office tying the ERA symbolically to the morality of the 1964 Civil Rights Act for which the original march took place.<sup>639</sup> Once they succeeded in their fight in Congress to extend the deadline for ratification, the Pittsburgh NOW buses turned from Washington D. C. to state capitols. Every month Pittsburgh sent busloads of activists to Illinois and Indiana to help urge state legislators there to ratify the amendment.<sup>640</sup> The accompaniment of African-American Pittsburgh NOW members helped open doors in Illinois to the network of African-American legislators. Nora Parker Carter had worked with Jesse Jackson's Operation PUSH in Chicago before moving to Pittsburgh and joining Pittsburgh NOW. Her ties gave Pittsburgh feminists access to these legislators' offices that even Chicago NOW members did not have.<sup>641</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> Know Inc., Dear Friends of Equal Rights, August 1977 in Evansgardner Collection. The event was repeated the next year and one walker approached the Republican gubernatorial candidate for a sponsorship to walk. She learned from Thornburgh that his wife Ginny was a walker to whom he donated and that both he and his wife supported the ERA. Richard Thornburgh to Margaret Ellis, Harrisburg Pennsylvania, September 7, 1978 in RLT Papers

<sup>639</sup> Minutes of the Public Policy Committee, March 8, 1978, and April 5, 1978, in YWCA Records

<sup>640</sup> Evansgardner interview, November 7, 2001, 5 and Wetherby, February 8, 2001. An ERA Freedom Train headed to Springfield, Illinois in 1976 capitalizing on all the hoopla surrounding the U.S. Bicentennial. Greater Pittsburgh NOW Newsletter, March 1976 in Evansgardner Collection .

<sup>641</sup> Wetherby, email, February 8, 2001

The Governor's Commission on the Status of Women provided an outlet through which women could address their inequality in Pennsylvania. Governor Shapp created the commission in February of 1972 "to insure that the principles of the Pennsylvania Equal Rights Amendment were implemented."<sup>642</sup> Shapp appointed Alma Fox, then serving as the president of East End NOW and vice president of the NAACP, to head the commission.<sup>643</sup> In addition to asking state legislators to ratify the federal Equal Rights Amendment, commissioners pushed Governor Shapp into initiating a review to change all laws in Pennsylvania which violated Pennsylvania's ERA.<sup>644</sup> Too often, the Commission on the Status of Women had too little power or authority.<sup>645</sup> For example, a commission representative sat on the Pennsylvania Affirmative Action Council, but only managed to change the state employment forms to exclude sex.<sup>646</sup> At the very least though, the commission printed reports showing discrepancies in the treatment of women. These reports, because they came from a state agency, carried the imprimatur of the state.<sup>647</sup> Commission staffers titled one such report, "Effects of ERA, a databased response to opponents." The report listed the benefits women gained under Pennsylvania's law and the privileges that they now had to share with men. For instance, judges could no longer arbitrarily set sentences for women when men received fixed sentences for the same crime. Additionally, as the CSW reported, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission ruled that women were entitled to disability status when pregnant. And finally widowers joined widows in gaining

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<sup>642</sup> *The Pennsylvania Manual, 1972-3*, 987

<sup>643</sup> "Black Women Here Define Lib Role," *Pittsburgh Press*, February 20, 1972, A-26 in CLP Biography Files

<sup>644</sup> *The Pennsylvania Manual, 1972-3*, 988

<sup>645</sup> Evansgardner , interview, January 18, 2002, 30-31 in SLGA

<sup>646</sup> *The Pennsylvania Manual, 1972-3*, 987

<sup>647</sup> Evansgardner , interview, January 18, 2002, 30-31 in SLGA

property tax relief, and ex-wives had to shoulder child support if their income exceeded their ex-husband's.<sup>648</sup> In making these findings known, the commission provided supporters of the ERA a stronger case for their cause or at least the appearance that the findings were objective. The commission also educated the public about women's' abilities. One film which it put out free of charge to employers and civic groups in Pennsylvania showed stories of women working in skilled and blue collar occupations.<sup>649</sup> In doing so, the commission hoped to break down barriers to women's employment so that fewer women had to bring forward discrimination cases.

Some of the focus on passage of the national Equal Rights Amendment grew out of frustration with judges' unfavorable rulings in anti-discrimination cases brought under local and state ordinances. Federal judges overturned work by state commissions saying that pregnant women had no rights to disability compensation. Federal judges also ruled that Philadelphia could use public money to set up schools for boys only. And closest to home, a federal judge ruled that University of Pittsburgh Professor Sharon Johnson had no case for discrimination even under Pittsburgh's Women's Rights Ordinance and Pennsylvania's Equal Rights Amendment.<sup>650</sup> The loss in Johnson's case resonated especially with Pittsburgh NOW members because of their voluminous work in support of Johnson. They also felt her denial of tenure was especially egregious since Johnson had published more articles than anyone in her department and brought in over \$300,000 in grants to the department. The case also resonated because the university overall employed just 117 women as full time faculty out of 1127. Moreover, the University had only one women faculty member in its law school and one in engineering. NOW members,

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<sup>648</sup> Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, "ERA Information and Resources List," 1975 in Evansgardner Collections

<sup>649</sup> First Pittsburgh NOW Newsletter, Fall 1976 in Evansgardner Collections

<sup>650</sup> KNOW, Inc., "Dear Friends of Equal Rights," Pittsburgh PA, August 1977 in Evansgardner Collections

along with the University Committee for Women's Rights, felt that their research proved a pernicious climate of discrimination at the university.<sup>651</sup> To have a federal judge ignore such grounds then posed a threat to many women's advancement in these fields. The Pittsburgh Women's Rights Ordinance rang hollow if it did not apply to universities, a major means of breaking down barriers to women's economic opportunities. The Pennsylvania Equal Rights Amendment and the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Relations Commission were diminished in power if federal judges with the stroke of a pen could rule unconstitutional major actions brought under them. NOW informed hundreds of customers on its mailing list that such cases meant they had to have a US Constitutional Amendment for protecting women's equality.<sup>652</sup>

### C. ENDING DISCRIMINATION IN JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

While these later cases failed, NOW's case against the *Pittsburgh Press* won at every stage. In the case, the extensive work which NOW members did developing alliances paid off. Betty Friedan had cursed, "What do you mean you brought a suit in Pittsburgh?," thinking that the group would fail, setting a bad precedent. Pittsburgh NOW proved her wrong. When the case first came up before the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, Wilma Scott Heide enticed Gerry Gardner, a scientist for Gulf Oil, to bring his renowned research skills to bear on fact finding.<sup>653</sup> Gardner stunned the commissioners in 1970 with his findings of a 300 percent

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<sup>651</sup> NOW, "Fact Sheet on Sex Discrimination at Pitt, " circa 1972 in Evansgardner Collection; Cathleen Schurr, Women face mounting harassment at Pitt," *Forum*, April 9, 1971, 4

<sup>652</sup> NOW, Inc., "Dear Friends of Equal Rights," Pittsburgh PA, August 1977 in Evansgardner Collections

<sup>653</sup> Evansgardner, interview, September 19, 2001, 40-44

discrepancy in the wages for the jobs advertised for women versus those for men.<sup>654</sup> The Women's Equity Action League and the National Association of Women Lawyers both with many overlapping NOW members, lent their support in amicus briefs. NOW members, additionally, used their ties to argue successfully to the ACLU board to overcome its objections that the *Press* had freedom of speech on its side. The Allegheny County Council for Civil Rights, by that point under the presidency of the YWCA's Jan Neffke, also filed an amicus brief.<sup>655</sup> Members showed up in all the hearings to influence the commission.<sup>656</sup> The commission found that the *Press* had abetted in discrimination by having this segregated system of want ads.<sup>657</sup>

When the *Press* appealed the case, all sorts of civil rights leaders feared that a loss would overturn the entire ordinance and joined NOW's case. In the Allegheny County Court Of Common Pleas and the appellate court too, the work of NOW members again prevailed by bringing allies to bear. The threat to the authority of the ordinance brought some aid from African-American groups, but NOW members shouldered most of the responsibility. Gardner's committee assembled boxes of evidence lest "a city attorney lose the case by goofing off." Assistant City Solicitor Marion Finkelhor, by that point a NOW member, represented NOW, arguing that only an unusual woman would apply anyway for a job in the male column even

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<sup>654</sup> Robert Beech, "Hearing, Please Turnout January 15 + 16," Flyer January 1970 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>655</sup> Commission on Human Relations, "Job Ad System Ruled Unlawful," *Human Relations Review*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Fall 1970, 1

<sup>656</sup> Robert Beech, "Hearing, Please Turnout January 15 + 16," Flyer January 1970 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>657</sup> Commission on Human Relations, "Job Ad System Ruled Unlawful," *Human Relations Review*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Fall 1970, 1

though she was qualified for it and interested in it.<sup>658</sup> In the Common Pleas Court hearings an African-American and a NOW member, Ruth Anderson, gave the most compelling testimony. She told about applying for an “of interest to men” job ad as a cook in a noodle factory. The bosses there told Anderson flat out that they did not hire women. Blinded by Anderson’s race, lawyers for the *Press* never thought to cross examine her that she might be a NOW member and biased by that affiliation.<sup>659</sup> A common pleas judge upheld the CHR’s ruling as did a state appeals court.<sup>660</sup> NOW and ACLU member Marjorie Matson then represented NOW before the U.S. Supreme Court.<sup>661</sup> Matson, a former target of McCarthyite smear campaigns, won over enough moderates and conservatives to counter the liberals on the bench who thought the case interfered with freedom of the press.<sup>662</sup> The case set a national precedent with newspapers across the country abandoning the practice of segregating want ads. Just as the fight against segregated want-ads had begun in the 1960s and come to fruition in the 1970s, so did the struggle to hold employers and unions accountable to women.

#### **D. FEMINISTS FIGHT FOR WORKING CLASS WOMEN**

The publicity in NOW’s early victories led union women to ask Pittsburgh NOW for help, involving the local chapters in long-term, stubborn employment fights. Pittsburgh’s NOW

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<sup>658</sup> Wetherby, interview, December 4, 2001, 73, 75 and South Hill NOW Newsletter, April 1971 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>659</sup> Wetherby, electronic communication for oral history interview follow up questions for the SLGA, February 8, 2002

<sup>660</sup> South Hill NOW Newsletter, April 1971 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>661</sup> Southwest Pennsylvania NOW Newsletter, Winter 1973 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>662</sup> Evansgardner, interview, September 19, 2001, 40-1

members fought for working class women's rights even while leftists, such as the local University Committee for Women's Rights, dismissed NOW as middle class women only seeking better opportunities for members of their class.<sup>663</sup> As early as 1969, NOW's employment committee had highlighted the growing wage gap for all women.<sup>664</sup> The fights for blue collar women's rights powerfully contradict one historical interpretation of NOW in the 1970s as an elitist organization.<sup>665</sup> One of the cases involved downright union malfeasance towards its female members. NOW interceded in 1969 on behalf of female employees at Pittsburgh Plate Glass in New Kensington.<sup>666</sup> Women there claimed that the union and the

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663 Evansgardner, interview. Members of the UCWR for several years would have little to do with Pittsburgh's NOW members. A parallel struggle between radical and liberal wings divided feminists nationwide with a younger generation calling NOW conservative or denouncing it for prioritizing gender over class or race. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex, The Case for Feminist Revolution*, (NY: Quill, 1970) 39, 43 and Robin Morgan, "Introduction," xxii. While Morgan pointed out to NOW's detractors that NOW had many working class members, she also feared that it could create "a bourgeois feminist movement that never quite dared enough...never really reached out beyond its own class or race."

664 The A&P workers had been fighting since 1969. It is not clear that NOW was involved in that A&P case until 1972. In other union struggles, NOW members did become involved in 1969.

665 Several authors characterize NOW from the period as class biased, continuing a rationale put forward in Barbara Ehrenreich's call in 1976 for a new struggle based on socialist feminism. Barbara Ehrenreich, "What is socialist feminism," *WIN Magazine*, June 3, 1976 as in [www.cwluherstory.com/CWLUArchive/socialfem.html](http://www.cwluherstory.com/CWLUArchive/socialfem.html). See for example, Zillah Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism* (NY: Longman, 1981 reprinted Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 4, Zillah Eisenstein, "What's In a Name? Seeing Feminism, Universalism and Modernity," *wag-a-du*, Vol. 1, Spring 2004 in [web.cortland.edu/wagadu/issue1/holmstrom.html](http://web.cortland.edu/wagadu/issue1/holmstrom.html), and Nancy Holmstrom, "The Socialist Feminist Project," *Monthly Review*, March 2003 as in <http://www.monthlyreview.org/0303holmstrom.htm>

Other works which highlight the fights undertaken by NOW nationwide for working class women include, Ruth Rosen's *The World Turned Upside Down* and Paula Giddings, *When And Where I Enter, The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. Rosen, 89-90 and Giddings, 306-7

666 The frustration with the union not taking seriously the women's grievances strongly parallels the fights of the Black Construction Coalition. Only further research will tell how much NOW's involvement in the BCC helped its

employer agreed to lay off women in exchange for protecting male union members' benefits. At those women's request, NOW members did meet with a union leader, but that was all they did in that case.<sup>667</sup> In later cases, activists from NOW took a larger role, lending their experience to help such women shepherd their cases through the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, and/or the EEOC. In 1971, the EEOC forced Murphy's Restaurants and the AFL local representing its employees to redraw seniority lines. Female employees there had brought suit because women with thirty years of experience earned two cents less an hour than men with just one year of experience. NOW fought for Murphy's employees again the next year when the new Teamsters local shut them out of meetings, cut back on women in leadership roles, and tried to backslide on seniority. NOW members helped with informational pickets and wrote letters of support.<sup>668</sup> NOW intervened on two separate occasions on behalf of employees at the A&P Grocery chain. Vern Vallo and Alice Clark came to them after repeatedly failing to force their union to even file a grievance on their behalf. The A&P refused to hire many such women full-time even after several had worked for the company for twenty years. Gerry Gardner accompanied Vallo and Clark to union meetings, giving them courage in their attempt to win election to positions within the local. Unfortunately for these women, their attempts proved futile as the union leaders closed nominations.<sup>669</sup>

NOW members then invested heavily in these fights for blue collar women, turning to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and other judicial bodies. Jo Ann Evansgardner

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members in this fight against union leaders who took women's issues for granted while not excluding them outright, unlike African-Americans.

<sup>667</sup> Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, February 1969 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>668</sup> National Organization for Women, "Little Known Facts About Murphy's," April 10, 1972, in Evansgardner Collections. First Pittsburgh NOW Board Agenda, March 1, 1972 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>669</sup> Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow on January 18, 2002, 1-3, 7- 9

risked NOW's previously amicable relations with the commission, by accusing HRC Executive Director Homer Floyd of holding back in the case on purpose. Evansgardner called him on it at a hearing, risking a charge of contempt. Ruled out of order, Evansgardner retorted, "I've been out of order my whole life." NOW member Bosanka Evosevich, by that point sitting on the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, took a more physical approach. Told that women lacked the strength to unpack A&P trucks, she challenged a union steward to an unpacking competition.<sup>670</sup> NOW chapters, then, paid for the services of an attorney to represent A&P workers in federal court. Five years after they started the fight, Vallo and Clark finally won permanent employment status with benefits in 1973.<sup>671</sup> NOW came to the aid of A&P workers once again when the company and union agreed to layoffs based on seniority. NOW joined the pickets, arguing that the agreement was unfair to such women given that the union and company had discriminatorily held them out of the seniority line for years. Moreover in 1978, NOW publicized the retaliatory steps which A&P supervisors took against women filing this grievance. Some bosses ordered such clerks to mix together a cleaning solution of ammonia and bleach, thereby exposing them to chlorine gas. Other supervisors physically shook women who were speaking out.<sup>672</sup>

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<sup>670</sup> Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow on January 18, 2002, 1-3, 7- 9

<sup>671</sup> SW Pennsylvania NOW Newsletter, Spring 1973, 13

<sup>672</sup> "To the Customers of A&P," Brochure, NOW , November 1978 in Evansgardner Collections also Evansgardner interview, January 18, 2002, 11

Women in Pittsburgh scored their largest monetary victory however, in 1974. Under a consent decree hashed out with the Justice Department, nine steel firms agreed to settle a lawsuit. They had to hire women, end discriminatory practices, and pay \$30 million.<sup>673</sup>

Overall, the fight of the Pittsburgh chapters of the National Organization for Women was impressive in its scope and necessity. Pittsburgh's women filed the highest per capita number of EEOC filings. This fact can be seen as a testament to two factors. One, it highlights the region's strongly masculinized industrial tradition which locked out women from key job opportunities.<sup>674</sup> And related to that factor, it shows that local women's rights advocates gave a lot of aid and encouragement to women filing such suits. At one time in the 1970s, Pittsburgh's NOW chapters worked on over 50 employment cases simultaneously. Gerry Gardner of the employment committee estimates that half of the cases involved blue collar women.<sup>675</sup>

## **E. FEMINIST ALLIANCES ACROSS RACIAL BOUNDARIES**

Many of the women's movement's victories in Pittsburgh came about because of its deepening alliance with civil rights organizations. This alliance grew out of trust established in grass roots work to force Sears to hire more minorities in the 1960s. In the 1970s, that cooperation deepened. Alma Fox and Jo Ann Evansgardner co-chaired the Shirley Chisholm for President

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<sup>673</sup> Steffi Domike, "Women of Steel," Mon Valley Media, 1984 in United Electrical Workers/ Labor Archives University of Pittsburgh Archives Service Center. Only further research will tell which groups fought in this struggle and how they won.

<sup>674</sup> Greenwald, "Women and Class," 33, 36-40. Maurine Greenwald found that Pittsburgh women had a labor force participation rate 4-5 percentage points below the average for other industrial cities from 1890 to 1920. Married women's labor force participation rates were also lower in Pittsburgh than in other industrial U.S. cities between 1920 and 1980.

<sup>675</sup> Evansgardner, interview, January 18, 2002, 18

Campaign in Pittsburgh. Most civil rights groups shunned the African-American congresswoman's race, but white and African-American women had found common ground in such issues as jobs, child care, low wages, and medical care. And African-American women stood up to a Black Power activist, Bouie Haden, when he threatened to bomb a Planned Parenthood clinic opening in Homewood.<sup>676</sup> Leaders in Pittsburgh NOW were long aware of black feminism and "difference" in the fight for African-American women's rights. Pittsburgh NOW members recruited from the civil rights movement made white members of NOW aware of the ways in which their experiences with oppression differed. They also worked to help white women in the movement overcome racist attitudes and behavior. Alma Fox reiterated the potential fault lines in a 1972 Pittsburgh convention "The Black Woman Challenges Society." Fox told the assembled group that white women have never been as oppressed as black women and that African-American women could not trust white women to automatically share gains. Instead, both the groups had to be present in the fight.<sup>677</sup>

What went on in Pittsburgh had repercussions on the national movement. Pittsburgher Brenda Frazier led a national taskforce for NOW on Black Feminism.<sup>678</sup> By 1973, Wilma Scott Heide had risen to the presidency of NOW nationwide. Heide attended the rally forming the National Black Feminist Organization and wrote to its leaders pledging support and help with information and research.<sup>679</sup> Unfortunately, other chapters did not share Pittsburgh's spirit of openness. After attending statewide meetings, Alma Fox lamented, "NAACP was the most

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<sup>676</sup> Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow on January 18, 2002, 33-34, 5-6

<sup>677</sup> "Black Women Here Define Lib Role," *Pittsburgh Press*, February 20, 1972 in CLP Biographies File

<sup>678</sup> Conference Notes in NOW Papers

<sup>679</sup> Wilma Scott Heide, president of National Organization for Women, "An Open Letter to Sisters of the National Black Feminist Organization," on NOW Stationary, August 27, 1973

sexist organization; and NOW was the most racist.”<sup>680</sup> She faced subtle comments and hackles from middle and upper class white women in Pennsylvania NOW.<sup>681</sup> Still, Pittsburgh feminists worked against such problems. East End NOW led a four part series on Eliminating Racism.<sup>682</sup> Phyllis Wetherby spearheaded efforts to recruit more African-Americans into the organization.<sup>683</sup> And Kathy Wilson, an African-American board member of First Pittsburgh NOW, founded Black NOW as a caucus within Pennsylvania NOW in 1976. Wilson then led day-long seminars at Pennsylvania NOW conferences to overcome potential divisions, arising out of incidents ranging from prejudiced comments to intercultural miscommunication.<sup>684</sup> Overall, Pittsburgh NOW members kept trying to live up to the words of their founder Wilma Scott Heide in making the movement one about human rights. Heide said in speeches across the country, “It is our human right to develop and contribute our talents whatever our race, sex, religion, ancestry, age. Human rights are indivisible.”<sup>685</sup> In some ways, they succeeded in making the national movement honor those words too.

The alliance between white feminists and African-American women made great organizing sense. NOW members knew that African-American women tended more strongly than white women to favor “efforts to strengthen and change women’s status.” A Harris Poll

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<sup>680</sup> Sonya M. Toler, “On the Forefront of the Struggle,” *Courier*, January 18, 2003, in CLP Biography Clippings.

<sup>681</sup> Alma Fox, interview by Michael Snow, September 16, 2003 for Pittsburgh Civil Rights History Project

<sup>682</sup> Major media and education figures Margaret Milliones of the school board, Curtis Porter of the *Courier*, and Bev Smith of WAMO spoke at the panel on the origins of racism in schools and media. “Eliminating Racism,” Flyer, East End NOW, April 1976 in Evansgardner Collection

<sup>683</sup> Evansgardner, interview by Michael Snow

<sup>684</sup> First Pittsburgh NOW Newsletter, Summer 1976, 3

<sup>685</sup> Wilma Scott Heide, pamphlet for New Feminist Talent Associates, NY, NY, n.d. circa 1974, in Evansgardner Collections

released in 1971 showed more American women overall opposing such efforts, with 42 percent in favor and 43 percent opposed. In contrast, 62 percent of African-American women favored such efforts with only 20 percent opposing them.<sup>686</sup> Thus, by encouraging its existing African-American NOW leaders to found their own caucuses, Pittsburgh NOW members built vehicles for outreach to a more easily recruitable audience.

One of the greatest victories for the women's movement in Pittsburgh came about because of this cooperation, as civil rights organizations and NOW sued the City to hire more women and racial minorities. Because of the earlier cooperation on Sears and the Black Construction Coalition, the NAACP invited NOW to join its lawsuit against the police department.<sup>687</sup> The NAACP took most of the initiative to sue the City, joined by the Guardians, NOW, nineteen individuals, and the Western Pennsylvania Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.<sup>688</sup> Together NOW and the NAACP used their influence to involve the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office. Assistant Attorney General Michael Louik handled the case for the groups. With research from the Guardians, the NAACP, and NOW, Louik showed pervasive patterns of discrimination. For example, the police department refused to define women working the missing persons department as detectives. Lawyers for the NAACP and NOW proved that these women did the same work as male detectives but received less pay and no promotions. Louik also demonstrated a pattern of not promoting African-Americans to officer status. Joseph Sanford of the NAACP actually detailed that the number of African-Americans on the force had

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<sup>686</sup> NOW Twenty Year Chronology, in Evansgardner Collection.

<sup>687</sup> Evansgardner, interview, January 18, 2002, 24-26

<sup>688</sup> Harvey Adams, head of the Guardians and president of the Pittsburgh Branch of the NAACP, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on March 7, 2000, 35 and Jo Ann Evansgardner and Gerry Gardner, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA, January 18, 2002, 24 and Marcia Henderson, "Suit Charges Race, Sex Bias in Police Hiring," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, February 7, 1975, 1,

declined from 122 out of 1701 in 1970 to 71 out of 1455 in 1975. Sanford also showed that the department had just three African-American women on the force and ten white women.<sup>689</sup> Aiding the case, Mayor Flaherty and the City did not oppose the lawsuit. The main defendant proved to be the Fraternal Order of Police.<sup>690</sup> Flaherty actually viewed the lawsuit as a godsend as it allowed him to hire minorities and women, making amends to minorities while also allowing him to not have to fight the police union and civil service commissions to do so.<sup>691</sup> Given such evidence, a federal judge agreed to Louik's demand that the police base future hiring on a preferential quota. As the judge ruled, the police had to hire in groups of four: one black male, one black female, one white female, and one white male.<sup>692</sup> The City of Pittsburgh also responded to the lawsuit by taking out recruiting ads for women officers in NOW newsletters and accepting applications via three YWCA branches.<sup>693</sup> Because of the consent decree, Pittsburgh at one time had the best representation of black and white women of any police force in the country.<sup>694</sup>

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<sup>689</sup> Henderson, "Suit Charges Race, Sex Bias," 1

<sup>690</sup> Harvey Adams, interview, 38, 35

<sup>691</sup> Peter F. Flaherty, interview by Michael Snow

<sup>692</sup> Henderson, "Suit Charges Race, Sex Bias," 1 and David Warner, "Police Fire Cuts Possible--Pete," *Pittsburgh Press*, Sunday December 14, 1975, 1,5 and Gerry Gardner and Jo Ann Evansgardner, interview, January 18, 2002, 25

<sup>693</sup> "City of Pittsburgh Announces Competitive Exam for Police Officer," Greater Pittsburgh NOW Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 1 March 1973, 3

<sup>694</sup> Evansgardner, interview, 25, and Michael Fuoco, "City Force No. 1 in Women in Blue," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, A1, May 28, 1998

## F. DIVISIONS BETWEEN FEMINISTS AND THE LEFT, UNIONS

The expansion of NOW's focus on employment and the ERA nationwide, however, carried with it the opportunity cost of feminists' lack of political power in city politics. Leftist and union women snubbed the organization as illegitimate for not placing the struggle of the working class first; NOW's battle with the unions did not help that matter.<sup>695</sup> Amy Ballinger, one potential reconciler of that chasm, won appointment to city council based on her decades of work with the Laundry Workers Union. In her oath of office, however, Ballinger mentioned every struggle from urban redevelopment to racism to generation gaps, but she never mentioned gender discrimination.<sup>696</sup> Perhaps because of NOW's battle with unions, Ballinger would not even meet with NOW during her tenure on council.<sup>697</sup> To fill a second vacancy the year Ballinger was appointed, Mayor Flaherty recommended that council appoint a second woman to council. He recommended Alma Fox, but the lone African-American on council, Lou Mason, would not support her nomination. In addition to Fox, Flaherty put forward the names of three other NOW members for the spot. He found that no one on council would second his motion. Council President Tom Fagan, a second union leader on council, ruled Flaherty out of order.<sup>698</sup>

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<sup>695</sup> California chapters of NOW faced a similar struggle in 1971 when Union WAGE put forward a "Labor ERA" bill at the same time as the ERA worked its way through the state's constitutional amendment process. Such tensions lessened nationwide once California passed ratified the amendment in 1973. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 194-195 Union women nationwide feared that conservatives would use women's rights laws to undermine unions. Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 340-1, 344

<sup>696</sup> Minutes of Council, December 21, 1970, *Municipal Record, Minutes of the Proceedings of the Council of the City of Pittsburgh*, Vol. CIV, No. 46, Pittsburgh, PA: Park Printing, Inc., 1970, 630

<sup>697</sup> Evansgardner, interview, January 18, 2002, 2

<sup>698</sup> Neither newspaper articles nor minutes of city council on the incident give Mason's reasoning. Ron Suber, "Alma Fox Kicks Off Campaign," *Courier*, February 22, 1975 in CLP Biographies File

NOW members running for city council stood a chance to rectify labor politician's ability to block such appointments, but leftists helped direct votes away from these women reformers. A year after Fagan blocked Flaherty's attempt to appoint Alma Fox, JoAnn Evansgardner ran as a Republican for city council and Bosanka Evosevich as a Democrat. Monsignor Charles Owen Rice, a leader in the Pittsburgh's anti-War movement and beacon to union members, was also running. Though Evansgardner and Rice campaigned in tandem on a few occasions, no coalition formed. Indeed, several feminists wrote angry letters denouncing Rice for a radio broadcast that he gave expressing confusion at young novices wanting to take a greater role in services. The chief political commentator for the left-leaning alternative paper, the *Forum*, excoriated Rice's critics as "silly sheilas." He declared that Monsignor Rice had done more for women's cause in his years of fighting for Heinz factory operatives than "any ten of the local lib chicks" had.<sup>699</sup> Such exchanges helped alienate portions of the city's social movements from one another at a time when they could least afford to stand divided if they wanted to unseat candidates from the Democratic organization. Only one candidate unendorsed by the Democratic Party won that year, and he had the advantage of incumbency. Evosevich and Evansgardner really had little chance of winning, especially as liberals and radicals siphoned votes from one another, let alone as union supporters derided their movement.

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<sup>699</sup> "Jo Ann Cares," n.d. in COR, Cathleen Schurr, "Women Win (And Lose) in Primary," *Forum*, May 21, 1971, 5, and Bill Rodd, "Charles Rice—Priest And Politician," *Forum*, April 30, 1971, 7

## G. OPPORTUNITY COST: STRATEGIC CHOICES AND WOMEN'S WEAKNESS IN LOCAL POLITICS

The women's rights activists' lack of power in the Democratic Party apparatus came about in part because of a conscious decision not to fight for women's rights via city electoral politics. Molly Yard had approached JoAnn Evansgardner about recruiting women to cut their teeth in the party by running for precinct positions. The idea enraged Evansgardner because men did not have to start at that level.<sup>700</sup> Feminists' presence as precinct captains and committee people, however, would have translated into greater power over the now opening endorsement process of the Democratic Party. East End NOW President Alma Fox ran for a city council seat in 1975. Michelle Madoff, the founder of Squirrel Hill NOW, that same year ran as an independent for county commissioner.<sup>701</sup> NOW held a garage sale for Fox and sent supporters to her kick off party. But caught up in dozens of employment cases, NOW members had little time to spare for these campaigns.<sup>702</sup> Perhaps sensing a dearth of involvement in electoral politics in the organization, Madoff said that, if she lost, she intended to politicize NOW.<sup>703</sup> NOW members did work hard the next few years in the local chapter of the National Women's Political Caucus, but many of them eventually dismissed it as a vehicle for candidates' wives to support their husbands.<sup>704</sup>

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<sup>700</sup> Evansgardner used the word "enraged" not "angered," demonstrating that she still remembered how strongly she felt about the idea thirty years later. Evansgardner, interview, October 23, 2001, 21

<sup>701</sup> Karolyn Schuster, "Call Madoff Names--She Loves It," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, Monday October 27, 1975 Only further research will tell how much NOW members supported Michelle Madoff when she ran for city council as an independent in 1973.

<sup>702</sup> Greater Pittsburgh NOW Newsletter, March 1976 and Ron Suber, 1

<sup>703</sup> Karolyn Schuster, "Call Madoff Names--She Loves It," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, Monday, October 27, 1975

<sup>704</sup> Evansgardner, interview, October 23, 2001, 19, 26

While NOW members and most feminists concentrated on other issues, Michelle Madoff built a power base, won with it, and then encountered an “old boys network mentality” on city council. When Michelle Madoff ran for county commissioner, she had already established political connections as head of the Group Against Smoke Pollution. Madoff had made such a name for herself in her environmental work that she was honored by becoming one of only two people ever to address a joint session of the state legislature.<sup>705</sup> In that 1975 race, Madoff blended feminist issues, environmentalism, and a backlash against expressway building. While she capitalized on the continued appeal of anti-machine rhetoric Pete Flaherty had pioneered, Maddoff merged it with feminist imagery. Madoff’s placards read, “She’s nobody’s boy” and “A Clean Sweep.”<sup>706</sup>

Madoff won a seat on city council three years later because of her growing political acumen. She did the unthinkable of winning a seat running as an independent, becoming the first non-Democrat to do win since 1932. Madoff saw an opportunity in the endorsed Democrat’s small name recognition. More importantly, she shrewdly banked that the Democratic organization had less of an advantage in a special election. The organization’s usual strength from running a slate and from having poll workers pool resources did not work.<sup>707</sup>

On council, however, Madoff found her dynamism somewhat sapped because she had little organized backing. On most of the motions which Madoff put forward, no other council member would provide a second. Since NOW and other women’s groups’ focused on national

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<sup>705</sup> Michelle Madoff, “Biography,” August 1972, in Michelle Madoff Papers

<sup>706</sup> Among Madoff’s Woodrow Wilsonesque Fourteen Points were 5. federal grants for energy research leading to jobs, 8. avoid the next East Street [expressway] 10 . women to have 53 percent of positions on County boards, 14 modernize obsolete steel mills. “Madoff For Allegheny, Independent Candidate for County Commissioner,” Pamphlet 1975 and Karolyn Schuster, October 27, 1975 in Michelle Madoff Papers

<sup>707</sup> Patrick Kiger, “The Perennial Campaigner: Stepping Out With Michelle Madoff,” *Pittsburgh*, July 1980, 12

and state causes, it left them less of a factor in local races in the city. That focus also rendered them less of a factor in influencing other council members into deal making with Madoff. The men on council froze out or ignored Madoff and even the woman insider picked through Balkan Succession, Sophie Masloff. One time, Masloff raised her hand to ask a question and a male council member asked her, “What’s the matter Sophie? Do you have to go to the bathroom?”<sup>708</sup>

In some ways, the focus on national and state politics made sense, city government had little authority over women’s issues of great concern to feminists and counter forces had mobilized in the state and the nation against feminist causes. Local chapters of NOW actually came together to form Pennsylvania NOW, over some objections that they were diluting their chapters’ resources. The advocates of forming a statewide organization won that debate by citing the need for state level reforms. Women’s rights advocates in New York State, the supporters of Pennsylvania NOW argued, had won passage of abortion reforms there when they could not do so at the national level.<sup>709</sup> If NOW members across the Commonwealth wondered if they possessed the resources to win their national goals, they probably lacked sufficient resources to divert attention to city politicians who had no power over abortion, the federal ERA, and welfare payments.

## **H. COUNTERING ANTI-FEMINISTS**

By the mid-1970s, Pittsburgh NOW members faced a gathering threat in the move to stop ERA. Some of the anger came about because corporations used Pennsylvania’s ERA as an excuse to

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<sup>708</sup> Kiger, “The Perennial Campaigner,” 15

<sup>709</sup> First Pittsburgh NOW, “An Open letter to the Chambersburg Meeting of NOW,” n.d. in Evansgardner Collections

take away benefits. Westinghouse, for example, took cots away from the women's restrooms in response to the Pennsylvania ERA, saying that having them was discriminatory towards men.<sup>710</sup> More importantly a grassroots movement headed by Phyllis Schlafly sought to roll back ERA's quick gains. Anita Bryant also toured the country claiming that equality of the sexes violated Christian principles. In Western Pennsylvania, an offshoot of a group calling itself Happiness of Womanhood (HOW) organized and distributed leaflets claiming the negative impact the Equal Rights Amendment would have. Another anti-ERA group's leaflet argued, for instance, that all public bathrooms would then have to be unisex, exposing young women to child molesters. Both HOW and Christian Women Opposed to the ERA argued that the ERA would make women eligible for the draft and put daughters "in the front lines of combat." Christian Women Opposed to the ERA used especially barbed wording, calling feminists "a small noisy minority," "who hate their husbands, murder their children, and sell themselves for a bottle of beer." HOW members distributed these leaflets around the Capitol in Harrisburg to stop legislators from ratifying the federal amendment.<sup>711</sup> From early on, Pittsburgh feminists countered these arguments. Testimony from the Greater Pittsburgh YWCA said that their group supported women in the armed services "with the same exemptions as men."<sup>712</sup> NOW member, Gerry Gardner gathered some of HOW's literature, contradicted its claims in the margins, and copied

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<sup>710</sup> Evansgardner, interview, October 23, 2001, 45, Phyllis Wetherby, electronic communication to Michael Snow in response to follow up questions for an SLGA oral history interview February 8, 2002

<sup>711</sup> Mrs. Edward Ickinger, president Christian Women Opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment, "Defeat ERA," August 21, 1972 and Myrna Wolf, "Equality Without Dignity," on Happiness of Womanhood Incorporated letterhead, August 21, 1972 in YWCA Records

<sup>712</sup> YWCA, Testimony Prepared for the Pennsylvania Senate Hearings on the Equal Rights Amendment, June 1, 1972

the materials.<sup>713</sup> ERA supporters then sent around the materials to several groups arguing that such skewed views were reaching legislators in Harrisburg and alerting ERA supporters to contact their legislators.<sup>714</sup>

Their efforts prevailed in 1972, but the threat from HOW continued in Pennsylvania. Most notably, Senator Thomas Nolan, a co-sponsor of the inclusion of women under the Human Relations Act, changed from supporting the ERA after meeting with three HOW members from his district.<sup>715</sup> He launched overtures in 1977 to rescind Pennsylvania's ratification. The League of Women Voters and its president, Susan Brandt, took charge of defeating anti-ERA forces on this measure.<sup>716</sup> Luckily for ERA supporters, Nolan had burned enough legislative bridges with his efforts to repeal Pennsylvania's Human Relations Act that his effort to rescind the ERA made little headway.<sup>717</sup> Elsewhere the anti-ERA forces held greater appeal. In the capital building in Springfield Illinois, the Pittsburgh contingent faced Phyllis Schlafly directly. Schlafly climbed to a balcony in the dome and dropped dead birds onto the floor below, cackling that that was what would happen to the ERA. She yelled, "It was dead too. It wouldn't fly."<sup>718</sup> Schlafly proved prophetic as all of the Pittsburghers' help to Illinois women's rights supporters disintegrated in a fight over issues unrelated to the ERA between African-American and white male legislators.<sup>719</sup> In contrast to sending busloads to Springfield, YWCA leaders

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<sup>713</sup> Gerry Gardner, personal communication, November 7, 2001

<sup>714</sup> "Dear Friends of ERA" August 1972 in YWCA Records

<sup>715</sup> Evansgardner, interview, November 7, 2001, 26

<sup>716</sup> Minutes of the Public Policy Committee, September 27, 1977 in YWCA Records

<sup>717</sup> Minutes of the Public Affairs Committee of the Greater Pittsburgh YWCA, September 15, 1973 in YWCA Records and Evansgardner, November 7, 2001, 18

<sup>718</sup> Evansgardner, interview, November 7, 2001, 26

<sup>719</sup> Evansgardner, interview, November 7, 2001, 27 and Giddings, 347

asked their national organization to honor NOW's boycott of states that had failed to ratify the ERA.<sup>720</sup>

## I. DIVISIONS CAUSED IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT CAUSED BY ABORTION RIGHTS

Feminists' earlier victories on abortion also galvanized some opposition. From early on, NOW members fought at the epicenter of the movement to liberalize abortion laws. Pat Miller from NOW joined Dr. Tom Allen from Magee Women's Hospital to form the Abortion Justice Association more than three years before the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Roe vs. Wade*.<sup>721</sup> Some of the issue's potential to siphon off supporters for women's rights appeared early in Second Wave feminism in Pittsburgh as well. A major women's rights advocate from Ohio formed Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), splitting anti-abortion women away from NOW. In addition, Black Power leader Bouie Haden denounced Planned Parenthood as launching a "genocidal" campaign against African-Americans when it opened a women's health clinic in Homewood. Though Haden had worked with feminists in 1969, he threatened to fire bomb the clinic. Luckily for Pittsburgh's women's movement and NOW in particular, reproductive rights appealed so deeply to so many women that they overcame those two schisms. In the early 1970s, African-American women quickly spoke out against Bouie Haden's statement, and some came into NOW because Haden's presumption to monopolize the

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<sup>720</sup> Jan Neffke, public affairs director Pittsburgh YWCA, to Helen Parolla, Public Policy Director of National Board YWCA, June 16, 1977 in YWCA Records

<sup>721</sup> Phyllis Wetherby, electronic communication, February 8, 2002 and Minutes of Pittsburgh NOW, May 21, 1969 in Evansgardner Collection.

floor on their issues made them see the need for the women's movement. Additionally, within two years of its founding, WEAL members voted to take a pro-choice stance.<sup>722</sup>

In contrast, the local YWCA Public Affairs Committee kept issuing statements in favor of abortion all along. In 1970, it simply referred to the national board's call to repeal all restrictive laws. The next year its position papers took a stronger, detailed position. Whereas some politicians and states' policies were already allowing abortions in certain cases, the YWCA said, the unwanted child does not ask to be born whether "by chance of rape, incest, lust, accident or innocence." The YWCA paper on Family Planning called even for Medicare to cover abortions. The only compromise which this group held out was to make abortions unnecessary by preventing pregnancy via adoption, birth control, and sex education.<sup>723</sup>

Women's fight over reproduction more consistently weakened feminists' relations with local politicians. Running for the U.S. Senate three years after naming NOW member Evosevich to the Commission on Human Relations, Pete Flaherty stated that he was opposed to "abortion on demand" and went further stating that he believed that the "fetus is a living being from its moment of conception."<sup>724</sup> Flaherty supported women's rights advocates on equal pay, discrimination, and police hiring but not abortion. State legislators moved to chip away at reproductive freedoms that year. They passed the Abortion Control Act of 1974. The act restricted the use of government funds for abortion unless the women's life were in danger. The act further mandated that a woman notify her spouse before having an abortion and gain his

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<sup>722</sup> Evansgardner, interview, January 8, 2002, 14-15, 5-6

<sup>723</sup> YWCA Public Affairs Committee "Family Planning Position Statement," February 19, 1971, YWCA Public Affairs Committee, "Reproductive Freedom Position Statement," February 5, 1971 in YWCA Records

<sup>724</sup> Jon Katz, "The Almost Invisible Flaherty Candidate With Little To Say," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 7, 1970 in Dick Thornburgh Collections

consent, and, if the woman were under 18 years old, notify her parents. It, moreover, threatened abortion providers with criminal charges if they performed an abortion without first determining that the fetus was “not viable” or “might not be viable.” Governor Shapp vetoed the measure, but the legislators overrode his veto.<sup>725</sup>

Women’s rights advocates appear to have taken the override as a lesson that they should only fight the measure in the courts and/or concentrate at the national level.<sup>726</sup> Several providers in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Planned Parenthood brought suit attacking the measure in the courts. In 1975, a federal district court struck down the restrictions on government funds and the need for parental and spousal consent.<sup>727</sup> Nevertheless by 1976, anti-abortion forces were gathering momentum, and Pittsburgh feminists rallied to defend *Roe v. Wade* from restrictions. NOW members called on the U.S. Senate to oppose the Buckley-Helms “fertilized egg rights amendment,” and on President Ford to stop his states’ rights position.<sup>728</sup> The next year matters became graver for abortion rights advocates. Fifteen states had introduced resolutions calling for a constitutional convention to create an amendment to guarantee rights of unborn fetuses. The YWCA Board of directors sent letters to all Allegheny County legislators asking that they vote against the resolution introduced in Pennsylvania.<sup>729</sup> President Carter’s secretary of Health,

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<sup>725</sup> *Colautti v. Franklin*, 439 U. S. 379 (1979), FindLaw, <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?navby=case&court=us&vol=439&invol=379>

<sup>726</sup> It does not appear in the records of the Pittsburgh YWCA or NOW.

<sup>727</sup> Pub. L. 94-381, 1, 90 Stat. 1119; *Colautti v. Franklin*, 439 U. S. 379 (1979), FindLaw, <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?navby=case&court=us&vol=439&invol=379>

<sup>728</sup> Greater Pittsburgh NOW Newsletter, March 1976 in Evansgardner Collections

<sup>729</sup> Only further research will tell how this bill fared. Memorandum To Executive Directors and Presidents of Public Affairs Committees From Helen Parolla Director of Public Policy, “Y National Board Action Alert,” May 2, 1977 and Report of the May Board of Directors Meeting in Minutes of the Public Affair Committee, June 1, 1977 in YWCA Records.

Education, and Welfare also wanted to stop federal funds from being used on abortions.<sup>730</sup> When this measure came up for a vote, Jan Neffke and NOW members mobilized to lobby, but U.S. Senator John Heinz, though he had supported ERA, voted to restrict federal funds except in cases of incest, rape, or cases endangering the life of the mother. In the words of the YWCA, he was prepared to deny poor patients legal or medical aid for abortion.<sup>731</sup> Whatever Heinz's personal beliefs in the matter, he knew that in Southwestern Pennsylvania the Catholic Church had mobilized People Concerned for the Unborn Child and Pennsylvanians for Human Life. The latter had even slipped materials into local Girl Scouts programs. Women in Urban Crisis, the YWCA, and NOW tried to build and work through a competing group, the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, but it proved puny in comparison.<sup>732</sup> Several prominent local Catholic politicians, especially County Commissioner Tom Foerster, used their positions to try to curtail federal moneys which they controlled from going to agencies which provided abortions. Eventually in 1979, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the viability clauses of the Abortion Control Act unconstitutionally vague.<sup>733</sup> As the case was working its way through the courts though, the state legislature had tried again to restrict the use of government funds for abortions in 1978, and federal courts once again struck down the statute.<sup>734</sup>

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<sup>730</sup> Parolla, "Y National Board Action Alert," May 2, 1977

<sup>731</sup> Senator H. J. Heinz II to Jan Neffke, Washington D. C. on U. S. Senate stationary, July 5, 1977 in YWCA Records

<sup>732</sup> People Concerned for the Unborn Child Newsletter, September 1978, 5 in Thornburgh Collection and Clara Price, President YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh to Fred Hawkins of the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 3, 1977, YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh, "Community Groups with Whom the YWCA Works," n. d. in YWCA Records

<sup>733</sup> *Colautti v. Franklin*, 439 U.S. 379 (1979), FindLaw, <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?navby=case&court=us&vol=439&invol=379>

<sup>734</sup> *Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 476 U. S. 747 (1986), FindLaw, <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=476&invol=747>

In Pennsylvania politics, the issue actually slightly redrew political battle lines. The 1978 governor's race was an initial hint of this trend. People Concerned for the Unborn Child endorsed the Democrat, Pete Flaherty, over the Republican, Dick Thornburgh. They found that Thornburgh allowed using government funds for abortions for low-income women while Flaherty opposed them. Both candidates opposed abortion except in certain cases. Thornburgh, however, added to Flaherty's exceptions "a health of the mother clause" which included mental health.<sup>735</sup> While feminists had won the battle to make abortion legal in Pennsylvania, they faced an increasingly difficult battle to stop incremental steps to limit it. In the 1980s and 1990s, that fight only deepened.

## **J. VICTORIES ON SEXUAL ASSAULT**

On the issue of treatment of survivors of rape, Pittsburgh's women's rights advocates had greater success shifting public policy. Professional women from Magee Women's Hospital and the University of Pittsburgh approached the Women's Political Caucus for help in the early 1970s. Hospitals throughout the state refused to admit victims of sexual assault because nurses and doctors were afraid of having to testify in court.<sup>736</sup> Out of that meeting came Pittsburgh Action Against Rape, (PAAR), at first a set of volunteers providing a hotline and support for survivors. Within a few months, NOW member Ann Pride sought out County Coroner Cyril Wecht and talked him into helping Pittsburgh Action Against Rape win its founding grant from the U.S.

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<sup>735</sup> "Flaherty Thornburgh Elaborate Views on Abortion," People Concerned for the Unborn Child Newsletter, September 1978, 5

<sup>736</sup> Barbara Hafer, interview by Michael Snow for SLGA on April 25, 2000, 10

Justice Department.<sup>737</sup> While providing aid to women, the volunteers also built up horror stories of how doctors, district attorneys, and judges treated these incidents. University faculty and staff, especially Barbara Shore, then churned out research to construct arguments to reform the state's medical and judicial systems' handling of such cases.<sup>738</sup> NOW, the Women's Political Caucus, and PAAR then used such information in lobbying efforts. With that in mind and under threat of a lawsuit using the Pennsylvania Equal Rights Amendment, legislators amended the criminal code so that judges no longer instructed jurors to presume that rape victims were lying.<sup>739</sup> The Commission on the Status of Women distributed a booklet, "Help for Rape Victims," and the commission also leaned on schools to instruct medical and nursing students in how to treat victims of rape and sexual assault.<sup>740</sup>

Barbara Hafer, a member of both NOW and the Political Caucus formed another group, the Center for Victims of Violent Crime (CVVC), to handle a broader set of cases including homicides and domestic abuse. Like PAAR, the center provided counseling for survivors, but it also helped the police and helped support the victim's family during trials. By making nurses and doctors focus better on providing healthcare in such cases, PAAR and CVVC's work helped the police concentrate on doing their jobs. Law enforcement officers appreciated the help and thereby became advocates of the program. Police officers, Police Superintendent Bob Colville, and the district attorney provided ready colleagues in the center's search for funding from Allegheny County. On that fight the groups failed, Commissioners Foerster and Hunt blocked it

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<sup>737</sup> Wetherby, electronic communication, February 8, 2002 also Evansgardner, interview, Part 4, 44-49 and Pittsburgh Action Against Rape, "History," PAAR, <http://www.paar.net/morepaar/index.htm>

<sup>738</sup> Evansgardner, interview, 45-48; Hafer, interview

<sup>739</sup> Commission on the Status of Women, "ERA Information and Resource List," 1975

<sup>740</sup> PAAR Newsletter, April 1976, in Evansgardner Collections

while Cyril Wecht, having moved up from the Coroner's Office, continually voted for it. Still the center served as a model for crisis centers in counties across the country.<sup>741</sup>

Together all of these groups fought for Pennsylvania House Bill 580 in 1976. It disallowed using the victim's prior sexual history and made it a crime for a husband to rape his wife if they had separated or divorced."<sup>742</sup> The groups also scored a victory allowing rape and domestic abuse survivors to win some compensation from the Pennsylvania Victim Compensation Fund.<sup>743</sup> Questionnaires to candidates from the League of Women Voters and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape also educated politicians about the issues, asking, for instance, if they favored mandating specialized training on handling rape cases for emergency medical technicians and police.<sup>744</sup> Since it remained legal in Pennsylvania for a husband to rape his wife, PAAR and CCVC still had their work cut out for them, but they had made great strides in the 1970s in making the judicial and medical systems far more humane in how they treated survivors of such crimes.

## **K. DEMANDING EQUAL REPRESENTATION**

One demand, having women populate government commissions and boards in the same proportion as they held in the population, went down in defeat, potentially damaging women's other causes. Wilma Scott Heide had been a leading proponent of it around the country, and made the demand part of her "Feminist Manifesto." She said there, "An undemographic

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<sup>741</sup> Hafer, interview, 10

<sup>742</sup> "House Bill 580," PAAR Spectives: The Newsletter of PAAR, April 1976

<sup>743</sup> Hafer, interview, 11

<sup>744</sup> Richard L. Thornburgh to Sandra K. Lambert, responses to questionnaire, September 18, 1978 in RLT Papers

government is an undemocratic one.”<sup>745</sup> Jo Ann Evansgardner elected to the Government Study Commission in 1973 got an amendment placed in the proposed Home Rule Charter for Allegheny County that no county board could have a majority of more than one member of either sex. When that charter failed at the polls, some leaders blamed the provision, but most people blamed the patronage system. Still, the provision did not move forward.<sup>746</sup> Michelle Madoff made the same demand part of her campaign platform in 1975. Madoff called for women to make up 53 percent of the voices in decision making.<sup>747</sup> While never implemented, this demand remained important nonetheless because it opened politicians’ eyes to the notion that they ought to consider more women for such boards. It opened women’s eyes to the fact that they should sit on such boards and demand to do so. When politicians fell far short of this demographic standard, watchdogs such as Madoff let them have it. She taunted Mayor Caliguiri, “In the Year of Our Lord 1979, how could he appoint fourteen white males to a city board?”<sup>748</sup>

Overall, while members of NOW and the women’s movement did not follow up on their success on 1969’s Pittsburgh women’s rights ordinance by reorienting city politics in Pittsburgh, they did score impressive gains in public policy and in state government. On the one hand, NOW members lost four out of five city council races for which they ran. And when they won positions, they remained marginalized in city council and county government restructuring commissions. On the other hand, the women’s movement assembled a dedicated set of demonstrators, letter writers, and researchers. These activists created and circulated tremendous

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<sup>745</sup> Wilma Scott Heide, “A Feminist Manifesto for the Presidency NOW,” speech delivered at NOW Social Policy Conference, Plaza Hotel NY, copy on NOW Stationary, n.d (circa 1973) in Evansgardner Collections

<sup>746</sup> Evansgardner, interview, October 23, 2001 30-31

<sup>747</sup> Madoff for Allegheny: Independent Candidate for County Commissioner, 1975 in Madoff Papers

<sup>748</sup> Kiger, “The Perennial Campaigner,” 14

amounts of information on discrimination against women and thereby gained the adherence of many state legislators and a majority of Pennsylvania voters, at least in the early 1970s. Based on that work, they won passage of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution, ratification in Pennsylvania of the federal ERA, and an extension for the national one. By working with their allies on the Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania human relations commissions, they won cases setting national precedents over discrimination in job advertising. After their relatively easy victories in winning civil rights protections for women in Pittsburgh and in Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh's women's rights activists turned their attention to battles for similar rights in other states. These activists also focused their attention on the courts and government commissions, an allocation of resources with a downside. As Pittsburgh women adeptly employed legal challenges to win employment discrimination cases and police hiring, a counter movement began building its base in Pennsylvania. Like African-American civil rights leaders fighting for school desegregation at this same time, women's rights advocates faced challenges because of their stands on abortion. Their focus on passing the ERA in other states and expanding their rights in the courts, left the network of feminists and their allies fewer resources to employ in defending reproductive rights and other women's issues in Pennsylvania's House and Senate. For the remainder of the 1970s, that strategic choice paid off. But anti-feminists increasingly employed pro-life arguments to alienate several local and state politicians from feminists. Thus, though Pittsburgh women had a disproportionate impact on the women's movement nationwide, their political network had a declining impact in the city itself.

## VI. GAY RIGHTS 1970-1980

In 1971, Sam, not his real name, was kicked out of nursing school for picking up a hitchhiker. The hitchhiker turned out to be a cop standing on a downtown corner where gay men met up. On these grounds, he arrested Sam for attempted sodomy, and the nursing school then ended Sam's career, despite a psychiatrist declaring Sam no threat to patients.<sup>749</sup> Sam, in 1971, had no recourse to law or even politics by other means. Such discrimination against gays stood perfectly legal under state and local law and practically demanded under Pennsylvania criminal code. Sam's case would have faded into obscurity had a leftist tabloid not taken it up. Even then he remained unable to hold menial jobs. The pain and bleak prospects, which gays like Sam faced, changed remarkably over the next ten years; Sam stood at a pivot point in gay rights in the city.

Unlike African-Americans and women, Sam and other gays in the 1960s in Pittsburgh lacked community organizations through which they could challenge cultural attitudes, laws, and government agencies which held them back. Between 1972-4, they rapidly built gay churches, a newspaper, and even community outreach groups. And from those new institutions gays quickly moved into demanding reforms from government officials. Budding activists built relationships with executives of local foundations, the superintendent of police, and especially with Governor Shapp. Though these alliances won them some remarkably quick victories, success in reshaping public policy largely eluded gays. The gay community's lack of familiarity with politics and

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<sup>749</sup> R Merle Pollis, "Sam vs. Society; a sad saga," *Pittsburgh Forum*, March 5, 1971, 6

inability to display its power to political foes and allies alike hampered its efforts to build a strong political network. By the time the community's political activists had launched their third attempt to build a political organization, they had finally learned the workings of elections and coalitions. Their success at least until 1979 was modest, a reflection of their late start. In all, gay and lesbian activists, having started recently speaking up for their rights, building community institutions, and political organizing, could not use their political network as successfully in the 1970s as African-Americans and women used theirs.

#### **A. FINALLY BUILDING A GAY COMMUNITY**

The community, in its infancy of being above ground, made great and, in many ways, meteoric strides in gaining its voice and building institutions. A handful of novice Pittsburgh activists brought national activists Barbara Love, Sydney Abbot, and Jack Baker to a conference on homosexuality at the University of Pittsburgh in March 1972. The audience, gathered at Pitt, proposed forming the Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh (GAP). The advances made by feminists and gay rights movement across the nation finally emboldened the Pittsburgh gays and lesbians to create GAP and sustain it as an organization. That day in calling for the creation of GAP, the audience borrowed a page from women's liberation, proposing coffee houses, consciousness raising groups, political action, and even a statewide convention.<sup>750</sup>

GAP members impressively made good on a number of these promises. The monthly coffee house at a Unitarian church and consciousness raising groups helped more community members shrug off the psychological chains of societal oppression and practice articulating their

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<sup>750</sup> "GAP is one year old this Month," Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh Newsletter, No.1, March 10, 1973, 1

needs and demands. Bolstered, GAP members formed a Zap Force which struck directly and publicly at two main sources of this oppression. They took the microphone at the National Council of Churches convention when it came to Pittsburgh. Zap Force members struck again at a Pittsburgh Police forum on what the community defined as pornography. Most importantly, GAP broadened its reach by informing the community through a newsletter in 1973. Though crudely typeset and mimeographed in its first few issues, the newsletter reached hundreds of people too afraid or apathetic to attend meetings, let alone zaps. Picked up at gay bars and/or passed friend to friend, the newsletter both alerted gays and lesbians to the growing courage of organization members and stepped up the number of gay people receiving positive information on homosexuality. Within twelve months, the GAP newsletter had grown into a sixteen page tabloid with a circulation of 4,000. Circulation of the re-christened *Pittsburgh Gay News* more than doubled even that mark by 1975. In those early years, the paper included question and answer talking points for countering stereotypes and digests of pro-gay psychological and theological studies. It so concentrated on militant actions and advocacy work that bar patrons actually complained of their social events being left out.<sup>751</sup>

Outreach aimed at increasing tolerance of homosexuality of Pittsburghers outside the gay community too. Pittsburgh's first Gay Pride Week kicked off with a conference at Pitt in June 1973. Conference organizers brought in nationally prominent psychologists Drs. Allan Bell and Evelyn Hooker. Hooker and Bell spoke about their work debunking the theory that

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<sup>751</sup> "GAP is one year old this Month," *Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh Newsletter*, No.1, March 10, 1973, 1; "Gays Confront National Council of Churches Convention," *Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh Newsletter*, No.1, March 10, 1973, 1; "Gays confront porno forum and police superintendent," *Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh Newsletter*, No.1, March 10, 1973, 1; Masthead, *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 9, Saturday March 2, 1974, 1; Masthead, *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 17, Saturday, January 4, 1975, 1; "Psychiatrists Drop Gay 'Sickness' Label," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 8, Saturday January 12, 1974, 1, 4; "Gay Pride Week plans underway," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 9, Saturday March 2, 1974, 1

homosexuality was a mental illness. Gay Alternatives of Pittsburgh also chartered a Port Authority trolley, draped it with pro-gay signs outside, and took it on a tour of several conservative upper class suburbs. Riders reported as many victory signs as jeers motioned towards them. And finally that week, the city's first Gay Pride March demonstrated the participants' commitment by walking with banners for several miles from the heart of downtown past the universities in the Oakland neighborhood. Organizers noted that a dozen mainstream media organizations, including three TV stations, covered the events.<sup>752</sup>

GAP members also took to the air waves as guests on a call-in radio show the next month.<sup>753</sup> More importantly, six months later, rush hour listeners heard a ten-part series on "Ready or Not: Here's Gay Liberation" on KDKA, the city's most popular station.<sup>754</sup> By mid-1974, GAP had negotiated for WYEP radio to launch a weekly one-hour show on issues and events in the community.<sup>755</sup> It ran for two years. Through the *Pittsburgh Gay News*, GAP also alerted members of the gay community on the ins and outs of being heard as a caller to talk radio shows.<sup>756</sup> The Pittsburgh Area Broadcasters Association, at the beginning of 1975, signaled their understanding of the growing clout of the gay community by inviting GAP member Randal Forrester to address their group. Forrester joined several leaders from various Pittsburgh communities invited to speak in accordance with licensing guidelines from the Federal

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<sup>752</sup> "Gay Pittsburgh Came Out: Gay Pride Week '73 in Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 4, Saturday, July 21, 1973, 1

<sup>753</sup> The show was Ruth McClain's "Community Feeling, Community Talk Show," Jeff Cole, "GAP Members on WAMO Radio" *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No 4, Saturday, July 21, 1973, 8

<sup>754</sup> Jim Austin, "Major Pittsburgh Radio Audience Hears Pro-Gay Message," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 8, Saturday January 12, 1974, 2

<sup>755</sup> "Gay Radio Comes to Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 11, Saturday, June 1, 1974, 1

<sup>756</sup> Jim Austin, "People Power on ten-second delay," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 17, Saturday, January 4, 1975, 21,

Communications Commission, even though those guidelines said nothing about having to include sexual minorities. Forrester took the opportunity to run through prejudicial attitudes and note the American Psychiatric Association's new stand declassifying homosexuality as a mental illness. Stroking the broadcasters' egos, he noted their ability to shape opinion and urged local programming to address prejudices.<sup>757</sup>

In the meantime, GAP had not forgotten grassroots organizing, distributing 8,000 pamphlets during the spring of 1974 to passersby downtown. The activists began by targeting 200-300 people leaving and entering the City-County Building. The choice of location clearly showed that they wanted the message to carry inside to the politicians and bureaucrats. The pamphlets debunked stereotypes about homosexuals. Because Bible tract societies and charitable organizations monopolized street leafleting downtown in those days, GAP leafleters symbolically asserted their equality to those groups or at least hit new audiences of pedestrians expected more "wholesome" fare.<sup>758</sup>

Outside of GAP and the *Pittsburgh Gay News*, the community grew by creating two other institutions remarkable in the level of change they represented. At the end of the first Gay Pride March, some marchers gathered for a worship service. Out of this service in 1973 grew the city's first gay church, the Universal Church of Celebration. Though the church borrowed space from other congregations, it had its own minister and assistant minister within a year. While many gays and lesbians turned their backs on faith traditions which denounced them as sinners, this church gave strength to those wishing to remain within the faith. Within a year, it was

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<sup>757</sup> "Pittsburgh broadcasters ask for and receive a gay point of view," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 18, Saturday February 1, 1975, 4, 10

<sup>758</sup> "Educational Leaflet Program to Begin," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 8 Saturday January 12, 1974, 3 and "GAP Begins Massive Leaflet Program," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 9, Saturday, March 2, 1974, 1

joined in Pittsburgh by the arrival of Dignity, a national organization dedicated to reforming the anti-gay policies of the Catholic Church.<sup>759</sup> Together these two organizations helped Pittsburghers overcome the negative messages about homosexuality preached from other pulpits.

The reach of one new organization proved even greater than that of these two groups. The Persad Center, its name shortened from “Personal Adjustment,” began humbly in 1972 as a network by which activists could refer gays and lesbians to tolerant therapists. Because those mental health practitioners were swamped within six months, social worker Jim Huggins and activist Randy Forrester led the founding of one of the first three gay counseling centers in the country.<sup>760</sup> Huggins and Forrester’s approach<sup>761</sup> meant that Persad exerted influence well beyond the regained self-worth that patients received. A social work graduate student at West Virginia University in community organizing, Huggins had first learned organizing working for United Mine Worker’s leader Jock Yablonsky.<sup>761</sup> Although peer counseling and clinical therapy went on at Persad, its volunteers and staffers also fanned out across Pittsburgh as forerunners of diversity trainers. Huggins informed the *Pittsburgh Gay News* readers of Persad’s community organizing with the following words: “we focus on the way sexual minority people are viewed and treated in this society as the primary cause of life style adjustment difficulties.”<sup>762</sup> By speaking to social work and sociology courses at local universities and by consulting with mental health practitioners from government agencies, Persad’s Speakers Bureau members significantly

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<sup>759</sup> “Gay Pittsburgh Came Out, Gay Pride Week,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 4 Saturday, July 21, 1973, 1; “Dignity Comes to Pittsburgh,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 14, October 1974, 1

<sup>760</sup> Forrester, interview by Michael Snow, August 14, 2003

<sup>761</sup> Jim Huggins and Randy Forrester, Keynote Speech, Transformation at the Grassroots Conference, State College, PA, October 26, 2002

<sup>762</sup> James Huggins, MSW, “What’s a Persad Center?” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No.8 Saturday January 12, 1974, 17-

increased the number of practitioners aware of sexual minority issues. In the early work of GAP, Persad, and the *Pittsburgh Gay News*, Pittsburgh's gay community telescoped in two years the community organizing that women and African-Americans had done in the preceding eight decades.

## **B. FIRST ENTRIES INTO LOCAL POLITICS**

Still, the gay community's strides in identity-building would not be enough to secure power because the community also stood comparatively limited in terms of its political experience. Where African-Americans and women had served in elected office and as committee people in Pittsburgh since the 1930s, lesbians and/or gays, who undoubtedly also served within those ranks, stood invisible or worse. Rumors abound about at least two politicians and legal officials who cracked down extra hard on moral issues in order to weld shut their closet doors, but no staffers, let alone politicians, openly identified as lesbian or gay. So while African-Americans and women could vote for one of their own as a means of advancing the rights of their group, Pittsburgh's gay citizens could not. In addition, only a handful of small business owners in Pittsburgh identified as lesbian or gay; as a result, the gay community, unlike women and African-Americans, could not point to state and local contracts or grants secured by local politicians as an indication of whom to support at the polls. Where political candidates actively sought speaking engagements in black churches and League of Women Voters' forums, the gay community lacked such long-standing arenas and politicians avoided the new ones. Most importantly, a lack of candidates' track records on gay issues hampered initial gay community forays into endorsing political candidates. Women's rights activists could consult 50 years of

public figures speaking on ERA. African-Americans could chart the track records of officials' voting for or co-sponsoring stronger pieces of state and city civil rights legislation. In contrast, the criminal code was the only arena in which politicians had legislated on gay issues in Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania. Therefore, outside of those legislators who had voted for the Barr-Walker Act in 1952, gay voters had little knowledge of how most state representatives and senators stood on gay rights. Pittsburgh's ordinances on disorderly conduct and sexual solicitation dated back to the 1890s, offering even less guide to recent city councilors' views.

GAP valiantly tried to fill this vacuum of knowledge about politicians' stands by distributing questionnaires, but that work had little effect in the first five years. The GAP/Legal Action Committee compiled questionnaires for state officials starting in 1973. The questionnaire briefly asked about their stances on abolishing criminal penalties for sex between consenting adults and support for adding sexual orientation to the anti-discrimination code. Revealing the controversial nature of these issues and the lack of a groundswell of support for potential legislative allies, the questionnaire asked if the candidate would be "willing to support these issues off the record." The questionnaires further sought to educate officials and candidates by including a cover letter on homosexuality and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. That same month, GAP sought to organize an event in which "every candidate would speak on gay rights forum." The author of the urgent appeal for volunteers "for the enormous amount of effort will be required to 'put it all together'" hints at the difficulty organizers expected at hounding candidates into attending. Underscoring that point, only one candidate had sought out GAP itself to speak to a meeting, and she was a long-shot for judge.<sup>763</sup>

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<sup>763</sup> "County-wide candidates will deal with gay issues," *Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh Newsletter*, No. 2, Saturday April 14, 1973, 2 and "Candidate for Judge comes to GAP Meeting," *Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh Newsletter*, No. 1, March 10, 1973, 2

Lesbians and gays in Pittsburgh slightly improved their politicking over the next two years in terms of questionnaires, creating organizations, and determining stands. In 1974, the Pittsburgh based activists piggybacked on the efforts of Philadelphia organizers by publicizing the pro-gay views which Governor Shapp expressed to Philadelphia's gay groups during his campaign for re-election. Senator Schweiker also alluded to his support for gay rights to Philadelphia groups, but his opponent Pittsburgh Mayor Pete Flaherty never even acknowledged receiving questionnaires from either Pittsburgh or Philadelphia-based groups.<sup>764</sup> An activist from the National Organization for Women running as a dark horse candidate for Allegheny County Commissioner did recruit gays and lesbians to help gather signatures for getting on the ballot and did voice support for gay non-profits. However, that candidate again proved the exception in Southwestern Pennsylvania in terms of courting the community.<sup>765</sup>

To combat anti-gay activities, advocates for gay civil rights formed the Pittsburgh Gay Political Caucus (PGPC) in the spring of 1975. They stated their goal as follows: "creating a 'gay voting bloc' as the most effective method of changing laws and their enforcement." Members of PGPC realized the opportunity afforded by the ballot box, despite the still small numbers of Pittsburghers willing to live openly. PGPC disseminated candidates' stands on gay issues so that "the Gay who cannot be politically active to express agreement with the goals of the gay liberation-civil rights movement can through the anonymity of the ballot box." The PGPC also demonstrated the growing strength of the movement in that by now some lesbians and gays within the political framework proved willing to work for gay civil rights, even if they

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<sup>764</sup> "Gay Backed Candidates Win," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No 16, Saturday December 7, 1974, 3. The author of this article titled in a manner of pure rhetorical flourish since gay electoral support for Schweiker and Shapp eludes analysis.

<sup>765</sup> Janet Schrim, "Madoff Commissioner Candidate supports gays," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 20, Saturday April 5, 1975.

remained unwilling for the most part to list their names. As with the earlier GAP legal committee, the PGPC educated candidates on gay issues by including informational packets. By 1975 though, they could include a letter from former Democratic presidential candidate Hubert Humphrey supporting gay rights. PGPC expanded on the questions which the GAP legal committee had asked. Its new one included stands on mental health care, adoption, same-sex marriage in addition to the older questions on discrimination, police harassment, and repeal of sodomy statutes.<sup>766</sup>

In the November 1975 issue of the *Pittsburgh Gay News*, the PGPC unveiled its pull-out voting guide. Most of the candidates endorsed came from the Socialist Worker's Party because those candidates, unlike most from the major parties, actually answered questionnaires and took favorable stands on gay rights in public. Six major party candidates also made the list including District Attorney candidate Bob Colville, County Treasurer candidate Ed Cooke, and African-American civil rights activist Livingston Johnson.<sup>767</sup> The next month PGPC member Randal Forrester declared victory in the pages of the community's newspaper, analyzing the comparative results for the endorsed major party candidates. For the winning candidates, the PGPC endorsement, Forrester argued, garnered such candidates an average 1.675 percent better showing than the rest of the winners. Optimistically rallying the troops, Forrester declared, "We should be able to affect 8-10 percent. We've shown we can do it; let's do an even better job next

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<sup>766</sup> Fred Gromley, "Pittsburgh Gay Political Caucus testing the candidates and the gay vote." *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 25, October 4, 1975, A3

<sup>767</sup> "Pittsburgh Gay Political Caucus pull out voting section," *Pittsburgh Gay News* No. 26, Saturday November 1, 1975, A7

election.”<sup>768</sup> The following spring, PGPC had gathered information about candidate’s stands on gay issues to endorse five candidates for state representative and two for Congress. Moreover, one of its members ran for Democratic State Committee, marking the first such race by an openly gay candidate.<sup>769</sup>

Gay activists in this period only just began learning the rudiments of introducing legislation evidenced in their first attempt to add sexual orientation to Pittsburgh’s Human Relations Ordinance. The first forays proved awkward and unrealistic. First, on May 7, 1974 three activists caught city councilors on their way to lunch, handing them literature on the American Psychiatric Association’s stand on sexual orientation and information on gay rights bills in other cities. The next week Gay ZAP Force members announced their intention to “force city council to take a stand on the possibility of including sexual orientation in the City’s anti-discrimination statutes.” This time they had studied the procedures for adding items to city council’s business but had overestimated their ability to get a definitive answer. It was far-fetched for the handful of activists, after one week’s work, to think that city council members in the face of centuries of prejudice would give them the microphone, speak on record, or call for a vote, let alone sponsor legislation. Activists first had to help city council members conquer their prejudices and their fears that voters would accuse them of “siding with deviants.” Three courses of action stood before the members of the ZAP Force, a greater show of strength from the gay community at the polls or in the streets, visits to council members to increase their comfort with the topic through sustained interaction with individual activists, and a greater media campaign to assure the rightness of the gay cause. On the second two of these tactics, the

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<sup>768</sup> Randal G. Forrester, “The gay vote: you made it work!” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 27, Saturday December 6, 1975, A5

<sup>769</sup> “Pittsburgh Gay Political Caucus endorses small Primary Slate,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 31, April 1976, A3

members of GAP proved quick studies. After GAP's Legal Action Committee consulted with Pitt's Law Co-op and did research in the City law library on what areas of city law impacted gay life, it held a press conference June 17. Here the members announced their written request to address the council and demand a bill. This time within eight days, city council had translated their request into a numbered bill and referred it to the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations. Members of the committee then met with the commissioners to find out how to present their demands. The meetings reaffirmed that activists wanted the City to add gays and lesbians to groups of people protected under the City's Human Relations ordinance and that they wanted to repeal the City's "Immoral Solicitation" ordinance. Council's response to the commission's report on the proposed bills signaled that the fight would be difficult. For example, Councilman Richard Caliguiri worried aloud that solicitation would lead to prostitution, forgetting, as activist David March wrote in the *Pittsburgh Gay News*, that separate ordinances covered prostitution.<sup>770</sup>

Initial organizing that June indicated that the community grew in political sophistication and strength. Activist David March led the Pride Parade calling for an end to job discrimination and police harassment. Parade organizers even assembled 130 press kits delivered to the mainstream and alternative media.<sup>771</sup> March also called on the community to catalog cases of discrimination as a means of showing that the bill was necessary.<sup>772</sup>

Unfortunately for the cause of the passage of this bill, the movement lacked the persistence necessary to see it to victory. Gay activists and community members failed to educate the council members. With sadness, March noted in September of 1974 that "all action

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<sup>770</sup> David Marsh, "Gay Rights await City Council Action," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, no. 13, September 7, 1974, 1,3

<sup>771</sup> "Pittsburgh Gay Pride Week builds pride, unity," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, no. 12, July 20, 1974, 2

<sup>772</sup> David Marsh, "Gay Rights await City Council Action," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, no. 13, September 7, 1974, 1,3

toward Pittsburgh Equal Rights Amendment for gays was dormant.”<sup>773</sup> Members of the community had failed to bring their instances of discrimination to city council members and failed to lobby the mayor and the council. The fight for a Pittsburgh gay rights ordinance languished even within the gay community as activists turned their attention to Harrisburg and other fights.<sup>774</sup>

Over the next two years, Pittsburgh gay activists regrouped. At least the ground work done in earlier activism had made it easier for them to hold political demonstrations. In 1974, organizers of the Pride Parade had to threaten to sue the city in order to receive a permit for the parade. The next year the City granted the permit early and “easily.”<sup>775</sup> In addition, Debbie Boyle from the Gay Students at Pitt met with Mayor Flaherty in 1975, asking him to introduce a gay rights ordinance. She found him “cordial” but lacking any understanding of the issues, signaling that activists would have to redouble their efforts to win backing for their legislation. The next year, the PGPC tried to create its longed-for gay voting block by revamping Pride into a political march. As the crowd wound through downtown it stopped for four mini-rallies with speakers talking about oppression. Participants in three such rallies assembled in front of government office buildings where speakers informed participants about proposed laws. Speaking of the city ordinance, Debbie Boyle declared to the crowd, “We have to go in and

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<sup>773</sup> David Marsh, “Gay Rights await City Council Action,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, no. 13, September 7, 1974, 1,3

<sup>774</sup> In contrast, Philadelphia’s Gay Raiders and Gay Activists Alliance spent eight solid months organizing. Activists lined up the governor’s endorsement, favorable testimony from the assistant Episcopal Bishop, and information from the local ACLU on firings. While Philadelphia’s activism did not lead to a gay rights victory that year either, the sustained activism at least told the gay community which candidates to support by forcing more of the elected officials to speak on record in favor or against the bill there. “Gays vs. homophobes during 7 1/2 hour Philly Council Probe,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 17, Saturday, January 4, 1975, 4 and Karen Martin, “Philly demonstrators ejected after City Council disruption,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 28, January 3, 1976, A6

<sup>775</sup> “Parade Permit Granted,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 20, Saturday April 5, 1975.

demand our rights, not just ask for them.” Unfortunately for Boyle and for the lesbian, gay, and allied activists assembled, only sixty people turned out for the march.<sup>776</sup> Hence, the ordinance withered away under lack of pressure from the community.

### C. POLICE RELATIONS

Because the gay rights movement, both locally and nationally, had already invested tremendous energies in improving police relations and mental healthcare, its Pittsburgh branch succeeded in shaping some government policies even between 1970-1973. Owners and operators of Pittsburgh’s gay bars had established a legal fund during the late 1960s for arrestees and better relations with the vice squad of the Pittsburgh police. By the late 1960s and early 1970s some individual officers also came to gay bars to play hooky from their shifts. One Pittsburgh gay bar patron even detailed how these police drinking buddies beat his potential gay bashers. A generation before these police would have raided these same bars and humiliated customers.<sup>777</sup> In 1974, the Pennsylvania Crime Commission inadvertently helped foster a better atmosphere for sexual minorities facing the police. By the late 1960s, it had begun investigating and reporting on the need to reform laws against “victimless crimes.” According to its 1974 report, “using police resources to curb prostitution and homosexuality not only is ineffective and wasteful, it also provides a greater moral problem than it seeks to curb, namely corruption.”<sup>778</sup> Activists capitalized on a happy coincidence of their interests with those of the Republican Party. At the

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<sup>776</sup> “Militant Gay Pride Week march planned by PGPC,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 33, June 1976 A3.

<sup>777</sup> Bar Owner X, interview by Michael Snow; Randy Forrester, interview by Michael Snow.

<sup>778</sup> “Pennsylvania Crime Commission Asks Review of Anti-Gay Laws,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 10, Saturday April 12, 1974, 1

same time that the state implemented some initial recommendations and the Crime Commission readied its final report, a Republican-led investigation of police connections to the numbers racket helped Mayor Pete Flaherty choose Robert Colville as director of public safety. Colville dismissed dozens of tainted officers almost overnight and also met civilly with gay activists conducting a ZAP at a forum where he was speaking. While Colville chalked up his willingness to meet to the fact he was “sensitive to gays’ rights to public expression and affection,” the timing of his first meeting indicates that he viewed enforcement of anti-gay laws as leading to police corruption.<sup>779</sup> After all, Roger Arner, director of intelligence for the Crime Commission, stated such a connection just a few weeks before Colville met with GAP. He told a reporter for the *Pittsburgh Gay News* that the laws should not be liberalized for the sake of liberalizing but because enforcement caused illegal shakedowns and harassment. The overall situation, he argued, led to gay businesses being tied to organized crime.<sup>780</sup> Colville asked activists meeting with him that first time to bring the problems with individual officers to his attention.<sup>781</sup> They responded in kind. During the next fall, the *Pittsburgh Gay News* ran several articles on officers harassing individual gays and lesbians and alerted the community as to how to file a grievance.<sup>782</sup> While the documentary sources do not indicate what actions Colville then took, both Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh and its successor gay political organization endorsed Colville

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<sup>779</sup>The State and Local Government Archives Oral History Project stipulated that interviewers could not ask politicians interviewed about gay issues. Therefore, Colville’s interview, cited in this chapter, does not cover the meeting nor his motivations.

<sup>780</sup> “Pennsylvania Crime Commission,” 1

<sup>781</sup> “Gays Confront Porno Forum and Police Superintendent,” *Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh Newsletter*, No. 1, March 10, 1973, 1

<sup>782</sup> “Gay Legal Defense Fund and Services in Full Operation,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 5, Saturday September 1, 1973, 1, 3

repeatedly.<sup>783</sup> Those endorsements indicated that they were responding to more than his stated sympathy to the cause.

Besides meeting with Superintendent Colville, activists also worked on the Allegheny County and University of Pittsburgh police forces to reform the way they treated gays and lesbians. Members of GAP, the Pitt gay student group, and a lawyer from The Law Collective held several meetings with Pitt administrators. They angered at dragnets undercover Pitt police had launched against men seeking sex in university bathrooms. The activists explained the chilling effects entrapment, lewd conduct arrests, and subsequent publication of the names had on the whole gay community. Those gays who had not yet acted upon their homosexuality but were coming to terms with it saw such stories and drew deeper into “the closet.” The activists in those meetings also detailed the mistreatment and abuse suffered by arrestees. In a hopeful sign Dean Moyer agreed to stop patrols by undercover cops, to put up signs instead about uniformed patrols, and to have Persad retrain the Pitt force. In exchange, the activists agreed to actively discourage community members from meeting up in the university bathrooms.<sup>784</sup>

At the county level the thaw in relations between the Allegheny County police force and activists produced greater results. Decades of harassment by police officers had left many community members unwilling to speak with police investigators, even when the police appeared to protect community members. In 1975 the county police commanders sought out and received help from GAP leaders in breaking the silence about the 1973 murder of Charles Bir, Junior, a gay man. Once they ascertained that the police legitimately sought to catch the

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<sup>783</sup> “Gay Voting the who and why of voting for candidates in support of gay rights,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, Saturday, November 1, 1975, A7-A9; “The Political Club endorses candidates in Nov. 6 election,” *Out*, No. 32, November 1979,1

<sup>784</sup> “Uniformed Police at Pitt T-rooms,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 12, Saturday July 20, 1974, 17

murderer and not use the information as a ruse to shut down gay businesses or harass community members, they shared information from the victim's call to the GAP hotline for help. By building mutual trust in this case, the community and the police were able to put the murderer behind bars.<sup>785</sup>

#### **D. PERSAD: WINNING AID THROUGH LINKS TO FOUNDATION ADMINISTRATORS**

The founders of Persad made even greater inroads with local public health policymakers between 1972 and 1973. Building on fifteen years of research on mental health and nine years of lobbying within the profession, members of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) dropped homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses.<sup>786</sup> Because the reform movement was moving forward within the APA, the founders of Persad could nurture relations with the head of a local foundation. Phil Hallen, president of the Maurice Falk Medical Fund, heard the activists' initial plan for a clinic and asked to see a project proposal. Hallen viewed that proposal, liked it, and called together a meeting of 20-30 mental health professionals, academics, religious leaders, and government administrators. Hallen's reputation and stature brought in these people to hear about a cause they would have previously thought dubious. Through Hallen and his contacts, activists gained further help revising their proposal. With that help, Persad put together a grant

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<sup>785</sup> "Gay Man murdered in Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 17, Saturday January 4, 1975, 1,5

<sup>786</sup> One of the first issues of the *Pittsburgh Gay News* detailed the timeline of these events for its readers. It noted how Dr. Evelyn Hooker had released studies in 1957 showing no correlation between homosexuality and mental illness. The article detailed Drs. Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings's dialogues at conventions as early as 1964. And it covered the Gay Liberation Front's protest at recent APA meetings. "Psychiatrists Drop Gay 'Sickness' Label," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 8, Saturday January 12, 1974, 1

application. As a result, it became the first gay mental health agency anywhere to receive foundation grants.<sup>787</sup>

That grant from the Falk Medical Fund then signaled a mark of approval from Pittsburgh's elite, one which Persad used to open other doors. Because Persad impressed the individuals assembled by Hallen, some volunteered to draw up articles of incorporation for the group. Without such articles, a group could not apply for government funding. The professionalism which Persad's founders displayed at that initial meeting additionally helped county administrators agree to Persad's request for funding. Those officials in particular felt freer to face possible repercussions for funding a gay group because they could point to its existing support from the Falk Medical Fund. The Allegheny County Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MH/MR) Program contracted with Persad in 1973. That contract marked the first time a government body granted funding to a gay counseling center anywhere in the U.S.<sup>788</sup>

This arrangement with Allegheny County greatly changed existing public policy. Persad staff contracted with mental health professionals working for Allegheny County, consulting on cases dealing with gay individuals. This step marked a sea change because it signaled official recognition of the validity of the cause of gay rights and gave money to encourage its broader acceptance, at least within the arena of social services. Whereas two to five years before, these

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<sup>787</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Michael Snow, July 2003, audiotape in author's possession

<sup>788</sup> Randy Forrester, Interview by Tony Silvestre, 21 July, 1987, transcript, University of Pittsburgh Men's Study, Pittsburgh PA, "Will Gays Continue to Turn Their Backs on Gay Needs?," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 12, Saturday July 20, 1974, 4 and "Persad Center Inc. an affiliate of Allegheny County MH/MR," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 4, July 21, 1973, 4

administrators oversaw programs to “cure” homosexuality, now government officials began underwriting the reform of such programs so that they taught patients self-acceptance.<sup>789</sup>

### **E. THE BATTLE FOR PERSAD FUNDING**

For all of the progress that the gay community made in this initial turnaround in mental health policies and police relations, the shallowness of the gay community’s political network still left it vulnerable to blatantly prejudicial attacks. On September 26, 1974, the Allegheny County commissioners rejected the contract to continue funding Persad. The majority of the commissioners did so despite the fact that the \$16,000 contract amounted to less than a tenth of a percent of the overall budget for county mental health contracts that year. They did so despite the fact that both the Citizens Advisory Board and Mr. George C. Lowe, Jr., the administrator for Allegheny County MH/MR programs recommended Persad funding.<sup>790</sup> In fact, out of 105 contracts put before the commissioners that year, the commissioners only rejected Persad’s contract. Persad’s leaders and supportive mental health professionals arranged a meeting to appeal the rejection. All three commissioners agreed to meet, but the two commissioners against Persad failed to show up.<sup>791</sup>

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<sup>789</sup> It is beyond the scope of this work and the materials which I have uncovered to determine what the exact programs for the treatment of homosexuality were in Allegheny County. From the lack evidence to the contrary, I can assume that it did not differ in the late 1960s from policies in other states such as North Carolina, calling for electroshock treatment and castration. Kevin Jennings, speech delivered at the Gay Lesbian Straight Educators Network fundraiser, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, 3 December 2003

<sup>790</sup> County Commissioners refuse to renew Persad Funding,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 14, Saturday October 5, 1974, 1

<sup>791</sup> “Funds Stopped October 31, Persad County Funding in Political Stalemate,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, Saturday, November 2, 1974, 2

The commissioners revealed that they had rejected Persad's contract due to prejudice in how they responded to the gay community's subsequent lobbying to restore the funds. Hundreds heeded Randy Forrester and Jim Huggins's appeal that they write, telegram, or call the county commissioners. The mainstream newspapers, moreover, cataloged efforts by Persad's straight allies. The director of county MH/MR programs went on record saying, "They've done a blasted good job." The chair of the Allegheny County MH/MR Board proved even more effusive in praising Persad. "Persad represents one of the greatest bargains in the whole mental health program and should be expanded," he said. Virtually every other awardee of county contracts also submitted endorsements of Persad's work as did the National Association of Social Workers. Despite all of the support from mental health practitioners for Persad, Commissioner William Hunt dismissively responded to one citizen letter with the following words: "We would not support psychopaths counseling psychopaths. Neither will we support homosexuals counseling homosexuals."<sup>792</sup> Commissioner Tom Foerster declared funding for Persad, "a waste of money."<sup>793</sup>

Over the next couple of years, gay activists tried multiple approaches to overcome the power and prejudices of these two men but lacked the political might to budge them. Following up on the letter writing, the main organizers at Persad called for a public protest calling it "more effective ... because it cannot be swept under the rug and is more easily reported by the media." At first, they considered a lawsuit prohibitively costly.<sup>794</sup> A subsequent meeting at the

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<sup>792</sup> "Persad Considers shutdown," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 16, Saturday December 7, 1974, 1 and "Funds Stopped October 31, Persad County Funding in Political Stalemate," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, Saturday, November 2, 1974, 2

<sup>793</sup> Persad sues County," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 19, Saturday, March 1, 1975, 4

<sup>794</sup> Persad Considers shutdown," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 16, Saturday December 7, 1974, 1

Community Advocate's Office of the state attorney general brought two new perspectives and allies in the fight. The new knowledge emboldened Persad organizers to sue particularly when they learned that the state had legal aid for such instances for community groups. They also thought that the lawsuit could set a national precedent aiding groups elsewhere. Secondly, Persad could try to bypass the county going directly to the state for funds.<sup>795</sup> On the political front, one gay editorial writer urged gays to file as candidates to run against the Commissioners and gave directions on how to do so.<sup>796</sup> The cause faced setbacks when no one took up this suggestion making that issue a lynchpin of a strong campaign. Michelle Madoff did court the community saying she would restore and increase Persad's funding, but she failed to win the election by a long shot. More importantly, no media outside of the *Gay News* showed up for the press conference announcing the lawsuit's filing.<sup>797</sup> Worse news arrived when Judge Watson denied summary judgment; then, he and Judge Marion Finkelhor ruled that Persad lacked standing to sue under the Pennsylvania MH/MR Act of 1966. Persad, they reasoned, was not the recipient of services hence the denial of the contract did not deny members of a social group the mental health services. Over the next twenty-two years, Persad continued applying for County funds and Commissioner Foerster continually blocked the contract.

## F. FORGING ALLIANCES IN THE STATE

Blocked or disappointed in reforms at the local level, gays achieved greater success statewide because they coordinated with groups across the state. Debbie Boyle of Gay Students at Pitt and

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<sup>795</sup> "Persad Suing County For Funding," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 17, Saturday January 4, 1975, 16

<sup>796</sup> Richard Meritzer, letter to the editor, *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No 18, Saturday, February 1, 1975, 6

<sup>797</sup> Persad sues County," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 19, Saturday, March 1, 1975, 4

Jim Huggins and Bob Hughes of Persad challenged state officials on discrimination at a hearing at CMU. Three members of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Equal Opportunities Task Force asked for comment on affirmative action. Boyle and company berated the task force because "it had chosen to completely ignore the blatant discrimination against gay people."<sup>798</sup> Leaders from Philadelphia's Gay Activists' Alliance (GAA) and the Gay Raiders next played electoral politics, first testifying before the Republican state platform hearings. They demanded a gay rights amendment to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and repeal of the state's sodomy law. In June, they met with the GOP gubernatorial candidate.<sup>799</sup> Philadelphia-based activists also testified before the Democratic state platform hearings. Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh could not marshal the resources to send people to these hearings, sending instead a supportive telegram.<sup>800</sup> The GAA and Gay Raiders next approached staff from Governor Shapp's re-election campaign to determine his stand on their rights. He already knew from the press of the GOP candidate's favorable responses. The fact that groups from around the state had approached the parties then helped Governor Shapp to think of adopting gay rights as an electoral strategy. Shapp took the unprecedented step of meeting with Homophiles of Penn State (HOPS), the Penn State gay group. There he pointed out his previous aid to one of its members seeking a teaching certificate. The governor assured the group of his continued support and desire to overturn sodomy statutes and implement gay rights. Shapp then tied his self-interest to that of HOPS, doubling aloud that the Republican majority aligned against him in the legislature would pass such measures.<sup>801</sup>

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<sup>798</sup> "Persad, GSP testify at Equal Educational hearings," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, June 1, 1974, 15.

<sup>799</sup> "GOP Governor Candidate ...," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, September 7, 1974, 7

<sup>800</sup> "Gays testify at platform hearings," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, September 7, 1974, 10

<sup>801</sup> "State Races Hot, Gays Question Candidates," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, October 5, 1974

A sense of ease and mutual aid between Governor Shapp and gay activists continued to build throughout the summer and fall as the election heated up. When statewide activist Harry Langhorne and Mark Segal met with Shapp, he floored them with wide-ranging knowledge of gay history and organizations and came with specific proposals.<sup>802</sup> Shapp then stood by his record of following the Pennsylvania Crime Commission's recommendation in reducing the charge for sodomy from a felony to a misdemeanor. He told the activists that he would be instrumental in repealing the law altogether. Shapp further promised to throw his weight behind a state gay rights law, but he asked for something in return. Shapp said that the effort to add sexual orientation to the categories of people protected by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission was "doomed to fail," and therefore, he "would not urge it under a Republican-dominated legislature." Gay political activists played the game here well too, saying that conservative rural Democrats would act as another obstacle. Shapp had well timed his meeting and the release of information from it with the general election. The *Pittsburgh Gay News* obliged the governor by running this statement and its article on the meeting right before the election.<sup>803</sup>

While this electoral dance fits into traditional interpretations of social movement power deriving from potential numbers in the streets or at the polls, Shapp's fulfillment of these campaign promises also highlights the growing power expressed from the interpersonal side of the gay network. Shapp's intimate knowledge of gay history and the discrimination the community faced came from the governor's experience with gay relatives.<sup>804</sup> This personal connection to the community and the trust it engendered, not just gay community strength at the

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<sup>802</sup> "Shapp takes broad gay rights stand," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 15, November 2, 1974, 1, 3

<sup>803</sup> "Shapp takes broad gay rights stand," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 15, November 2, 1974, 1, 3

<sup>804</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Michael Snow, August 14, 2003.

polls which he could not verify anyway, was why Shapp met with his department heads within four weeks of winning re-election. His administration named liaisons to the gay community within six weeks rather than doing the traditional method of forming a blue ribbon commission and developing a soon-to-be-forgotten report.<sup>805</sup> The governor's office also quickly and publicly supported gay activists' fight for Philadelphia's gay rights ordinance."<sup>806</sup>

### G. WIELDING THE POWER OF GOVERNOR'S LIAISONS

Shapp's liaisons learned first hand the effects of anti-gay discrimination, making them more willing advocates. For example, when Barry Kohn of the Pennsylvania Department of Justice called credit bureaus to ask about potential red-flagging of gays and lesbians, several hung up on him. It is not coincidental that the liaisons worked hard and quickly on probing the depths of discrimination after hearing about such incidents in meetings to report back to each other and activists from Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.<sup>807</sup> In follow-up meetings, liaisons asked the community activists for further evidence of discrimination in banking, mental health care, public safety, and insurance. The presence of activists and the administrators in the room helped short-circuit foot dragging in state bureaucracies. For example, subordinates had told the liaison from the Department of Public Welfare that the state mental health system had no gays institutionalized for homosexuality. Mark Segal quickly countered the claim as obfuscation, telling the liaison of ongoing aversion therapy in Philadelphia. Segal told the liaison to "check schizophrenia chronic undifferentiated," the diagnosis under which state hospitals hid

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<sup>805</sup> "State announces liaisons to gays," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, January 4, 1975, 9

<sup>806</sup> "Gays vs. Homophobes," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, January 4, 1975, 4

<sup>807</sup> David March, "State Gay Summit," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, March 1, 1975, 1

homosexual patients. Randy Forrester of Persad added knowledge about the state system discriminating against gays by institutionalizing them longer than other patients.<sup>808</sup> Activists also put out calls for information through the gay press to community members within the state-regulated industries which might discriminate against gays and lesbians. The tremendous follow through shown by these gay activists encouraged state officials to work themselves with speed. By April of 1975, the Shapp administration was redrawing insurance regulations to support equality. It also issued a statement of support for reinstatement of Persad's government funding. On this measure, the state's pro-gay stance came to no avail given the fact that Allegheny County Commissioners Foerster and Hunt continued to block funding for Persad. In other arenas, the alliance with Governor Shapp had reaching impact. Most importantly, Shapp issued an executive order that the state would work to end anti-gay discrimination.<sup>809</sup> The order also created a governor's task force to make the liaisons more routinized and permanent.

When Governor Shapp's office publicized the executive order, however, the gay community faced a counter move, sorely testing the strength of its budding political relationships in state government. Foreshadowing this development, Shapp actually had softened the executive order after police chiefs, school principals, and religious leaders criticized the initial proposals. The final order deleted specific actions such as changing state licensing programs and working for the passage of law against anti-gay discrimination.<sup>810</sup>

Despite the administration's attempt to muffle opposition by muting the demands, conservative legislators introduced five separate anti-gay bills within six weeks of the announcement of the executive order. Pro-gay legislators, or if not pro-gay at least ones wanting

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<sup>808</sup> David March, "State gay summit yields hope," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, March 1, 1975, 1

<sup>809</sup> "Shapp softens gay executive order," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, May 3, 1975, 1

<sup>810</sup> "Shapp softens gay executive order," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, Saturday May 3, 1975, no. 21, 1

to keep the governor from facing a legislative defeat, killed two of the bills and held up another in committee. The same tactic did not work, however, on one bill in the senate which sought to ban gays and lesbians from employment as state police, prison guards, or attendants at juvenile or mental institutions. Demonstrating the strength of the anti-gay argument and the weakness of pro-gay sentiments, the senate passed this bill unanimously in May 1975. According to gay activists, it was the first such bill to pass any state legislature. This time Governor Shapp vetoed the measure, and the governor's supporters blocked an override attempt. The senate, however, struck back with even harsher measures. Their next bill more broadly defined a homosexual as anyone "who is inclined to or engages in sexual or erotic activity with one's own sex." This wording covered people who simply thought about the activity or who engaged in a broad range of actions whereas the earlier bill just covered someone engaging in deviant sexual intercourse. This second bill, Senate Bill 743, also heaped fines and jail time on anyone hiring such a person to a prohibited job.<sup>811</sup> Gay activists noted that the author of this bill, Senator Thomas Nolan from Pittsburgh's eastern suburbs, had a history of opposing civil rights protections, having moved to limit the power of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission in 1973. Nolan's bill also passed the senate overwhelmingly in 1975 and moved to the state house.<sup>812</sup>

Delayed for the time being by the initial veto in their efforts to create anti-gay laws, conservatives switched tactics, finding some support in the courts. A Pittsburgh businessman launched a lawsuit against Governor Shapp's order banning discrimination against gay state employees. Where Nolan's bill would have excluded gays in a number of jobs, the lawsuit sought to wipe out their protection in all state jobs. The plaintiff's lawyers called the governor's

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<sup>811</sup> "Rash of anti-gay bills roused," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 23, Saturday August 2, 1975, A3 and "Shapp vetoes SB 196: Override attempt set for mid-November," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 26, Saturday November 1, 1975, A3

<sup>812</sup>"Rash of anti-gay bills roused," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 23, Saturday August 2, 1975, A3

views “inconsistent with our beliefs and traditions.” Here forces coming together against gay rights began groping towards their present argument against equality. More importantly, although the Commonwealth Court dismissed the suit, the logic it used lessened the liberating effect of Shapp’s order. Shapp’s order, the judges argued, protected people on the basis of their “sexual preference.” However, if the employees actually acted upon that preference, according to the ruling, they were subject to criminal prosecution as sexual deviants. Thus, the judges used the state’s sodomy law to stigmatize gays as criminals.<sup>813</sup> Meanwhile, supporters of equality focused on mobilizing their community.

#### **H. MOBILIZING GAY CONSTITUENT/LOBBYISTS**

In response to the legislative snarl, gay activists sparked a greater grass roots movement for lobbying, though, as novice lobbyists they were barely up to the challenge. Knowing that the fight for legal rights would be arduous, activists had sought to teach gays and lesbians the arguments for and against bills. Harry Langhorne planned a 32-page brochure of statistics, logic, and talking points. The growing power of the gay rights movement elsewhere helped offset some of Pennsylvania’s movement’s weakness. Langhorne based his brochure on a similar one Massachusetts residents had used to win a state anti-discrimination law. Pittsburgh gays spread this brochure widely in their community in 1975.<sup>814</sup> When conservatives came forth with anti-gay bills, activists, writing in the *Pittsburgh Gay News*, issued an alarm. Reporting on the introduction of the first anti-gay bills, one author wrote, “the ease with which these bills have

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<sup>813</sup> “Court dismisses suit to reverse Shapp gay order,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 30, March 6, 1976, A4

<sup>814</sup> “PA Gay Rights Brochure planned,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, Saturday May 3, 1975, 7

been introduced and House Bill 94 passed points to the need for a strong statewide gay political organization and lobbying effort.” The article pointed to the help of the governor’s task force but warned the community against over depending on it. The legislative fight “need[ed] the involvement of more gay people.”<sup>815</sup> To strengthen ties between organizations across the state and add to the number of people with political skills and knowledge, activists planned and held a statewide gay conference in October 1975.<sup>816</sup> Over the next five months gays across the state shifted from a defensive position to an offensive one as well. With help coordinating from the national gay rights group, the Gay Task Force, they formed the Pennsylvania Rural Caucus and held lobby training workshops in Pittsburgh. Most importantly, they organized contingents for a combined lobby day in Harrisburg for pro-gay bills, not just against Senate Bill 743.<sup>817</sup>

In March 1976, these gay activists confronted a growing backlash from state legislators with an unexpectedly diverse showing in Harrisburg. Just five months before the rally, the state senate voted unanimously against gay and lesbians employed in “sensitive areas.” Thwarted by Governor Shapp, conservative senators added more teeth to their measure in November 1975. Protests that month of 100 demonstrators in Pittsburgh led by the Pittsburgh Gay Political Caucus and similar work in Philadelphia barely put a dint in the ranks of senators arrayed against the community, making the tally 43-3. To counter the threat, the PGPC joined with Philadelphia’s Gay Raiders and the Pennsylvania Gay Rural Caucus to mobilize people in March 1976. Chartered busses carried 19 activists from Pittsburgh and 22 from Philadelphia to the state

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<sup>815</sup> “Rash of anti-gay bills roused,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 33, Saturday August 2, 1975, A3

<sup>816</sup> “Ambitious plans announced for Pennsylvania Gay Conference,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 24, Saturday September 6, 1975, A3

<sup>817</sup> The Gay Task Force had been founded in 1972. “Gay Lobby Day goal to contact all PA. lawmakers,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 30, March 6, 1976, A4

capital. The remaining 40 attendees crucially came from areas “usually seen as having no gays.” The organizers showed great sophistication in holding several training sessions in the regions ahead of time to prepare the volunteers. And finally, the contingent from Pittsburgh fanned out, visiting 23 of 35 legislators from Allegheny County.<sup>818</sup>

In terms of rallies in Harrisburg, this one drew a small crowd, but it gave legislators and activists alike notice of a changed gay community. A crowd of eighty people willingly risked arrest and public exposure of their sexuality to declare their stand in favor of gay rights. Hence, legislators could no longer count on absolute impunity if they enacted new anti-gay rights laws. The demonstrators’ presence from so many areas showed legislators, moreover, that homosexuality was not just a phenomenon restricted to San Francisco or Greenwich Village. Even several small town legislators met gay constituents thereby lessening the myth that gays were a “big city disease.”<sup>819</sup>

Overall the result proved mixed to positive with no legislative victory accruing from this one small, though significant, display of strength. On the downside, the activists found out how egregious the anti-gay attitudes of some legislators were. After a half hour meeting with Pittsburghers, Senator Tom Nolan of the city’s eastern suburbs said that pro-gay legislation “will never pass so long as I am Senate Majority leader.” Echoing the racial tainting fears of segregationists from the 1950s, Nolan felt comfortable enough to state in the presence of such

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<sup>818</sup> “Shapp vetoes SB 196 Override attempt set for mid-November,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, Saturday November 1, 1975, A3, Jim Austin, “Anti-gays keep trying,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, Saturday December 6, 1975, A6, Rich Marquart, “Diverse assembly of protesters picket state building,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 27, Saturday December 6, 1975, A3, and Austin, December 6, 1975, A6, n.a “Gay Lobby Day set in March,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 29, February 7, 1976, A3, A5, and M. David Stein, “Modest Success ‘State Capital blues’ as gays meet legislators,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, , No. 31, April 1976, A3

<sup>819</sup> M. David Stein, “Modest Success ‘State Capital blues’ as gays meet legislators,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, , No. 31, April 1976, A3

gay people that “he did not like gays touching straights.” Senator Jeanette Reibman ran away from the activists who criticized her vote on the employment ban, asking, “Where are all these gay people oppressed by it?” On the other side, participant Randall Kesterson noted “positive responses from several legislators who previously had voted against gays in state employment.” More importantly, Representative Joseph Rhodes, a former activist for African-American civil rights, joined with a representative from Philadelphia to introduce a pro-gay bill in March 1976. It would add sexual orientation and marital status to the list of categories of people protected under the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. Gay activists and allies on the governor’s commission had used their meetings in Harrisburg and status to identify pro-gay legislators to submit their wording for the bill.<sup>820</sup> Activists from Philadelphia’s Gay Activists’ Alliance had learned from their first meeting with Governor Shapp, both of his support for such a proposal and his sense that the Republican majority and rural Democrats would block it. Subsequent discussions of the Governor’s Task Force on Sexual Minorities hammered out wording. And the rally in Harrisburg and letter writing campaigns sought to address the governor’s exact sense of likely opposition to the bill. The strategy appeared to work initially. Even Senator Nolan suggested he might support such a bill but only if it “excluded gays from sensitive areas.” In the meantime, activists declared a small victory, claiming that their worked helped bottle up in committee the House version of the ban on employment in sensitive areas.<sup>821</sup>

That same year electoral concerns caused legislators to frustrate the gay community in its effort to take away the criminal stigma. Going into the fight pro-gay forces could take heart in

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<sup>820</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Michael Snow, August 14, 2003

<sup>821</sup> M. David Stein, “Modest Success ‘State Capital blues’ as gays meet legislators,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 31, April 1976, A3; “Penna. Gay Rights Bill Introduced,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 31, April 1976, A3; “Shapp takes broad gay rights stand,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 15, November 2, 1974, 1, 3; and Stein, A3

the support of the Pennsylvania Joint Council on the Criminal Justice System. There delegates, made up of judges, corrections officials, and police officers, voted by over a two-to-one margin for the immediate repeal of sodomy statutes. Responding to Gay Lobby Day, Philadelphia Senator Louis Hill introduced a bill to repeal Pennsylvania's Voluntary Deviate Sexual Intercourse Law. Prospects looked even better since Hill's own Judiciary Committee would likely hold the initial hearings on the bill.<sup>822</sup> Diane Gigler and Rich Marquart from the Pittsburgh Gay Political Caucus exhorted Pittsburghers to write letters in support and telephone legislators.<sup>823</sup> The Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus set a more ambitious goal of 50,000 letters. They hoped for 200 for each legislator. An editorial writer in the *Pittsburgh Gay News* urged the community into action, stating that the likelihood of passage was "very small" because "constituents who are opposed to gay rights" were more likely "to bother to communicate their feelings to their legislators."<sup>824</sup> The Criminal Justice Council appeared to bolster this movement even further sending a report on June 4 calling for the repeal of all vice laws.<sup>825</sup>

Then election year reality set in. Senator Hill polled his committee finding a bare plurality in favor of reporting the bill out. With half the senate up for reelection, committee members found it too dangerous to handle the topic.<sup>826</sup> Foreshadowing how the sodomy repeal might fare, house members overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning Governor Shapp for declaring gay pride week in June 1976. He did this before any other governor in the nation had

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<sup>822</sup> Harry Langhorne, "PA 'Sodomy' repeal to be introduced," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 32, May 1976, A7

<sup>823</sup> Diane Gigler and Rich Marquart, "Caucus Calls for Help," letter to editor, *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 33, June, 1976, A12, "PA Rural Caucus seeks 50,000 'repeal' letters to lawmakers," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 33, June 1976, A4

<sup>824</sup> Editorial, "Involvement Made Easy," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 32, May 1976, A8

<sup>825</sup> "Criminal Justice Council calls for vice law repeal," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, July 1976, A7

<sup>826</sup> Harry Langhorne, "Hill Delays Sodomy Repeal Introduction," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 33, June, 1976, A3

made such a statement of support, and legislators ruled it “contrary to their wishes.”<sup>827</sup> Hill then polled the rest of his senate colleagues outside his committee and found that his bill repealing sodomy statutes would lose. He withdrew the bill and refused to discuss reintroducing it with gay activists until after the election.<sup>828</sup> While legislators were handing gays several setbacks and the community increased its mobilization, Governor Shapp offered far more than symbolic support for the gay community.

## I. THE GOVERNOR’S COMMISSION ON SEXUAL MINORITIES

The administration turned the Governor’s Task Force on Sexual Minorities into a full-fledged commission in 1975 and with it enacted some huge and quick actions to improve conditions where the executive branch of state government had direct authority. First, the governor issued his order creating the task force and forbidding discrimination against state employees on the basis of sexual orientation. After a committee of task force members presented him with a draft of a permanent structure, Governor Shapp upgraded the task force to full commission status. The task force had met four times as an ad hoc group, and members sought to create a more formal body and powers.<sup>829</sup> The governor would appoint eight members, the gay community another thirteen, and voters statewide would elect five. In the process, Pennsylvania became the

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<sup>827</sup> “Shapp proclaims Gay Pride Week Legislators Freak Out,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 34, July 1976, A10

<sup>828</sup> “Sodomy repeal stalled,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No.34, July 1976, A10 The stall took place in the backdrop of the US Supreme Court voting not to hear an ACLU and National Gay Task Force suit challenging Virginia’s sodomy appeal. M. David Stern, “‘Test’ Flops as High Court upholds sodomy laws,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No 32, May 1976, B3, M. David Stern, “West Virginia is for gay lovers,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 35, August 1976, A3

<sup>829</sup> Debbie Boyle, “Governor’s Task Force seeks permanent structure,” *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 23 August 1975,

first state in the nation to have a formal governmental body solely dedicated to improving conditions for and increasing rights for gay citizens.<sup>830</sup>

By transforming the task force into a commission, the governor's office also made this body something that would continue to exist under succeeding administrations. More immediately, the change in status gave the commission a greater mandate from the governor which appears to have translated into greater power with other spheres of state authority. For example, the commission forced officials from the state police to meet with activists, chastising them on entrapment of gays in public places. State police officials issued a weak excuse for their behavior, basically confirming that the commission had rattled them. A memo from the state police claimed that they only investigated cruising areas in order to protect gays from "hoods who would've robbed them if they congregated there." The memo's justification represented a small change but change nonetheless. Previously, state police had free rein to challenge and arrest gays. Previously, state police mostly ignored criminals who preyed upon gays. In taking a defensive posture, police officers turned aside from viewing gays automatically as criminal.<sup>831</sup> Commissioners set about trying to make a greater change in police attitudes.

The commission brought greater change in terms of the state viewing gays and lesbians as fit parents. Debbie Boyle of Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh was able to use her status as a commissioner to mediate in a foster parent case. After her intercession, an agency placed a lesbian foster child with a lesbian household. In Pittsburgh, Whale's Tale Inc. then began

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<sup>830</sup> "Gay Community elections possible as Governor's Commission Chosen," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No.24, Saturday September 6, 1975, A3, "Shapp upgrades Gay Task Force to Commission, selections this month," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, October 1975, A6

<sup>831</sup> "State police admit entrapment, issue flimsy excuse in memo," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No 27, December 6, 1975, A3, A6 and "State police soft peddle entrapment, Barer meet on," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, January 3, 1976, A4

looking into recruiting gays and lesbians as foster parents.<sup>832</sup> This change represented a considerable shift in a society whose members all too often equated homosexuals with child molesters and a state which had only a few years before imprisoned gays and lesbians based on their orientation. The State also changed how it regulated the greatest number of gay establishments, the bars.

Under the inducement of the commission, the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (LCB) turned around in how it responded to the gay community as well. Before the commission was created, gay activists used a governor's liaison to complain about LCB agents extorting gay and lesbian establishments. The chairman of the LCB responded simply with a memo. He denied that the Pennsylvania Liquor Code outlawed serving alcohol to "homosexuals or lesbians [sic]." While noting that the LCB had previously cited bars for disorderly conduct for allowing homosexuals to kiss or embrace, the chairman would only go so far as to maintain that the LCB had issued no such citations for a period of time.<sup>833</sup> His memo never mentioned the extortion complaint, let alone a plan to investigate it. Unsatisfied with the LCB for dodging the original complaint, a subcommittee of the governor's commission drew up new guidelines for the Liquor Control Board. The subcommittee had weight because it included not just Pittsburgh activists Debbie Boyle and Janet Cooper but also the chief counsel, executive director, and chief enforcement officers of the LCB. The subcommittee drew up several standards with wording reprimanding LCB agents for previous actions. Now the LCB could only investigate to "stop [ ] unlawful or improper behavior" in contrast to past investigations done in a "vindictive and harassing" nature. More crucially, the guidelines demanded that liquor control officers apply the

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<sup>832</sup> "Gay Placed With Gay Foster Parents," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, Pittsburgh Edition, No. 1, October 1976, 3

<sup>833</sup> "Gay bars off limits to LCB harassment?" *Pittsburgh Gay News*, August 1975, A3

same standards to all liquor establishments. They were no longer to cite gay bars for offenses that never incurred fines to a straight bar.<sup>834</sup>

The governor's administrators stepped up the pressure on the Liquor Control Board to enact the new rules fully when it stopped at only verbally approving the new guidelines. The LCB's tepid response brought the Pennsylvania Justice Department's spokesman to the press expressing his disappointment.<sup>835</sup> For its part, the commission reacted to LCB foot dragging with months of pressure. Finally, the weight of this barrage caused the LCB's chief counsel to send a memo to all of the LCB's enforcement districts, which included the governor's executive order banning discrimination by state agencies. It noted the LCB officers' previous habits of citing gay establishments merely because of displays of same-sex affection, the implication being that such grounds for citations now violated the governor's order.<sup>836</sup> While gay activists' budding relations with Shapp's administrators brought them victories within the state executive branch, coalition-building brought victories elsewhere.

## **J. BUILDING LINKAGES TO OTHER MOVEMENTS**

In the process of fighting for the civil rights bills, repeal of sodomy statutes, and warding off anti-gay bills, the community finally gained public support from other social movements. The standard historiographic interpretation holds that gay rights organizations and black organizations grew estranged after anti-gay slurs by Black Panthers and the rise of homophobic

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<sup>834</sup> "New liberal LCB guidelines may regulate gay bars," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 23, October 4, 1975, A9

<sup>835</sup> "New LCB guidelines not approved yet," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 26, Saturday November 1, 1975, A7

<sup>836</sup> Debbie Boyle, "Penna. . Liquor Control Board at loggerheads with Task Force," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 29, Feb 7, 1976, A6

black ministers.<sup>837</sup> The history of Pittsburgh's community follows a different pattern. A spokesperson for the Pittsburgh chapter for the NAACP came to a GAP meeting in 1974 and spoke of the need for greater cooperation between various oppressed groups. Several GAP members joined the NAACP that night.<sup>838</sup>

Pittsburghers also contradicted the standard trope that organized labor only took a socially conservative position on this issue. Most notably, the Pennsylvania State Service Union (PSSU), spearheaded by Pittsburgher Joni Robinowitz, took up the governor's ban on discrimination and included non-discrimination as a provision in its state contract. Thus, the PSSU became the first union in the nation to embrace gay rights. The union's embrace was forceful as well as ground-breaking. Its negotiators even held their ground when state negotiators argued in July of 1975 that the governor's order rendered the provision moot. The PSSU position would protect its members if a future governor overturned the order.<sup>839</sup> The PSSU also went so far as to plan a legal challenge to the bill excluding gays and lesbians from serving in certain state jobs.<sup>840</sup> Religious liberals joined the cause at that point too. The

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<sup>837</sup> Duberman, *Stonewall*, 250, 257-9, Mab Segrest, "Visibility and Backlash," in Deitcher ed., *The Question of Equality*, 116-117, Eric Marcus, *Making History, The Struggle For Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights, 1945-1990, An Oral History*, (NY: Harper Collins, 1992) 184-5

<sup>838</sup> "NAACP Spokesperson addresses GAP Meeting," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 16, December 7, 1974, 8

<sup>839</sup> "Gays may be protected in new PA union contracts," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, October 1975, A6. Unfortunately, the rank and file negotiating committee of the AFSCME took a different stand the next year making the classic diversion that they wanted a ban on discrimination "on any non-job related grounds." "No AFSCME protections for gays," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 35, August 1975, A7

<sup>840</sup> "Shapp vetoes SB196: Override attempt set for mid-November," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 26, Saturday November, 1, 1975, A3

governing organization of Pennsylvania's Quakers even voted to give gay activist Harry Langhorne \$600 to lobby for the gay civil rights bill.<sup>841</sup>

More importantly feminists and New Left organizations helped rally to gay rights when conservative legislators threatened to roll back Governor Shapp's pro-gay reforms. Along with the PSSU, the New American Movement (NAM) and NOW helped the Pittsburgh Gay Political Caucus organize protests against anti-gay legislation. Ellie Smeal spoke at the rally on behalf of the National Organization for Women, (NOW). She reaffirmed the commitment of the organization to equality and noted that the group dedicated one percent of its national dues to the cause of advancing rights for lesbians.<sup>842</sup>

These demonstrations of support were not fleeting. ACLU and NOW chapters, alongside the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus, sent out appeals for their members to write letters urging repeal of the sodomy statute.<sup>843</sup> NAM later sent a large contingent to march in the Pittsburgh Pride parade.<sup>844</sup> Most importantly, Pennsylvania NOW withdrew its endorsement of Janet Reibman when she ran for U.S. Senate. They cited Reibman's support for the bill barring gays and lesbians from certain state jobs. NOW also cited Reibman's stated opposition to the federal gay rights bill.<sup>845</sup> These efforts of coalition building appear to have had an effect on Reibman.

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<sup>841</sup> "Quakers grant \$28,000 [sic] for gay projects in PA," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No 26, November 1, 1975, B3. The overall amount granted by the Coordinating Committee of the Religious Society of Friends totaled \$2,800 not \$28,000, still a large sum for gay activism in any one state especially from one religious body.

<sup>842</sup> Rich Marquart, "Diverse assembly of protesters picket state building," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 27,m December 6, 1975, A3-4

<sup>843</sup> "PA Rural Caucus seeks 50,000 'repeal' letters to lawmakers," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 33, June 1976, A4

<sup>844</sup> Elayne Rapping, "NAM urges mass turnout for Gay Pride March," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 33, June 1976, A13

<sup>845</sup> Nancy Epperson, "PA NOW nixes Riebman support, she voted to pass anti-gay bills," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 28, February 7, 1976, A10

After the bitter exchange on the statewide gay lobby day in Harrisburg and after NOW withdrew its support, State Senator Reibman changed her position. Reibman co-sponsored the bill to overturn Pennsylvania's sodomy law.<sup>846</sup>

Tension surrounding sex segregation always divided Pittsburgh's gay community in the 1970s; nevertheless, the movement for women's equality proved the greatest incubator for gay rights. Catcalling from male patrons and second-rate facilities for women alienated lesbian patrons at gay bars.<sup>847</sup> Similarly, lesbian editorialists protested an "inevitable" male bias in Persad's male counselors and the short-lived nature of lesbian community projects. Still ill-feeling never erupted to the point of lesbians withdrawing en masse from the movement along the lines that debilitated the Gay Activists Alliance in New York City. Instead, Pittsburgh lesbians called upon their cohort to become more active in gay organizations and serve as women's counselors at Persad.<sup>848</sup> Feminist consciousness raising groups and women's centers provided a way station in which many gay activists explored gender issues as a non-threatening way of discovering their sexual orientation. Many of these women then provided volunteers for Persad's Speakers Bureau and counseling services.<sup>849</sup> Consciousness raising groups also lent a format and theoretical underpinnings to many gay men's groups. As gay men gathered, they shared experiences finding out that they were not alone, deviant, or at fault for the discrimination they encountered.<sup>850</sup> In recognition of these contributions, the *Pittsburgh Gay News* covered

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<sup>846</sup> Harry Langhorne, "Hill Delays Sodomy repeal introduction," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 33, June, 1976, A3

<sup>847</sup> Jan Cole interview by Michael Snow, June 30, 2003; Rita Drapkin interview by Michael Snow, June 12, 2003.

<sup>848</sup> Rebecca Clare, letter to the editor, "Women Should Get Something Together," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 10, April 13, 1974 5; Duberman, *Stonewall*, 249-250

<sup>849</sup> Barbara Paull, "A Matter of Preference," *Pittsburgh*, February, 1980, 29, and Cole, interview, Drapkin, interview.

<sup>850</sup> Forrester, interview by Michael Snow, August 14, 2003

many non-gay events put on by feminists, inviting participation from the gay community.<sup>851</sup> And most crucially in terms of recognizing the shared nature of oppression, gay activists formed The Political Club in 1979 with its stated goal of mobilizing a combined feminist and gay power base.<sup>852</sup>

Pittsburgh's experience had an impact on the national women's movement. From 1969, local leaders of Pittsburgh NOW chapters had learned firsthand from members of the impact of homophobia. Their influence, along with the work of Los Angeles Chapter co-presidents, helped NOW embrace lesbian rights.<sup>853</sup> Contrary to the standard interpretation, the arguments of these NOW members, as much as Rita Mae Brown's Lavender Menace ZAP, overcame Betty Friedan's fear that, if NOW endorsed lesbian rights, it would allow conservatives to label all feminists lesbian.<sup>854</sup> Thus, because of relationships between activists in Pittsburgh, the resources of the world's largest women's organization then came to bear on gay rights.

In contrast to the bonding of feminists and gay rights movements through the interpersonal connections that brought together NOW, Persad, and The Political Club, the YWCA's stance on the issue showed a slower growth reminiscent of Pittsburgh societal attitudes as a whole. Since 1961, Jan Neffke had worked tirelessly in the YWCA's Public Affairs Bureau.<sup>855</sup> In 1973, the national organization endorsed a commitment to lesbian rights.<sup>856</sup>

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<sup>851</sup> "Rape Crisis Center Opens in McKeesport," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No.14, Saturday, October 5, 1974, 2, "Pittsburgh Feminist Network Formed," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No 30, March 6, 1976, A11

<sup>852</sup> "The Political Club endorsed candidates in November County Election," *Out*, November 1979, 1

<sup>853</sup> Joann Evansgardner, interview, in SLGA

<sup>854</sup> Giddings, 304 and David Deitcher, "Introduction," in David Deitcher, *The Question of Equality: Lesbian and Gay Politics in America Since Stonewall* (NY: Scribner, 1995) 35,

<sup>855</sup> Jan Neffke, interview by Michael Snow, in SLGA

Neffke herself took up that work, joining the board of Persad in 1976.<sup>857</sup> However, when she had tried to use her personal linkages to unite the YWCA with opponents of anti-gay legislation in Harrisburg, she ran into a roadblock. When Senator Nolan proposed excluding gays from “sensitive” occupations, some members of YWCA Public Affairs Committee agreed with Neffke’s associate Carol Titus that the bill violated the principle of equal civil rights. They favored making a public stand against the bill. Others stalled consideration with a standard parliamentary delaying tactic, asking for clarification on the exact wording of the bill. They also deflected the discussion by asking for the meaning of the national YWCA’s usage of the phrase “pluralism” in the gay rights resolution. Still others agreed with Senator Nolan that gays ought to be excluded along with sex offenders from being teachers and counselors. Some even worried that the whole YWCA membership had to be informed and consulted first.<sup>858</sup> Each and every one of these questions seemed reasonable at first glance. However, seasoned political activists, such as members of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee, knew the real motive in asking them. They knew that Nolan’s bill would come up for a vote before the staff could report back with answers. The questions then equaled a “no” answer.

Rebuffed by the Pittsburgh YWCA on this bill, Neffke and her allies launched an educational program seeking to add more local YWCA members to the political coalition forged for gay rights. They set up a pilot program of speakers and materials for presentations on the issue of sexual orientation and the harm done by homophobic discrimination. Finally, Neffke

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<sup>856</sup> Resolution of the 1973 Annual Meeting of the YWCA, San Diego as in the Minutes of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee in YWCA Records.

<sup>857</sup> “Persad,” *Gay News*, No.1, October 1976, 18

<sup>858</sup> South Hills Area Director Carol Titus brought the issue to the YWCA. Neffke brought Persad and the ACLU’s positions on the bill to the subsequent meeting of the Public Affairs Committee. Minutes of the YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh Public Affairs Committee, January 7, 1976 and February 4, 1976 in YWCA Papers in HSWP.

threw down the gauntlet for the fence-sitting members of the Public Affairs Committee. In a memo to the whole committee, Neffke signaled both the success of such a pilot program and the Public Affairs staff's willingness to do such programs across the county.<sup>859</sup>

### **K. OVERTURNING SODOMY STATUTES VIA THE COURTS**

In contrast to the YWCA's cautious approach, years of combined activism between the gay community and the ACLU brought a victory, an end to Pennsylvania's sodomy law. In particular that interaction proved crucial when three years of legislative organizing failed to bring about the same goal. As early as 1972, activists forming Persad had asked the Pittsburgh ACLU for help incorporating. The President of ACLU Pennsylvania, Tom Kerr told the chapter it should help Persad, citing legal questions dealt with by the ACLU nationwide. On his own initiative, he also told the chapter it should be ready if Persad's members later wished to approach the legislature for amendment or repeal of the Pennsylvania Criminal Code statute.<sup>860</sup> The local ACLU's involvement in Barr-Walker cases, in the 1960s, undoubtedly factored into this willingness to proceed. The ACLU single-handedly overturned that statute which allowed judges to impose "indefinite sentences on criminals convicted of sex crimes.

When legislative efforts to repeal the state's sodomy statute stalled in 1976, the chair of Governor Shapp's Commission on Sexual Minorities also signaled to the ACLU that at least one

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<sup>859</sup> Memo, Jan Neffke to Wilksburg Center Advisory Committee and Lois Mohn, Public Affairs Committee Chair, May 26, 1976 in YWCA Papers, in HSWP.

<sup>860</sup> Tom Kerr, Esq., to R. Stanton Wettick, Jr., Esq, Director of Neighborhood Legal Services Association, Pittsburgh, June 29, 1972 on ACLU Pennsylvania stationary in Matson Family Papers

Pennsylvania Supreme Court judge was favorable to the cause.<sup>861</sup> The ACLU began searching for test cases and for help from national gay legal rights groups. An initial case fell through when the defendant accepted a plea, but the public outpouring surrounding the arrest of a popular Pittsburgh drag queen, Dawn Delight, brought a new case forward and a community ready to rally.<sup>862</sup> The lower court could draw on an interconnected precedent built with help of women's groups protecting privacy in reproductive matters. However, Robert Colville had to turn against his former gay allies and appeal the case as Allegheny County District Attorney.<sup>863</sup> Meanwhile Pat Miller, a feminist fired by Commissioner Tom Foerster for her pro-choice positions, wrote the brief for the ACLU's appeal in the Dawn Delight case. Miller argued that the case violated the right to privacy and that it violated equal protection under the law since the law did not render sodomy between married couples a crime.<sup>864</sup>

Years of feminists voting for pro-choice Pennsylvania Supreme Court judges served the gay community well here. These judges ruled the Pennsylvania sodomy statute unconstitutional. When the supreme court judges ruled on privacy, they actually overstepped the issues involved in this case.<sup>865</sup> The Commonwealth's attorneys defending the law were right in saying that the

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<sup>861</sup> Ellen Doyle, Esq., Executive Director of the Pittsburgh ACLU to Sheperd Raimi, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, November 8, 1977 in ACLU Records in UE/Labor Archives, AIS

<sup>862</sup> In agreement with the UE/Labor Archives, I have concealed the identity of the defendant in this case. Ellen Doyle's notes on the case of *Commonwealth vs. \_\_\_\_\_* No. 866 of 1977 Washington County Court, September 22, 1977 in ACLU Records in UE/Labor Archives, AIS and *Out*, March 19, 1979.

<sup>863</sup> Joyce Gemperlin, "Deviante Sex Law Unconstitutional, Judge Ross rules," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, July 19, 1979, 2 in ACLU Papers

<sup>864</sup> Pat Miller, Brief of the ACLU of Pennsylvania as Amicus Curiae in *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania vs. Michael Bonadio, Patrick Gagliano, Shanne Wimbil, and Dawn Delight*, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Western District, 105-108, March Term 1979 in ACLU Papers.

<sup>865</sup> *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania vs. Bonadio* 415 A. 2d 47 (1980)

appellants had no standing to make their arguments about privacy. Police had arrested Dawn Delight and her accomplices for engaging in sexual acts on a stage in front of an audience. Therefore, this exact case did not involve questions of privacy. The strength exerted by years of feminists, gays, and civil libertarians fighting to elect judges who believed in privacy won the day, not proper legal reasoning.<sup>866</sup> The case had national ramifications as the first time a state supreme court overturned a sodomy law.

#### **L. FINALLY DEMONSTRATING LOCAL POLITICAL POWER**

In addition to the coalition linkages strengthened in the wake of antigay bills, votes on these bills by Allegheny County state legislators finally laid bare their positions on gay issues, allowing the community to have more information at the polls. Before 1976, most of the endorsed candidates, with three notable exceptions, were from minor parties. Gay groups endorsed Bob Colville, Milton Shapp, and Leonard Staisey from the Democratic ranks. Otherwise, they had to develop slates asking voters to oppose two or three anti-gay officials and vote for Socialist Worker Party and independent candidates.<sup>867</sup> In contrast after legislators voted on these bills, Pittsburgh Gay

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<sup>866</sup> Carl Max Janavitz and Rochelle S. Friedman, Brief for Appellees in *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania vs. Michael Bonadio, Patrick Gagliano, Shanne Wimbil, and Dawn Delight*, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Western District, 105-108, March Term 1979 in ACLU Papers.

<sup>867</sup> In the general election of 1975, for example, the PGPC endorsed eight Socialist Workers candidates, four Democrats, two Constitutional Party members, and one Republican. In contrast six candidates that year received negative endorsements owing to their past anti-gay policy actions. More to the point of the continued difficulties gay political activists faced, thirty-one candidates failed to respond to PGPC questionnaires and repeated contacts. Judicial candidates stood as the exception to this trend of unsupportive major party candidates. The PGPC found six Democrats and one Republican to endorse. "Gay Voting the who and why of voting for candidates in support of gay rights," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, Saturday, November 1, 1975, A7-A9.

Political Caucus could include such representatives as Democrats Joseph Rhodes, Ivan Itkin, and K. Leroy Irvis.<sup>868</sup> All had voted against anti-gay measures and now received PGPC nods.

Conservatives' attempts to roll back gay rights nationwide between 1977 and 1980 sorely tested the mettle of gay organizers, but the Pittsburgh community finally discovered its local political power in the process of responding. From 1976 to 1980, Reverend Jerry Falwell led rallies in state capitals around the nation, urging evangelical Christians to become involved in politics in order to counter what Falwell saw as the decline in Christian morality in the U.S.. His group most specifically targeted gays when gay veterans laid a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; Falwell called it the "Tomb of the Unknown Sodomite."<sup>869</sup> Locally, Anita Bryant, fresh on the heels of her victory in repealing the Miami Gay Rights Ordinance, brought her anti-gay civil rights message to the Charismatic Catholic Conference in Pittsburgh in 1978. The quickly formed Pittsburgh Committee for Human Rights asked many groups to endorse a counter rally "to Bryant's message of bigotry." In the endorsement request, allies of gay rights broadened their appeal, noting that Bryant opposed sex education, abortion, and even non-Christians. Therefore, it concluded that progressive Pittsburghers ought to "not leave the gay community isolated in its opposition to Anita."<sup>870</sup> Over fifty activists picketed her show at Pittsburgh's Civic Arena.<sup>871</sup>

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<sup>868</sup> "Pittsburgh Gay Political Caucus endorses small primary slate," *Pittsburgh Gay News*, No. 31, April 1976, A3

<sup>869</sup> Jerry Falwell, "Forming the Moral Majority," excerpt of Jerry Falwell, *Strength for the Journey* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989) in Thomas R. Frazier, *The Many Sides of America: 1945 to the Present*, (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996) 211-218 and Jeffrey K. Hadden and Charles F. Swann, "Prime Time Preachers," 99, *Religious Broadcasting*, <http://religiousbroadcasting.lib.virginia.edu/primetime/C5.html>

<sup>870</sup> "Pittsburgh Committee for Human Rights," April 22, 1978 in YWCA Papers in HSWP

<sup>871</sup> Drapkin, interview

Bryant's message galvanized Pittsburgh's gay community to the point that Randy Forrester declared "Anita Bryant did more to elevate the status of gays in this country than any single individual."<sup>872</sup> As a case in point, gay activists organized their first ever gay National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights to combat this organizing by Falwell and Bryant. The Pittsburgh community alone sent four busloads of people to this event. This number of people participating was, therefore, much greater than the attendance at any of the local Pride marches. The crowd estimated at 80,000 to 200,000 that day astonished these Pittsburghers with a sense of their potential combined power. The lobbying work done that week also heightened that sense of empowerment. A delegation of Pittsburghers found Representative William Morehead and Senator John Heinz very receptive. Senator Heinz even said he would co-sponsor a bill adding sexual orientation to the list of categories protected under federal civil rights laws.<sup>873</sup> Emboldened by the march, activists planned such a strong outpouring of anger over Anita Bryant's next Pittsburgh appearance that the singer tried to cut short her run before the picket. Her tactic failed when gays formed an emergency phone tree and pushed up the demonstration date.<sup>874</sup>

Randy Forrester's race for county commissioner signaled the gay community's greatest foray to that date into politics. By bringing together support from various movements to impact the polls, Forrester's campaign finally alerted Pittsburgh politicians to the importance of the gay vote. It began at a feminist couple's house where many people expressed their dislike of incumbent Commissioner Tom Foerster's stands on women's reproductive rights. Those assembled convinced Randy Forrester to re-register as R. G. Forrester so that he could run a

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<sup>872</sup> Paull, 11, 31

<sup>873</sup> Marc Holliday, "March on Wash. History Made on October 14," *Out*, November 1979, 27, 30-1

<sup>874</sup> "Anita Welcomed to Leave Town," *Out*, June 1980, 13

name confusion campaign worthy of Tammany Hall. When the gay community took the campaign seriously, raising money and volunteers, Forrester decided to run a full blown campaign.<sup>875</sup> Beyond punishing the enemy of Persad's funding, Forrester wanted to demonstrate the strength of the gay vote. The gay community had had a lot of trouble in this regard because the usual measures of comparing precinct tallies to census tracts were unavailable. No neighborhood's residents could identify as gay on the census forms. Pollsters also did not ask voters exiting polling places about their sexual orientation.<sup>876</sup> The novelty of Forrester as the first openly gay candidate for office in Pennsylvania got him media attention and invitations to debates.<sup>877</sup> Potential voters at those meetings wanted to hear about all sorts of issues; for this reason, Forrester developed position papers from a pro-minority perspective.<sup>878</sup> His campaign received added muscle when the liberals and leftists dominating the 7-11 Democratic Club endorsed him.<sup>879</sup> By election night, the Forrester campaign had developed into a major surprise just by exceeding expectations. Experienced pundits noted that name confusion did not factor much into the results because incumbent Tom Foerster spent the entire campaign running against his one gay opponent. While Randy Forrester made it his policy to focus on every issue but gay rights, Forrester's sexual orientation was apparent to voters as the incumbent's campaign made its motto "Vote the Straight Ticket."<sup>880</sup> Voters helped Forrester realize his dream of revealing the pull of pro-gay stands. By 10 PM, TV broadcasters no longer

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<sup>875</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Michael Snow, August 14, 2003.

<sup>876</sup> Barbara Paull, "A Matter of Preference," *Pittsburgh*, February, 1980, 11

<sup>877</sup> Forrester, interview

<sup>878</sup> Paull, 30

<sup>879</sup> Forrester, interview

<sup>880</sup> Paull, 30

referred to Randy Forrester as an also ran.<sup>881</sup> His tiny \$5,000 campaign garnered 25,000 votes. One party professional wondered on the air “Are 12 percent of voters gay?”<sup>882</sup> Others were shocked to learn that the Forrester campaign won almost as many votes in the suburbs as in the city, demonstrating that gay rights had appeal beyond the inner city.<sup>883</sup>

Besides demonstrating the potential electoral power of the gay community and its supporters, Forrester’s race also strengthened its institutions for endorsing non-gay candidates. The Political Club’s formation in 1979 further cemented ties between gay organizations and the movement for women’s equality. To the Pittsburgh Gay Political Caucus’ guides on candidates’ stands on gay issues, the Political Club (TPC) added information about Tom Foerster’s role in Pat Miller’s firing. It endorsed Republicans Robert Peirce and Barbara Hafer and Democrat Cyril Wecht because of their stands on gay rights, abortion, rape clinics, and ERA.<sup>884</sup> Oddly, Peirce publicly denied seeking the endorsement after a staffer had done so for him. In the pages of the gay press, the club’s leader claimed that Peirce would have won had he not rebuked the club. The other endorsees that year received a 2,500 vote bounce from the endorsement, this leader noted.<sup>885</sup> In return for this strategy of combining feminist and gay rights issues, TPC won some valuable public relations help. National gay rights leader Troy Perry came to town, joining Pat Miller in speaking about building power at the polls. Their name recognition brought 75 people to a meeting when the ranks of the TPC still “would barely fill [Randy Forrester’s] living room.” Miller lent her expertise on electioneering, exhorting the audience to dog candidates on

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<sup>881</sup> Forrester interview

<sup>882</sup> Paull, 11

<sup>883</sup> Forrester interview

<sup>884</sup> “The Political Club endorses candidates in Nov. 6 election,” *Out*, No. 32, November 1979, 1

<sup>885</sup> “Randy: Peirce would have won had he not repudiated endorsement,” *Out*, December 1979, 6

gay rights at every rally if their questionnaires went unanswered. Perry basically espoused TPC's philosophy saying "gays are not going to get anything until ERA is passed."<sup>886</sup> With such authority figures parroting the TPC philosophy, the club gained standing in the community.

Results such as the 1979 elections and the repeal of the state's sodomy law brought a turnaround in the tenor of the mayor's office. The community had feared crackdowns on gay bars and cruising areas orchestrated at the behest of mayors wanting to clean up downtown's image. In 1980, rumors floated that Mayor Caliguiri had ordered police to step up dragnets and raid gay bars for disorderly conduct and nuisance violations. He took the unprecedented step of denying such allegations to the gay press.<sup>887</sup>

While Pittsburgh gays had not won a seat at the table at least in terms of placing one of their own in office or winning civil rights protections, they had made major strides. As gay, bisexual, and lesbian activists gained skills and exploited the help of elected allies, they won some measures of state protection. They parlayed a dialogue with Superintendent Colville into agreements on police behavior. Their connection to philanthropist Phil Hallen brought them the financial and legal resources to expand Persad's efforts to change attitudes and reform mental health policy. Most importantly, activists capitalized on their deepening ties to Governor Shapp. Shapp created the Governor's Commission on the Status of Sexual Minorities, giving the activists he named to it a vehicle to address anti-gay discrimination via state regulatory power. Links to activists in the women's and civil rights movements allowed members of all three movements to see their common stake in fighting oppression. In small but crucial ways, this shared vision brought gay activists aid from NOW and the NAACP and prevented rifts within

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<sup>886</sup> Glenn Morris, "Organization needed for gay political success in 80s," *Out*, March 1980, 15-16, 24

<sup>887</sup> "Dithridge 24 Arrested," *Out*, May 1980, "Turns Out Caliguiri didn't order harassment," *Out*, June 1980

the gay community. The still closeted status of the majority of the gay community meant that a relatively small cohort of activists made up the ground troops of its political network. The gay community, therefore, lacked the strength to impose its will on local and state politicians at the polls for most of the 1970s. Thus the victories of the community and its network of allies stand all the more testament to the power that interpersonal relationships and allegiances could yield. The overturning of the sodomy statute, the creation of non-discrimination policies for state employees, and the establishment of the governor's commission did not result from a fear of retribution at the ballot box or demonstrations in the streets. By the same token, gay rights organizations' lack of political experience jeopardized many of their larger reform efforts. As a result, opponents of gay rights seriously threatened protections for state employees, and gays' efforts to pass anti-discrimination laws went nowhere. Over the course of the 1970s, gays made a good deal of progress in their attempts to learn and implement effective lobbying and electoral strategies. The political skills that gay activists gained in the 1970s, plus the alliances they forged with political leaders, would bear fruit in the 1980s after much more of the community had finally "come out" in the streets and at the polls.

## VII. CONCLUSION

One event in Pittsburgh in 1990 clearly demonstrates the power of a political network to change public policy. Despite the decimation of Pittsburgh's gay community by AIDS and despite a forceful set of opponents to their rights, gay activists finally won passage of the Pittsburgh Gay Rights Ordinance in 1990. Such a bill had floundered when the community failed to organize adequately for it in the 1970s, but in 1989 gays' anger over inadequate government response to the health crisis made members of the gay community ready to organize.<sup>888</sup> Additionally, the experience of gay friends impelled Alma Fox of the NAACP to convince her fellow members of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, along with civil rights leaders and city council members, to support the fight for gay rights.<sup>889</sup> Faced with initial opposition, pro-gay forces in the city regrouped in the wake of two political setbacks that they viewed as betrayals. First, Mayor Sophie Masloff took a priest to visit Michael Coyne, a Catholic city council member, to tell him that his faith opposed gay rights. Outraged, Coyne and activists informed the media. Religious conservatives as well as pro-gay activists flocked to city council. And second, at a heated council hearing, Council member Otis Lyons changed from supporting the measure, thereby tabling the bill.<sup>890</sup>

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<sup>888</sup> Personal conversation with Eric Feder, former staff member to City Council member Jim Ferlo and Dan Cohen, August 8, 2004. Randy Forrester, interview by Michael Snow, August 14, 2003

<sup>889</sup> Fox thought back to her relatives with light colored skin who lived in fear that their attempts to pass would be discovered and used the argument to counter members of her community who said gays and lesbians could choose to live in silence if they feared discrimination. Alma Speed Fox, interview by Michael Snow for the Pittsburgh Civil Rights History Project on September 16, 2003 videotape ; and *Pittsburgh Out*, March 1989; and *Out*, April 1989 newspaper clippings in Byrd Brown Scrapbooks

<sup>890</sup> Personal conversation with Eric Feder, former staff member to City Council member Jim Ferlo and Dan Cohen, August 8, 2004. Randy Forrester, interview by Michael Snow, August 14, 2003

Activists for gay rights then deftly exploited their opponents' political weaknesses, mustering their limited resources for maximum effect. The new gay militant group, Cry Out/ACT UP, picketed every event that Masloff attended in her campaign to remain mayor. Masloff stood especially susceptible to such intimidation since she owed her office solely to having been council president when Mayor Caliguiri died. Masloff had not been elected by voters, and the Democratic Party did not want her to run.<sup>891</sup> Other activists threatened to "out" dozens of Pittsburgh priests and several local politicians if they did not cease campaigning against a gay rights ordinance.<sup>892</sup> When the new Pittsburgh city charter switched the make up of city council from members elected at-large to members elected from districts, gay activists threw their weight to influence key races. That spring Pittsburgh voters ousted three incumbents who had voted against the gay rights ordinance.<sup>893</sup> The switch from at-large to council-by district seats pitted a long-time gay rights supporter, Council member James Ferlo, against Otis Lyons. Ferlo won, in part due to his support from gays. The next year, Ferlo and Coyne reintroduced the gay rights ordinance. In cosponsoring the bill, new member Dan Cohen joined civil rights activist-turned Council member Jake Millions and NOW member-turned Council member Michelle Maddoff. With five co-sponsors, the bill had more than enough council supporters and passed this time.<sup>894</sup>

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891 "GLBT Activists Signs Sophie's Choice=Bigotry," *Pittsburgh Press*, March 5, 1989, A17, Personal conversation with Randy Forrester, August 7, 2004. Sophie Masloff, interview by Michael Snow on August 21, 1998 for SLGA, 44

892 Personal conversation with John Michael Curlovich, Cry Out/ACT UP activist, February 2000.

893 Michael Snow interview with Randy Forrester, July 2003.

894 Personal conversation with Eric Feder, former staff member to Council member Jim Ferlo and Dan Cohen, August 8, 2004

When religious conservatives moved to overturn the new ordinance, the Pittsburgh gay community then drew upon the sense of empowerment and alliances forged in the fight to pass the law to outmaneuver opponents of the measure. Several religious groups tried to overturn the new ordinance with a ballot referendum. Because such measures had worked in several other cities and states, Pittsburgh's gay activists tried a new tactic. They launched a campaign to challenge the signatures of people petitioning to hold the referendum. One city council member loaned gay activists a member of his staff to help coordinate volunteers and a copy of the voters list. Eric Feder, that staff member, had learned in electoral campaigns how to disqualify duplicate signatures, falsified locations, and dubious petition gatherers. In seven days of intense work, dozens of volunteers staffed a bank of computers, cross checking addresses of signatories with the voter lists. Working round the clock, they were able to disqualify thousands of the signers, enough to kill the referendum drive.<sup>895</sup> No other gay community had ever accomplished that feat. Their victory illustrates the power which a social movement may exert when it has built a political network. Pittsburgh's gay activists had established legions of committed activists, alliances with other minority groups, and relationships with city politicians. As a result, even in the face of a devastating epidemic and a strong countermovement, Pittsburgh's gay rights organizations and their allies had finally matured into a potent political force.

In winning passage of the Pittsburgh Gay Rights Ordinance, the city's gay community finally caught up with the work done previously by African-Americans and women. More than finally winning civil rights protections under city law, they had finally leveraged community institutions and political alliances to win political reforms. In essence, Pittsburgh's gay activists raced through steps in building a mature political network that had taken African-Americans and

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<sup>895</sup> Personal conversation with Eric Feder, former staff member to Council members Jim Ferlo and Dan Cohen, August 8, 2004

women decades to do. In the post-war decade, African-Americans had an existing base of their own politicians and community institutions from which they could build fights to expand their civil rights. Women and gays during those ten years hardly identified their problems as ones affecting their entire category of people. African-Americans made some progress winning civil rights protections at the local level in the 1950s, whereas women's groups focused on problems of poverty or foreign relations but refused to advocate for civil rights protections for women. Gays remained atomized by police raids and morals charges. Neighborhood organizers, advocates of "good government," and civil rights protestors in the 1960s greatly expanded the political opportunities for African-Americans, women, and gays. African-Americans in the early 1960s won state civil rights laws and the creation of government institutions dedicated to enforcing their rights to jobs and housing. Women, many of them with skills gained in the civil rights movement, copied this pattern with the formation of NOW and the spread of feminist ideas to other women's groups, leading to their victory in passing the Pittsburgh Women's Rights Ordinance. Gays in the 1960s groped towards accommodation with police officers but failed to establish lasting advocacy organizations.

By the 1970s, Pittsburgh's African-Americans had grown in their political stature. Some of their politicians had amassed enough political power to ensure passage of state jobs training programs and expand civil rights laws. Others at the local level slowly pushed forward school desegregation. Political networks established by women and gays came into their own in the decade as well. Just like their African-American colleagues, women's rights advocates appointed to state and city human relations commissions backed up the work of movement organizations. Gays started the 1970s with no established community institutions yet quickly built news outlets, churches, and political groups. Using those institutions as a base of

operations, gay rights activists with their very limited experience in politics won small measures of state civil rights protections and overturned discriminatory laws. Each of these three movements faced off against increasingly organized conservatives wishing to roll back or prevent gains for women, gays, and African-Americans. However, even in the face of that obstacle, and even as the numbers of social movement protests and protestors decreased, where social movement activists used the increasing political rank of some of their members, deepening alliances with powerful politicians, and their increasing political sophistication, they made progress.

In detailing that history, this study contributes to the body of literature on social movements. Histories of social movements have tended to eschew to the study of politics or touch on it as incidental. Focused on explaining the origins of social movements or their later impact on cultural attitudes, most such studies fail to detail the mechanisms by which social movements influenced politicians. Perhaps such a focus stands as a correction to older works on politics which ignored policies on women or sexual minorities. Researchers on women's and gays' political organizing took up the movement dictum "the personal is political." They expanded what researchers of politics could examine as a valid field of inquiry. Such researchers focused on the family, media portrayals, or cultural attitudes as a locus of oppression and a site of resistance. Ultimately, such studies overcompensated for earlier oversights. They in turn lost sight of traditional politics and its influence on "personal politics." Public policy in the United States attempted to control or channel wide swaths of citizen's personal lives. In essence, the political is personal. A large amount of activists' work centered on challenging and redirecting such policies. The extent to which they succeeded or failed in those efforts had a lot more to do with the political networks which they established than whatever changes they made in

interpersonal dynamics and self-esteem. What happened to each of the three movements in the 1980s demonstrates the impact of the strengths and weaknesses of each movement's political networks.

#### **A. AFRICAN-AMERICANS 1980-2003**

When several African-American politicians turned their backs on the Pittsburgh community's established political linkages, they diminished the power of the community over city government. The community's power at the polls had already been sorely tested by external factors. The increased strength of newer illegal drugs not only sapped the energies of some individuals who previously might have fought for civil rights, but it also racked African-American neighborhoods with violence in 1980s.<sup>896</sup> When "law and order" candidates responded to such violence by imposing longer sentences, drugs had a third major effect on African-American political strength. Nationwide by 2004, 13 percent of African-American men could not vote because of felony convictions, seven times the percentage for the population at large.<sup>897</sup> In Pennsylvania, the prohibition lessened some of the power of the African-American vote in the state. And prohibitions in other states on felons voting has worked to shift power in Congress towards candidates disinclined to favor measures aimed at improving civil rights and poverty rates for African-Americans. Against that backdrop, African-Americans lost power on city council. George Shields, an African-American candidate endorsed by the Democratic Party,

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<sup>896</sup> Commentators and scholars who attribute the increased murder rate to dissolution of the community need to take into consideration how the ready availability of cheap handguns, known as "Saturday night specials," and the spread of automatic weapons made drug-related crimes much more lethal in the 1980s.

<sup>897</sup> Bill Toland, "NAACP Convention Zeroes in on Voting," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, July 13, 2004 <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/04195/345608.stm>

lost his seat when the unendorsed candidate, Frank Lucchino, won.<sup>898</sup> Shields thought that Balkan Succession, which traditionally reserved two seats for African-Americans on Council, would make him a shoo-in and barely campaigned. A subsequent African-American candidate refused to “stoop” to seek the backing of the African-American ward chairs, and thereby won their animosity and lost his race when they failed to rally voters for him.<sup>899</sup>

Disagreements among African-American civil rights leaders further weakened the community’s power over local politics in the 1990s. The move to make remake city council paradoxically diminished the power of the African-American vote, even while seeming to guaranty African-American seats on the council. The board of the NAACP overcame the objections of its president to endorse making council by district. Harvey Adams warned the NAACP and the entire community that, under the at-large system, when the African-American community stood united, it could elect three members of council, and, failing that, every council member had to take African-American concerns into consideration. With thirty whites running in the Democratic primary, a united African-American voting block could win all its seats and put all other candidates on notice to work on its issues. When the system went to district representation, council members put the concerns of their neighborhoods ahead of the best interest of the city as a whole.<sup>900</sup> Seven council members from districts with small African-American minorities had much less reason to show concern for African-American issues. Bill Robinson and Harvey Adams on the reapportionment committee fought for three majority black districts but lost. The community did not heed Robinson’s and Adams’s call to organize on the

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<sup>898</sup> Thomas, “Fortunes and Misfortunes,” 59

<sup>899</sup> Adams, interview, 31

<sup>900</sup> Adams and Masloff interviews

issue. City council, since 1990, then lived up to Adams's worst fears. Adams said, "We haven't had a favorable vote on black issues since they voted for council by district."<sup>901</sup>

While African-Americans lost some influence at the polls, the influence that they had accumulated through years of negotiations came in handy in the Warner Cable deal. The community's initial opportunity came from more powerful entities' needs, but years of trust sealed the deal. In seeking the monopoly concession to operate in Pittsburgh, Warner was ready to deal. In the 1970s Mayor Flaherty had blocked cable from coming to the city, making cable companies wish for a quick strike in the new Caliguiri administration. Additionally, no major U.S. city had a cable contract. As a result, several large firms were competing for the concession to get their foot in the door. That made them up the bids which they offered. Joining this fray, the local television channels vehemently opposed letting cable come into the city.<sup>902</sup> Companies, wanting to win the Pittsburgh contract, therefore, were looking for pro-cable allies. Local civil rights leaders stepped into that fight, asking what the cable companies would do for the benefit of African-Americans and what voice the community would have in making certain that the company operated as a public trust. No doubt aware of the two civil rights leaders' established working relationships with most of the city's CEOs and wanting yet more groups on their side, Warner Communications agreed to put Byrd Brown and Harvey Adams on its board. More importantly it gave stock in Warner to the African-American negotiators to distribute as they saw fit. When Warner Communications eventually sold the license to another company, the deal put \$2.4 million into the coffers of local African-American groups.<sup>903</sup>

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<sup>901</sup> Harvey Adams, interview by Michael Snow, for SLGA on March 7, 2000, 8-9, 29, 31

<sup>902</sup> Masloff, interview, 36

<sup>903</sup> Adams, interview, 71-2

Pittsburgh's African-Americans spent the next several years regrouping their political forces and eventually won two goals that had long eluded their civil rights advocates. By redirecting community anger towards victory at the polls for public policy referendum, a rejuvenated civil rights movement won a long sought victory in the fight for a Civilian Review Board.<sup>904</sup> A grassroots effort spearheaded by City Council member Sala Udin, Harvey Adams, and the umbrella group, the Alliance for Progressive Action had success. The gay group, Cry Out/Act UP, joined in this fight, highlighting police malfeasance in investigating anti-gay hate crimes. Together these groups collected 16,797 signatures to put the question on the ballot. That margin made up for the Fraternal Order of Police's challenge of signatures.<sup>905</sup> They were aided by the fact that officials with the U.S. Justice Department officials who sided with the ACLU and NAACP's case against the police, finding a large pattern of abuse and ordering reforms.<sup>906</sup> Voters overwhelmingly approved the referendum creating a civilian review board.<sup>907</sup>

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<sup>904</sup> Ellen Perlmutter and Marion Gammill, "Looking For Answers/2,000 Marchers Unified in Silence," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, November 17, 1996, A-1 John M. R. Bull, "Retribution Urged After Police Board Voted Down, Supporters of Bill Prepare Drive For Referendum in May Primary," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, October 25, 1996, B-1, John M. R. Bull, "Police Review Board To Get Another Hearing," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, October 25, 1996, C-2, John M. R. Bull, "Police Board Plan Stalls Council Votes No On Referendum," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, December 5, 1996, D-1

<sup>905</sup> John M. R. Bull, "Citizen Assails Mayor for Review Board Plan," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, July 22, 1997, B-1, Johnna A. Pro, "Playing Politics With the Best of Them A Purist At Heart, Wambaugh Led Fight for Civilian Board," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, August 17, 1997, B-1, John M. R. Bull, "Review Issue Goes to Voters," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, April 9, 1997, A-1, Frank Reeves, "Court Allows Vote On Civilian Review Board for Police," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 13, 1997, Jon Schmitz, "'Yes' to Police Review Panel," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 21, 1997, A-1,

<sup>906</sup> John M. R. Bull, "Court OKs City Police Reform Agreement, Settles U.S. Suit Charging Patterns of Abuse," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, April 17, 1997, C-1,

<sup>907</sup> John M. R. Bull, "Ever Changing," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, July 31, 1997, D-1, Jan Ackerman, "Weaker Police Board Feared, NAACP Leader Says Council Panel," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, August 4, 1997, B-1

Beginning in the late 1980s, a slow roll back of efforts to integrate the Pittsburgh public schools joined police violence as one of the greatest long-term disappointments of civil rights in Pittsburgh and as one of its eventual electoral victories. In 2003, a new coalition of people angry over bitter fighting on the Pittsburgh Board of Education finally defeated the “neighborhood schools” majority. Three highly influential local foundations gave these groups a window of opportunity to reach more voters when they withdrew \$3.5 million in grant money from the district in response to board bickering and stymied programs.<sup>908</sup> A coalition of white liberals, teachers, African-American leaders, feminists, philanthropists, and gay activists mounted a campaign to defeat the sitting board president. This grass roots coalition went door-to-door campaigning for Pat Dowd, the candidate opposing the school board president. The candidate won on that support.<sup>909</sup> The new school board majority then set about reversing the effects of voluntary residential segregation on the schools and black/white achievement gaps.

## **B. WOMEN 1980-2003**

Like African-Americans, strategic choices by Pittsburgh’s women rights advocates caused several political defeats, leading them to need to build a new network for victory. Repeatedly defeated on the abortion issue in the state legislature, NOW and women’s rights advocates

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<sup>908</sup> Steve Levin, “After Thorny Year, Foundations Roared About Schools,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 11, 2002, a-9, Carmen J. Lee and Jane Elizabeth, “Foundations Yank City School Grants,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 10, 2002, a-1, Timothy McNulty and Carmen J. Lee, “Mayor to Lead School Study,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 16, 2002, a-1, Carmen J. Lee, “Local Leaders Back City Schools Panel,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 17, 2002, b-7, <http://nl.newsbank.com>

<sup>909</sup> Roberta Shope, “The Will of the People,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 8, 2003, A-18, James O’Toole, “City School President Out,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 21, 2003, A-1, Editorial, “Primary Virtue,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 22, 2003, A-18, <http://nl.newsbank.com>

worked to protect abortion rights in the courts. Pennsylvania Governors Thornburgh and Casey brought hundreds of women into NOW and the women's movement by offering anti-abortion laws to state legislators. As anti-abortion forces focused their resources on state legislative races not the courts, they found legislators increasingly eager to do their bidding. NOW, Planned Parenthood, the ACLU and other advocates then defeated most of these laws in federal courts.<sup>910</sup> State legislators passed a new Abortion Control Act in 1982 as the voting public increasingly accepted the argument that anti-abortion citizens did not want to aid in abortions by "subsidizing" them with their tax dollars.<sup>911</sup> In an attempt to make the law stand up to constitutionality tests, the new act modified older statutes prohibiting abortions if the fetus was viable. The law also mandated that women seeking abortions be provided state-written brochures on medical risks of abortion and lists of agencies available to care for unwanted children and single mothers. In 1986, NOW and other women's groups' strategy still worked as the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Abortion Control Act.<sup>912</sup>

However, the strategy of relying on the courts backfired by the early 1990s. Legislators at the behest of anti-abortion groups added yet more amendments to the Abortion Control Act in 1988. A changed U.S. Supreme Court willingly upheld major portions of it. The new provisions demanded that abortion providers give mandatory counseling and that patients wait twenty-four hours after that counseling before they could have an abortion.<sup>913</sup> Defeated in the courts,

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<sup>910</sup> Wetherby. February 8, 2002

<sup>911</sup> "Pennsylvania's Abortion Control Act," [http://www.peopleforlife.org/ctrl\\_act.html](http://www.peopleforlife.org/ctrl_act.html)

<sup>912</sup> Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 476 U. S. 747 (1986)  
<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=476&invol=747>

<sup>913</sup> *Planned Parenthood of S. E. Pa. v. Casey*, 505 U. S. 833

(1992).<http://www.naral.org/yourstate/whodecides/states/pennsylvania/bc.cfm> and

<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?navby=search&court=US&case=/us/505/833.html>

Planned Parenthood then put out the call to work at the polls again. Because of the ruling, the organization called for volunteers and lobbyists to overturn the previous governor and attorney general's work. Said its literature on the decision, "Planned Parenthood women, teens, and men must work to force the Pennsylvania government to change this law."<sup>914</sup> In Pennsylvania the abortion issue proved a losing issue for Women's Rights Advocates time and time again as significant proportions of Catholic voters and politicians turned up to block it.

While women's rights advocates lost some power at the state level because of the abortion issue, their political network regrouped with success at the county level. Barbara Hafer defeated the anti-abortion Republican county commissioner, William Hunt, by building new alliances. Though Hunt, the incumbent, had powerful supporters in the Republican Party, Elsie Hillman, the influential GOP fundraiser and former county GOP chair, gave Hafer advice on how to win. On that advice, "organize where you previously lost," Hafer set out convincing many former colleagues and patients in the Monongahela Valley to change their registration to Republican.<sup>915</sup> Hillman had by the 1980s split with the Republican Party's trend towards anti-abortionists.<sup>916</sup> Hunt inadvertently handed Hafer another constituency when reporters asked him what he thought of Hafer's qualifications. When Hunt derogatorily answered, "She's a little nurse from Elizabeth," Hafer then launched a master stroke of organizing. She sent the news report of Hunt's comment to all 24,000 registered and licensed nurses in Allegheny County. Hafer's work for the Center for Victims of Violent crime also brought police officials into her volunteer base.<sup>917</sup> And her work on behalf of the Persad Center brought her a growing base of

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914 "Pennsylvania Abortion Laws," <http://www.ppsp.org/abortionlaws.asp>

915 Hafer, interview, 14

916 Evansgardner interview

917 Hafer, interview, 14-16

gay supporters. Together these groups handed Hunt a major upset in the Republican primary in 1983.

### C. TWO MOVEMENTS' LEADERS IN TANDEM 1983-1988

In the 1980s, women and African-Americans employed their political networks to staunch the hemorrhaging of their hard-fought gains in employment. The Pittsburgh region's loss of steel jobs erased many of the gains which women and African-Americans had made in the 1970s in entry to skilled employment. The steel industry had already downsized in the 1970s in Southwestern Pennsylvania, and the region shed another 127,500 manufacturing jobs between 1979 and 1987.<sup>918</sup> Such downsizing hit women and African-Americans especially hard. As Steffi Domike said of female steelworkers, "We were the last hired so we were the first to go." In one aspect, a repeal of civil rights hurt such workers. The alliance of fiscal conservative, pro-business groups with religious fundamentalists cut federal programs and tilted legislative and judicial bodies in more conservative directions. Women and racial minorities found a tougher time in the 1980s finding new jobs because the Reagan administration no longer forced most federal contractors to file affirmative action plans.<sup>919</sup> To counter these trends, movement leaders, by this time ensconced in political power, developed public policies to ameliorate some of the worst effects of the downturn. K. Leroy Irvis had by the time of the downturn risen to the

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<sup>918</sup> The area of Allegheny County called the Mon Valley lost 31,000 steel industry jobs between 1981 and 1988. John Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), 13.

<sup>919</sup> Steffi Domike, "Women of Steel," Mon Valley Media, 1984 in United Electrical and Labor Archives, University of Pittsburgh, Archives Service Center

position of speaker of the house in the state legislature. In that position, Irvis authored and secured passage of a bill to help families threatened with the loss of their homes.<sup>920</sup> The new bill imposed a sixty-day freeze on all foreclosures in the state and gave low-interest loans to families whose housing and utilities costs exceeded 35 percent of their income and who were three months delinquent in mortgage payments.<sup>921</sup> More importantly, Allegheny County Commissioner Barbara Hafer, formerly of the Women’s Political Caucus, joined her Democratic colleague Tom Foerster in building vocational programs and a mini-WPA. Hafer and Foerster, with Irvis’s aid, secured state funding for retraining workers. Under their program, the Community College of Allegheny County offered free retraining to unemployed steel workers, all “dislocated workers[,] and displaced homemakers.”<sup>922</sup> The inclusion of female-headed households in this program was one of several programs in which Hafer educated her male colleagues and stayed true to her activist beginnings.<sup>923</sup> In that fight, her alliance with Tom Foerster proved incredibly valuable as Foerster brought all of his decades of politicking to bear

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<sup>920</sup> “Irvis’ [sic] Bill Aims At Foreclosures,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, clipping, May 12, 1983, in Irvis Papers. As speaker, Irvis served as the nation’s only African-American to lead a state legislature.

<sup>921</sup> J. E. Rosenberger, “Home Loan Aid Bill Passes,” *Pittsburgh Press*, December 15, 1983

<sup>922</sup> Mark Belko, “Report Says County Program For Jobs May Save or Lose Cash,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* May 10, 1988, as in Laura Lewis-Clemons, *The Expansion of Human Services in Allegheny County 1968-1995, A Case Study*, University of Pittsburgh, Institute of Politics, 19

<sup>923</sup> Barbara Hafer, interview by Michael S. Snow, April 25, 2000 for SLGA ,17. James O’Toole, “Allegheny County Candidates Press Their Individual Agendas,” *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 12, 1999, Hafer kept county government attuned to the impact of the layoffs on families. As a former public health nurse, she knew firsthand that many double income steel workers’ families had depended upon one swing shift parent always being at home for child care. Now, in service jobs or out looking for work, these parents faced issues finding child care. Hafer made certain that government agencies helped non-profits provide child care in areas heavily distressed by the steel shut down. Hafer, interview, 21-22

in fighting the notoriously parsimonious Governor Casey for state appropriations for these programs.

#### **D. GAYS 1980 TO PRESENT**

The AIDS epidemic presented the gay community with its greatest threat but also with its greatest public policy victories from Pittsburgh city government. The disease devastated the community, stimulating and broadening the anger to act.<sup>924</sup> Paradoxically, AIDS also raised the visibility of community members and thereby the strength of the community. People infected with what was first called the gay plague could no longer plausibly deny their sexual orientation, nor turn on other members of the community to hide their own traits. Many more families recognized their children's sexuality and thereby stopped discriminating against sexual minorities at large. The enormous scale of the threat AIDS also spurred organizing. Whereas gay political groups struggled to have more than a dozen members before 1980, Shepherd Wellness and the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force (PATF) marshaled hundreds of volunteers. When city council members viewed this publicity, the gay community's level of organization to fight it, and fear the disease would spread to the rest of Pittsburgh, they launched a political response.<sup>925</sup>

PATF's executive director asked Councilman Mark Pollock for \$20,000 in Community

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<sup>924</sup> Charles Nichols, speech delivered to Taize Discussion group at East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, PA, Fall 2003, Father Lynn Edwards, speech delivered to the Monthly Meeting of PFLAG Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, July 11, 2004, and Kerry Stoner, executive director Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force, interview by Bill Buchanan, December 13, 1991, 26 in Tony Silvestre's Oral History Interviews of the Pittsburgh Gay Community, Pitt Men's Study Offices

<sup>925</sup>Council members followed the example of the National Institutes of Health, which had awarded University of Pittsburgh Researchers \$1 million to track the course of the disease. Peter Hart, "20 years later, the battle continues," *University Times*, Vol. 36, No. 17, April 29, 2004,

Development Block Grant funds. City council members exceeded the request, awarding the new Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force \$40,000 to administer to the needs of those infected and educate gays about its spread.<sup>926</sup> This was an extraordinary turn about given the long-dormant attempts to ban anti-gay discrimination in Pittsburgh.

Organizing and anger surrounding AIDS also provided a backbone and impetus which the gay community needed to force Pittsburgh City Council finally to pass the gay rights ordinance. Greater visibility and widespread fear of AIDS led to more day-to-day acts of discrimination against gays and lesbians, unmasking and heightening the need for such a law. For example, when Shepherd Wellness organized its first Christmas Dinner, the caterers heard that they were delivering to an AIDS group and refused to enter the dining hall, leaving the food outside in the parking lot. In addition, gays and lesbians rankled at federal sloth in responding to the crisis and reports of plans to quarantine people infected.<sup>927</sup>

Hard on the heels of the election and probably as a nod to Cry Out, Mayor Sophie Masloff handed gay activists a victory which further strengthened their standing in the interplay between activists and policymakers. She named Randy Forrester first to the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations and then to serve as its chair. Masloff was too shrewd a politician to state openly that Cry Out/ACT UP or the election had influenced her. Yet her action evidences that Forrester's appointment served as an attempt to repair relations and build new alliances. Forrester described it more succinctly "Sophie was under attack from queers, so, as a bone, she appointed the city's number one faggot." The appointment was more than just a victory in terms of having a sexual minority in charge of the organization which would oversee anti-gay discrimination cases. This position put Forrester in constant touch with members of city

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<sup>926</sup> Kerry Stoner, interview, p 24, 30

<sup>927</sup> Edwards, speech

council. This familiarity “greased my way in,” Forrester said, when he took applications for Persad to city council members asking for CDBG grants.<sup>928</sup> These grants would go a long way to offsetting the continued denial of government MH/MR funds to Persad by Allegheny County.

Members of the gay community also leveraged connections with state and federal authorities to win favorable policies on gay health care. The victory of the establishment of the Pitt Mens Study established the gay community in Pittsburgh as a credible force, capable of plying the halls of power for serious funding. When directors of the Pitt Men’s Study made their reports to federal authorities, when they presented their findings at conferences, and when they made appeals for renewed funding, they cemented ties with health officials.<sup>929</sup> Randy Forrester used those connections and on his own ties to state authorities that had increased over years of endorsing and lobbying politicians. In this way, Forrester and other allies of the Persad Center managed to influence state and federal funding for Allegheny County. The county would essentially serve as a pass through for funds directly earmarked for Persad and a couple of other agencies. Still, Tom Foerster’s opposition to sexual minorities made him jeopardize \$90,000 in federal funds for the county in order to prevent Persad from receiving any county money.<sup>930</sup> Fed up and sensing blood in the water in the wake of scandals in county government, in 1995, gay voters joined other disaffected Democrats in handing the Democratic organization its first defeat in fifty years in county government. Randy Forrester then called upon the new commissioner Mike Dawida and won enough money from the county to keep the center open.<sup>931</sup>

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<sup>928</sup> Personal conversation with Randy Forrester, August 7, 2004

<sup>929</sup> Peter Hart, “The Pitt Men’s Study: 20 years later, the battle continues,” *University Times*, April 29, 2004, 5,7

<sup>930</sup> Forrester, interview by Michael Snow August 14, 2003

<sup>931</sup> Forrester, interview by Michael Snow August 14, 2003

Separately these three movements often lacked the individual power to reshape local politics. Even in their combined force, they often came up short. At other times, however, they could mold politics, public policy, and law. To be certain, political schisms in their opponents' camp helped movement activists. Of course, public outcry at shocking events helped. But the process of building coalitions and staying unified within their own communities worked best when movement leaders worked their political networks. That is when they exploited the friendships, goodwill, and trust built up with government officials over years even in defeat on prior issues. The history of what Pittsburgh's African-Americans, women and gays accomplished in the 1970s and 1980s hold lessons for other groups with similarly limited resources and facing great odds. Community organizer, Saul Alinsky made famous the notion that to win you either have to mobilize money or people.<sup>932</sup> Based on what happened in Pittsburgh, activists wanting to organize while lacking both money and large numbers of agitators would be wise to form a political network. For that political network to mature into full force it needs a combination of the four following attributes: first, its members' demonstrated commitment to work within the political system and to keep fighting for the issues, not just make demands and fade away; second, their command of information about their issues in order to educate politicians and convert them into allies; third, a level of rapport with elected and appointed officials; and finally, the capacity to out maneuver obstacles in one branch of government or political arena by operating in another one.

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932 Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (NY: Vintage Books, 1971) and Saul Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals* (NY: Vintage Books, 1969)

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Note on Sources**

While most of the material for this study came from written sources, this dissertation also relied heavily on oral histories to fill in crucial gaps in Pittsburgh's history. Government reports, organizational minutes and newsletters, and microfilmed copies of local newspapers left out much of the richness and complexity of the interaction between social movement leaders and local politicians. In addition, several city agencies published few reports during the early 1970s, and Pittsburgh Mayor Pete. Flaherty granted journalists almost no interviews during his first term. To overcome that dearth of written sources, this study relied on oral history interviews. The lion's share of those interviews were archived and transcribed as part of the State and Local Government Archives Oral History Project (SLGA). With funding from the Buhl Foundation between 1998 and 2002, I and other members of the staff at the University of Pittsburgh's Archives Service Center conducted more than seventy interviews and oversaw the transcription of over 3,000 pages of such interviews. For that project, an advisory committee made up of local politicians and scholars of Pittsburgh politics and history identified dozens of key figures in post-WWII Pittsburgh history. Subsequent interviewees identified other leads. The tapes and transcripts of those interviews are available to researchers at the Archives Service Center of the University of Pittsburgh. The Chancellor's Office of the University of Pittsburgh provided funding for another set of interviews under the title of the Pittsburgh Civil Rights History Project. In the summer of 2003, I interviewed four key leaders from Pittsburgh's African-American community. The videotapes of those interviews are held at the Archives Service Center.

The use of oral history interviews also presented a problem. First, the ravages of time tend to most strongly effect interviewees' remembrance of dates. Throughout most of the study, interviewees' memories lined up with dates recorded in written sources. In those instances, I provided the year and month for the event. In other places, interviewees remembered events in relation to other key events whose dates I could confirm. Despite these two methods of correcting for holes in memory, I had to refer to several events in the body of the text without mentioning the year that they occurred. Only vast amounts of research on written sources will allow greater precision on the timing of some of those events.

The paucity of written sources is especially pronounced for the history of Pittsburgh's gay community before 1973 when the *Pittsburgh Gay News* began publication. No records for Pittsburgh gay organizations from the 1960s survive. In addition records from morals crusaders and police records similar to ones used by historians constructing histories of gay communities in other cities were not available. The clerk for the Pittsburgh Police Department denied requests to release information on arrests, even overall tallies let alone individual crimes. Yearly reports from the Police Department stored at the Allegheny County Law Library, the University of Pittsburgh Law Library, and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh have gone missing. Similarly obstacles bar the way for research using written sources when gays might have sought help from civil liberties groups or when such groups launched reform efforts aimed at liberalizing the policing of "morals." Only small portions of the papers of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the ACLU and the papers of its primary leaders are open to researchers. Future researchers may be able to locate newspaper accounts beyond those cited in chapter 2 of this study. An exhaustive search of microfilmed newspaper collections proved beyond the scope of this dissertation.

A set of oral history interviews conducted by Dr. Anthony Silvestre, director of the University of Pittsburgh Men's Study, captured some of the history of the gay community in Pittsburgh. Concerned that the AIDS epidemic was wiping away that history, Silvestre interviewed twenty-three people between 1987 and 1993. He sought to preserve as broad a snapshot of the community as possible before its members died off. With a grant from the Lambda Foundation, Silvestre had those interviews transcribed. They are now stored at the offices of the Pitt Men's Study. To verify some of the events recalled in Silvestre's interviews, I conducted my own interviews with people whom he missed and returned to some of his surviving interviewees to cross check their memories and ask more specific questions about politics. The notes from those interviews are in the author's possession.

To overcome potential biases caused by oral sources, every event covered in this study was verified by more than one interviewee. Unverified innuendos about connections to organized crime and the sexual orientation of certain politicians or their relatives were not included in this study.

The reluctance of gay persons of color to speak on tape limited this study's ability to analyze the role of race in Pittsburgh's gay community. Two factors contributed to that lack of sources. First, as Deborah Aaron and Sandra Quinn found in their study of Pittsburgh's gay community in 2003, African-Americans in Pittsburgh feel exploited by researchers from the university and are therefore reluctant to participate.<sup>933</sup> Compounding this fact, lawyers from the University of Pittsburgh challenged the validity of the Pittsburgh Gay Rights Ordinance in 1999, which increased the reluctance of many gays and lesbians to speak to me about their orientation

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<sup>933</sup> Sandra Crouse Quinn and Deborah Aaron, *Voices for a New Tomorrow: An Assessment of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community of Allegheny County* (Pittsburgh: Persad Center, 2003) 171

and history in the community. That lawsuit heightened whatever reservations gay African-Americans had. Second, several African-American members of the Pittsburgh gay community approached for this study did not come out until late in life. Their connection to gay life in Pittsburgh began only after the period under study. I could not test therefore several hypotheses. Only one article in the *Pittsburgh Gay News* from the mid-1970s mentioned race. It noted how an African-American woman took a gay bar to the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, accusing it of barring African-Americans. One interviewee told Tony Silvestre that the networks of African-American and white gays did not mix until the 1970s. On the one hand, it could be that these incidents bespeak a phenomenon larger than the prejudice of one bouncer and his employer. On the other hand, the first gay-owned gay bar booked stage performances by an African-American troop of drag performers and employed an African-American bouncer.<sup>934</sup> It could be as well that racial divisions were outweighed by racial intermixing that today goes on in greater frequency in Pittsburgh's gay bars and neighborhoods than it does in straight ones. Additionally, only further research beyond the scope of this study can shed light on whether African-Americans' complex relationship with sexual identity has changed over time. Today, many African-American men identify themselves as straight even while they have sex predominantly with other men.<sup>935</sup> It could be the case that such a divergence between behavior and identity went on in the past too. Or it could be the case that the increasing efforts by religious conservatives since the late 1970s to divide religious African-Americans from supporters of gay rights has increased the difficulties which African-Americans have accepting

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<sup>934</sup> "Alfred," interview by Tony Silvestre, September 24, 1989, Pittsburgh Gay Community Oral History Collection, Pitt Men's Study Offices, 30; Bar Owner Z, interview by Tony Silvestre, September 14, 1992, Pitt Men's Study Offices, 26

<sup>935</sup> Quinn and Aaron, 173-5

their orientation.<sup>936</sup> Outreach workers from Persad have said that in the 1970s they could count on agreement from African-Americans in diversity trainings around Pittsburgh. By the 1990s, they noted great opposition to gay rights in Pittsburgh from that same segment of the audience.<sup>937</sup> Only a much greater effort to recruit gay persons of color to speak about sexual orientation could take these observations beyond contradictory vignettes.

Future research will seek to expand on the findings from oral history interviews consulted. Frank Kameny's records in Washington D.C. on the Gay Activists Alliance and earlier groups such as the Mattachine Society may contain some information on Pittsburgh members. A Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the FBI may uncover records on Pittsburgh members of the Mattachine Society; a similar suit, used by Marc Stein and Malcolm Lazin uncovered records on Philadelphia members of the Mattachine Society and detailed notes and film footage on demonstrations and meetings in Philadelphia in the 1960s.

For the period between 1972 and 1980, roughly sixty percent of the information used on the gay rights movement came from the *Pittsburgh Gay News* and oral history interviews with leaders of the gay rights and women's movements. Research in alternative newspapers turned up four stories on harassment and discrimination, but a search through the *Pittsburgh Press* for "Pride Month" 1972 and 1973 turned up no articles on the gay rights events. A search of television footage covering some of the events described in those sources proved beyond the scope of this study as the facilities to view such records were unavailable during many months 1998-1999, 2001-2, 2003. To overcome potential bias from those sources, future research will

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<sup>936</sup> Quinn and Aaron, 153-5 and M Fullilove and R. Fullilove, "Stigma as an Obstacle to AIDS Action: The Case of the African-American Community," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42 (7) 1123 as in Quinn and Aaron, 155 and Mab Segrest, "Visibility and Backlash," in David Deitcher, ed., *The Question of Equality: Lesbian and Gay Politics in America Since Stonewall*, (NY: Scribner, 1995), 115-122

<sup>937</sup> Randy Forrester, interview by Michael Snow on August 13, 2003

consult footage from WQED local news program held at the Archives of Service Center. Future research will also focus on the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*.

## APPENDIX B

### Tables and Charts

**TABLE 1 PERCENT OF PERSONS 25 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER COMPLETING  
FOUR OR MORE YEARS OF COLLEGE IN HISTORICALLY BLACK  
NEIGHBORHOODS**

Neighborhood	1960	1970	1980	1970- 1980	1960-1980
Homewood	2.52%	1.99%	5.01%	+3.02%	+2.49%
Manchester	.56%	2.64%	10.13%	+7.49%	+9.57%
Hill District	2.96%	3.08%	5.61%	+2.65%	+2.53%

Source: US Censuses of 1960, 1970 and 1980 compiled from census tracts falling wholly or predominantly within the given neighborhoods .

**TABLE 2 PERCENT OF PERSONS 25 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER COMPLETING  
FOUR YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL IN HISTORICALLY BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS**

Neighborhood	1960	1970	1980	1970- 1980	1960-1980
Homewood	22.63%	30.70%	34.43%	+3.73%	+11.8%
Manchester	16.39%	22.10%	27.23%	+5.13%	+10.84%
Hill District	16.04%	21.38%	35.56%	+14.18%	+19.52%

Source: US Censuses of 1960, 1970 and 1980 compiled from census tracts falling wholly or predominantly within the given neighborhoods.

**TABLE 3 CHANGE IN POPULATION SIZE BY NEIGHBORHOOD**

Neighborhood	1960	1970	1980	Percent Change 1970- 1980	Percent Change 1960- 1980
<b>A. Historically Black Neighborhoods</b>					
Homewood	26971	20266	15102	-25.48%	-44%
Manchester	7691	4228	2682	-36.59%	-65.13%
Hill District	39120	26988	17875	-33.77%	-54.31%
<b>B. Historically White Neighborhoods</b>					
Greenfield	12638	11905	9584	-19.50%	-24.17%
Bloomfield	17030	14632	11924	-18.51%	-29.98%
Southside	22544	13518	14214	+1.05%	-36.95%

Source: US Censuses of 1960, 1970 and 1980 compiled from census tracts falling entirely or predominantly within the given neighborhoods.

**TABLE 4 POVERTY RATES FOR HISTORICALLY BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS**

Neighborhood	1960 <sup>1</sup>	1970	1980	Percent Change 1970- 1980	Percent Change 1960- 1980
<b>A. Historically Black Neighborhoods</b>					
Homewood	28.78%	21.31%	27.94%	+6.6%	-0.84%
Manchester	31.41%	27.65%	14.24%	-13.41%	-17.17%
Hill District	41.93%	28.14%	30.93%	+2.79%	-11.00%
<b>B. Historically White Neighborhoods</b>					
Greenfield	10.19%	3.92%	6.40%	+2.48%	-3.79%
Bloomfield	14.16%	8.22%	8.68%	+0.46%	-5.94%
the Southside	20.74%	15.12%	8.82%	-6.3%	-5.62%

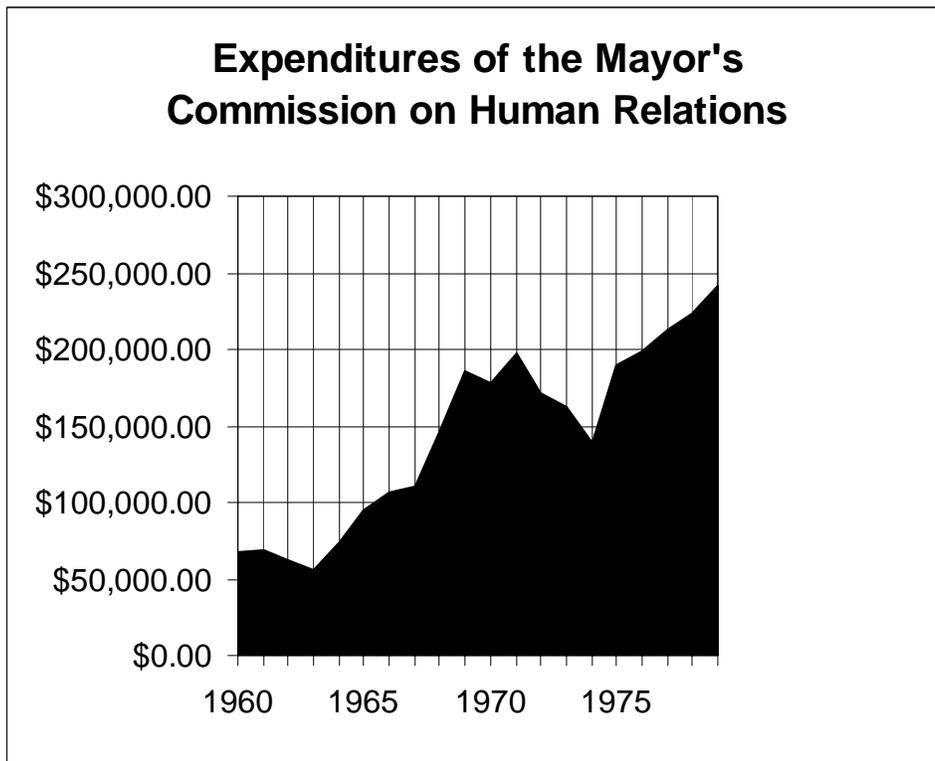
Source: US Censuses of 1960, 1970 and 1980 compiled from census tracts falling wholly or predominantly within the given neighborhoods.

<sup>1</sup> The 1960 census did not give data on numbers of families living below the poverty line. Figures were calculated by taking the number of families earning less than \$2999 a year in income. This roughly corresponds to the \$2973 Poverty Threshold for a Family of Four which the Census Bureau calculated from the Consumer Price Index. See "Characteristics of the Population Below the Poverty Level 1983," Current Population Reports, P-60/147.

**TABLE 5 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY RACE AND NEIGHBORHOOD**

Neighborhood	Percent Black 1960	Percent Black 1970	Percent Black 1980	Change 1970-1980	Change 1960-1980
Homewood	73.93%	95.26%	97.05%	+1.79%	+23.13%
Manchester	39.94%	73.58%	86.09%	+12.51%	+46.15%
Hill District	89.03%	93.70%	94.62%	+0.92%	+5.59%

Source: US Censuses of 1960, 1970 and 1980 compiled from census tracts falling wholly or predominantly within the given neighborhoods.



Source: City Controller, *Annual Reports*, 1960-1980, City of Pittsburgh, held by the Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh

**Figure 1 Commission on Human Relations Budget**

## **APPENDIX C**

### **List of Abbreviations**

AAUW: American Association of University Women

ACCD: Allegheny Conference on Community Development

ACCCR: Allegheny County Council on Civil Rights

ACCCCR: Allegheny County Citizens' Council on Civil Rights

ACLU: American Civil Liberties Union

ACTION-Housing: Allegheny Conference To Improve Our Neighborhoods-Housing

APA: American Psychiatric Association

AVA, Am Vets: Association of American Veterans, (pseudonym for one Pittsburgh gay bar)

CAP: Community Action Pittsburgh

CAW: Congress of American Women

CETA: Comprehensive Employment Training Act

CDBG: Community Development Block Grant

CHR: Mayor's Commission on Human Relations, later Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations

CSM: Pennsylvania Commission on the Status of Women

CUC: Civic Unity Council

CVVC: Center for Victims of Violent Crimes

EEOC: Equal Employment Opportunities Commission

ERA: Equal Rights Amendment

FEPC: Fair Employment Practices Commission

GAA: Gay Activists Alliance

GAP: Gay Alternatives Pittsburgh

HACP: Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh

HDHA: Hill District Homeowners and Tenants Association

HEW: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

HOPS: Homophiles of Penn State

HOW: Happiness of Womanhood, Inc.

HUD: Department of Housing and Urban Development

IUE: International Union of Electrical Workers

LCB: Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board

MH/MR: Mental Health and Mental Retardation Program

MTO: Metropolitan Tenants Organization

NAACP: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NAM: New American Movement

NCJW: National Council of Jewish Women

NOW: National Organization for Women

NSM: new social movements theory

OEO: Office of Economic Opportunity

OIC: Opportunities Industrial Centers

PAAR :Pittsburgh Action Against Rape

PATF: Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force

PGPC: Pittsburgh Gay Political Club

PHRC: Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

PSSU: Pennsylvania State Service Employees Union

RAC: Reorganization Advisory Committee

RMT: resource mobilization theory

TPC: The Political Club

UBF: United Black Front

UE: United Electrical Workers

UNPC: United Negro Protest Committee

URA: Urban Redevelopment Authority of the City of Pittsburgh

VFW: Veterans of Foreign Wars

YWCA: Young Women's Christian Association

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Archival Collection of Dick Thornburgh (RLT Papers)

Stanton Balfour Pittsburgh Renaissance Oral History Project

State and Local Government Archives, Oral History Project (SLGA)

Records of the Urban League of Pittsburgh (Urban League)

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP), Pittsburgh, PA

Hazelwood--History File Hazelwood-Glenhazel Branch, Pittsburgh, PA.

Hill District--History File, Hill District Branch, Pittsburgh, PA.

Pittsburgh Blacks--Biography Files, Pennsylvania Room

Pittsburgh Blacks--Organizations Files, Pennsylvania Room

Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania (HSWP), Pittsburgh, PA

Jonathan Robison Papers (Robison Papers)

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