

**L2016.19**  
**John Eberly (Gay Center)**  
**Collection, 1973-1987**

**FINDING AID AUTHOR**

Gabrielle Garcia

**ACQUISITION INFORMATION**

Due to the absence of a deed of gift, the exact origins of this collection are unknown; however, a note in the place of a deed of gift suggests the contents of this collection may have been abandoned materials from the early years of the center. It was not uncommon for volunteers or staff of the Center to come across abandoned documents and donate them to Lambda Archives.

**PROCESSING INFORMATION**

This collection was processed by Gabrielle Garcia as part of the 2020 CSL project.

**EXTENT**

Number of containers: 2  
Linear feet of shelf space: 1

**ABSTRACT**

**BIOGRAPHY OR HISTORY**

The Center

The Gay Center for Social Services (GCSS), a.k.a. The Center, is a non-profit organization created with the intent to meet the needs of the LGBT community in San Diego. The Center's earliest origins can be traced to the Gay Information Center hotline at San Diego State university. Run by Jessop, the hotline was transferred from San Diego State to the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), and finally to The Center. The Center was founded in 1972 by Bernard Michaels, Thom Carey, Jess Jessop, Patricia Byers, Patricia Clutchy, Peggy Heathers, Clint Johnson, George Murphy, Jerry Peterson, Gary Rees, John Senter, Jerry White, John Eberly, Gary Gulley, and Cynthia Lawrence. Michaels, a student at the School of Social Work at San Diego State University, centered his dissertation on the development and establishment of The Center and its services. The original Center was opened in 1973 and was located at 2250 B Street in Golden Hill before moving to 1447 N 30th Street—also in Golden Hill—in 1980. The Center would not stay on 30th Street for long, moving later in 1980 to 3780 Fifth Av., where they

would remain for the next twelve years until their move to 3916 Normal Street building in October 1992. The Center moved to its current location in Hillcrest—as of March 2019—at 3909 Center Street in 1999.

The Center was intended to provide much needed health, counseling, and educational services to their community. Because The Center was founded by members of the gay community, for the community, it could provide these services without discrimination, judgement, or shame for those seeking their assistance. The founders recognized that the LGBT community needed a place where the community could go for help without fear of exposure, arrest, or hostility towards their lifestyle at a time in which discovery of their identity could lead to severe consequences in their personal lives, particularly with employers.

The Center's initial programs included a hotline for information on their services and crisis intervention, counseling in "Rap groups" or one-on-one sessions, educational programs including a speaker's bureau and a lending library, and a prisoner parole and probation program for LGBT prisoners. The Center would later expand their services to include a Military Counseling program, the Lesbian Health Project, the Holistic AIDS Response Program (HARP), and a variety of other programs and workshops. To raise funds for these services and their establishment, The Center and the LGBT community put together a variety of events including original theater shows, such as "On the Road", block parties, auctions, and film festivals, hosted primarily in LGBT operated businesses. Over time, The Center would develop many taskforces to combat issues faced by the LGBT community, including HIV/AIDS, domestic violence in gay and lesbian relationships, violent crime, and human rights. In 1992, The Center would partner with law enforcement in San Diego to provide Gay and Lesbian Cultural Awareness training as well as a Sexual Orientation training course. The Center for Social Services has since opened multiple affiliated Centers including the North County Center in 1996 and the Hillcrest Youth Center in 2000.

### John Eberly

John Charles Eberly was born on September 4, 1935, in Detroit, Michigan, the only son of Edith Fulton Eberly and Carl Eberly.

He received a B.S. degree in Psychology from Northwestern University in Chicago in 1956 and an M.S.L.S in Library Science from Wayne State University in Detroit in 1971. Eberly worked in the field of advertising before becoming a teacher in Detroit, then moved to San Diego in 1971 and taught for 15 ½ years in the Chula Vista City School District. Hired as a librarian, he also taught kindergarten and first grades in Chula Vista. He served as President of the Chula Vista Elementary Education Association for several years.

Eberly also was active in the San Diego community. He was one of the original people responsible for the formation of the new Lesbian and Gay Men's Community Center. In 1972 he joined Metropolitan Community Church of San Diego and became active in various capacities. He started its Video Ministry in 1980 and reigned from that capacity in December 1987. The ministry's cablecast "Reflections of MCC" is the longest running TV show in San Diego. He also served on the church's board of directors and as editor of the Prodigal newsletter.

In September 1988, Eberly received the President's Award from the San Diego Democratic Club. He served the club in several capacities, notably as its treasurer for five years.

John Eberly died at home from AIDS complications on January 27, 1989. He is survived by his lover, Charles Suko, by longtime friend George Murphy, and by many friends and acquaintances.

"Obituaries." Update, 1 Feb. 1989, p. A-14+. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/FIQFKS808864623/AHSI?u=lambda&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=899c8888](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/FIQFKS808864623/AHSI?u=lambda&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=899c8888). Accessed 19 Aug. 2021.

## **COLLECTION SCOPE AND CONTENT**

This collection contains materials pertaining to early years of The Center in San Diego, then known as the Gay Center, including their programs (such as Men's Self Development, AIDS Care Team, Military Counseling Program, Gay Pride) and organizational documents from 1973 to 1987. These materials include event programs, guidelines, policies, resource lists, articles, letters, agendas, meeting reminders and minutes, clippings and print outs, reports, flyers, memos, financial documents, newsletters, proposals, pamphlets, directories, by laws, questionnaires, instructions, procedures, informational documents, press releases, notes, certificates, drafts, forms, rosters, business cards, manuals, receipts, amendments, calendars, referrals, budgets, job descriptions, posters, tickets, maps, bibliographies, invitations, and schedules.

## **ARRANGEMENT**

This collection consists of 2 boxes divided into 0 series.

## **SEPARATED MATERIAL**

No separated material.

## **SUBJECTS**

Gay Center for Social Services (GCSS), The Center, The Gay Center, The Gay and Lesbian Center, John Eberly, Jess Jessop, Quentin Crisp, Organizations - Service, Organizations - Social, Pride events - 1975, Pride events - 1976, Pride events - 1977, HIV/AIDS, Military, San Diego Pride

## **CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS**

This collection is open and available for research use, with the exception of confidential material. Copyright restrictions may apply.

## PREFERRED CITATION

The suggested citation for the collection is:

[Item Description]

John Eberly (The Center) Collection, 1973-1987

Lambda Archives of San Diego

San Diego, California

## RELATED MATERIAL

L1989.01, L1998.11, L2009.08, L2011.05, L2011.27, L2012.20, L2012.32, L2013.32, L2017.12

## LOCATION NOTE

C.5.1.4

## LANGUAGES

English

## CONTAINER LIST

Box	Folde r	Description	Date(s)	
1	1	Early History		
1	2	Gay Center Board Reports and Correspondence 1975-1977	1975-1977	
1	3	Gay Center By-Laws, Reports, Financials 1979-1981	1979-1981	
1	4	Gay Center Policies and Board Meetings 1976-1979	1976-1979	
1	5	Gay Center Youth Program 1974-1977	1974-1977	
1	6	Men's Self Development 1975-1979	1975-1979	
1	7	Men's Self Development 1977-1980	1977-1980	
1	8	Men's Self Development 1975-1980	1975-1980	
1	9	Personnel Committee Personnel Committee 1979	1979	
1	10	Gay Center Budget 1986-1987	1986-1987	
1	11	Jess Jessop/Franchise Tax Board Correspondence 1976-1977	1976-1977	
1	12	AIDS Care Team (ACT)		
1	13	Military Counseling Program 1984-	1984-1987	

		1987		
1	14	Military Law Task Force (MLTF) 1986-1987	1986-1987	
2	1	Gay Pride 1975-1977	1975-1977	
2	2	Gay Center: This Way Out Newsletter 1975-1978	1975-1978	
2	3	Quentin Crisp 1983-1984	1983-1984	
2	4	Gay Center Confidential Contact Reports 1978-1979 [restricted]	1978-1979	
2	5	Gay Center Speakers Bureau 1980-1981	1980-1981	
2	6	Gay Center Speakers Resources		
2	7	Gay Center Mailing List 1983	1983	
2	8	Kibby Estate 1977	1977	
2	9	Gay Center Original Forms 1985-1986	1985-1986	
2	10	Community Congress Roster & Info 1977	1977	
2	11	Community Congress & Congressional Record 1972-1978	1972-1978	
2	12	Gay Center Promotions & Fundraising 1973-1977	1973-1977	
2	13	Gay Center Promotions & Fundraising 1974-1978	1974-1978	
2	14	Lesbian Support Group 1978	1978	
2	15	Gay Center Miscellany 1977-1986	1977-1986	