



The Rainbow Connection is published by the Prairie Pride Coalition (PPC).

Send Correspondence to P.O. Box 5048, Bloomington, IL 61702-5048, or e-mail info@ppc-il.org

PPC Board: Dave Bentlin, Peggy Burton, Gary Gletty, Margo Mendoza, Donna O’Crowly, Elizabeth Anvick, Olemuel Ashford, Tony Thieman-Somora, and Kathleen Burger

Rainbow Connection

FEBRUARY, 2013

The Civil Rights Leader You’ve Probably Never Heard of

by Dave Bentlin

Lifelong friend of Eleanor Roosevelt. The first African American to earn a doctorate law degree from Yale University. The first African American female priest ordained by the Episcopal Church. A founding member of the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Quite a heady resumé, but believe it or not these milestones were all achieved by one remarkable woman: the Rev. Dr. Anna Pauline (Pauli) Murray. Murray’s accomplishments make her a historic figure of note in the African American and LGBTQ communities.

Murray was born in 1910 to parents who both were dead by the time Murray turned 13. She graduated from high school, then gained national notoriety when she attempted in 1938 to enroll at the all-white University of North Carolina. Despite support from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Murray did not gain admission to UNC, but in the effort she began a long friendship with Presidential First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Undeterred by UNC’s rejection, Murray enrolled at Howard University and graduated in 1944. Following that she attempted to enroll at Harvard Law School but despite winning a prestigious fellow-

ship she was barred admission because of her gender.

Murray eventually earned her first law degree. She also continued to work closely with Bayard Rustin and others who were pacifists who believed in non-violent civil disobedience as a method to gain civil rights for African Americans. Along the way she was arrested in Virginia for refusing to sit at the back of a city bus.

In 1960 Murray was appointed by President John F. Kennedy to his Committee on Civil and Political Rights, but grew frustrated by the civil rights

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GLAD Celebrates 20th Anniversary



The members of GLAD, the Gay and Lesbian Association of Decatur, are celebrating a major milestone in February – their 20th Anniversary.

The group was organized and met for the first time on Feb. 13, 1993 in the activities room of Decatur’s St. Thomas Catholic Church. The purpose of the group, according to the invitation sent out, was to not only be social outlet for the local LGBT community but also “offer support, education and even political action.”

The tradition began of having a potluck and a social program the second Saturday of each month. That tradition has contin-

ued, uninterrupted to this very day. In the group’s first decade, attendance varied between 50 and 80. Today, it is lower, usually about 20 to 25, but the mission remains the same – to foster a sense of community amongst the area’s LGBT folks and allies.

GLAD will be celebrating its 20th anniversary with a catered dinner on Saturday, Feb.9th at Decatur’s Peerless Corporate Training Center, 1304 N.20th Street. The will be a presentation on GLAD’s history. All are welcome. Please RSVP to glad-info@mchsi.com by Feb. 8th if you’d like to attend.

Leader

Continued from page 1

movement which seemed to minimize the efforts of African American women. She argued that African American women were often recruited to participate in grassroots efforts but were seldom recognized and tapped for leadership roles within the larger movement. In 1965 Murray completed her juris doctorate degree and became the first African American woman to earn such a degree from Yale University. That same year she served as counsel in *White v. Crook*, which successfully challenged the use of sex and race discrimination in jury selection. The next year she, along with 30 other women, founded the National Organization for Women (NOW). In 1977 Murray achieved another milestone, becoming the first African-American female priest ordained by the Episcopal Church. She retired from her position in 1984 and died the next year from cancer.

Speculation abounds about Murray’s sexual orientation, but most sources agree that she was a lesbian who remained closeted but forged her closest relationships with other women. For much of her life homosexuality was associated with mental illness, so throughout her adult life she tended to identify herself as a heterosexual man (using Pauli instead of Pauline).

As we celebrate Black History Month let’s not forget the contributions of our LGBT brothers and sisters like Pauli Murray and Bayard Rustin.



Law office of
Allison & Mosby-Scott

Jon D. McLaughlin

Attorney at Law

Caring help when you need it most

Phone: (309) 662-5084 · Cell: (309) 319-6206 · Fax: (309) 662-2994
Jon@allisonmosby-scott.com · www.allisonmosby-scott.com



Law office of
Allison & Mosby-Scott

Michelle Mosby-Scott

Attorney at Law

Caring help when you need it most

Phone: (309) 662-5084 · Cell: (309) 310-1154 · Fax: (309) 662-2994
Michelle@allisonmosby-scott.com · www.allisonmosby-scott.com

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Wednesday, February 13, 2013

7 p.m.

Normal Theater

209 North Street, Uptown Normal

Panel discussion following screening!



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Calendar

- **Monday, January 11**– PFLAG, the Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays, meets on the second Monday of each month at the Unitarian Church – 1613 E. Emerson, from 5:30 – 7:30.
- **Saturday, January 9**– Transgender support group meets on the second Saturday of each month. Contact tginbnil@hotmail.com for more information.
- **Friday, February 8**—Hotspot hosted by Sharon Share a Like on the second Friday of each month at the Bistro.

PPC to Co-Sponsor Library Event

The Prairie Pride Coalition is once again co-sponsor of an event that helps raise funds for the Bloomington Public Library.

From 1-5 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 10, we will join other community organizations and businesses in “Putt with the Prose” at the library, 205 E. Olive Street in Bloomington.

For \$5, players can play miniature golf at 10 holes set up at various points within the library. Four dollar presale tickets are available through Feb. 9 at the circulation desk and in the Bookmobile.

This year PPC will sponsor the 18th hole. We will have candy and LGBT information available as part of our efforts to provide outreach to the greater Bloomington-Normal community.

Join us in supporting our local library!



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Worship Sundays, 10 a.m.

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