CHAIR’S MESSAGE:
It’s Pride Month
By Gerald L. Shoemaker Jr., Esq.

I attended the Philadelphia Pride Parade on June 8. Having come out over 20 years ago, I am ashamed to say that this was only my second time attending the parade. I am not ashamed to say that I did feel a sense of pride and, most importantly, solidarity at the parade. I was amazed at the number of corporations that participated by having employees and their families march. I was even more amazed at the other organizations participating in the parade: the FBI, the Philadelphia Police, Philadelphia Fire, as well as many sports teams, including the Philadelphia Union, the Flyers (including Gritty) and the 76ers.

Approximately one week after the parade (and as I write this), Taylor Swift released her new song, “You Need to Calm Down,” which has already generated a great deal of buzz as she speaks loudly, through song, in support of LGBTQ rights. In fact, the initial video released with the song makes reference to GLAAD and highlights the “EA” in every word containing that combination in the song with “EA” is highlighted. The “EA” stands for Equality Act.

Most importantly, our committee had a great victory on May 17, when the PBA House of Delegates voted to adopt the resolution drafted by the Transgender Name Change Task Force. I was proud to present the resolution to the House and was proud by the response of the delegates. Now, we move on to the next phase, which is working to draft rules and/or legislation to implement a more appropriate path for transgender persons seeking name changes.

Also at this same meeting, I was pleased to...
The first two days will be packed with plenary and break-out sessions. Each session offers 10 or more classes. Choose a class to learn something entirely new or to expand your knowledge in your practice area.

- A Comparative Discussion on the Intersectionality of American, Civil and Islamic Jurisprudences and its Impact on Everyday Life;
- What Do You Mean My HIV Prevents Me From Serving My Country?;
- An Exploration of anti-LGBTQ Biases in the Criminal Justice System;
- Protecting LGBTQ Lives By Restoring the Rule of Law to the U.S. Immigration System;
- The Right to Parent: Advanced LGBT+ Family-Building & Assisted Reproductive Technology;
- Trans Name and Gender Change 2.0, moderated by committee member Ellen Fischer.

Other sessions will address the special issues LGBTQ+ youth face, such as:

- Defending Anti-Conversion Therapy Laws & Suing Conversion Therapists in a Post-NIFLA World; and
- LGBTQ Youth Homelessness: Strategies for Reducing Over-Representation and Addressing Systemic and Day-to-Day Legal Challenges.

On Day Three, practice area institutes will have all-day programming for their members, including: corporate counsel; employment law; family law; finance law; insurance; intellectual property; transgender law; and trusts and estates; there is also a prosecutors group.

Also on Day Three is Career Day, offering law students career planning and resume-writing help, interviewing practice, meetings with LGBTQ+-friendly law firm recruiters, government agencies, corporate legal departments and LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations. Last year, 400 students and almost 190 recruiters participated.

Time is set aside for fun, networking, eating and drinking. Attendees will not be disappointed!

For information and a complete conference schedule, click here: [https://lgbtbar.org/annual](https://lgbtbar.org/annual).

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**Philadelphia Trans Wellness Conference**  
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The link below has more information on individual workshops, including Lawyers for Insurance Equality! Challenging Denials of Trans-Related Care; Advanced Gender Rights Law and Litigation (3-part series); innovative legal services delivery models; and more. The PA CLE Board has approved this program to offer attendees up to 11 credits (including 1 ethics credit). Online registration is open through July 8, 2019.

For more information about the Philadelphia Trans Wellness Conference, click [here](https://lgbtbar.org/annual).

For more information about ProTrack and to register, click [here](https://lgbtbar.org/annual).

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**Lavender in Philadelphia**  
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President Trump has forbidden the flying of rainbow flags at U.S. embassies. Despite this mandate, many embassies have disobeyed this directive and hoisted the flag in honor of Pride. Moreover, his administration continues to attack the rights of our community, all while pretending not to do so by sending a tweet promoting Pride.

The president of the Human Rights Campaign, Chad Griffin, had an appropriate response: “You can’t celebrate Pride and constantly undermine our rights — including attacking #TransHealth, discharging #TransTroops, refusing to protect LGBTQ youth, and cozying up to dictators who brutalize & marginalize LGBTQ people. This is gross hypocrisy, with an emphasis on gross.”

Let’s stay positive and work against any effort from our government to treat those in our community any differently than any other person! I hope you all had a happy Pride!
Fifty Years After Stonewall, LGBT Elders Need Greater Support

By David Griffith, Esq.

2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, a revolutionary event that is largely credited with launching the LGBT rights movement. As cities across the country gather to celebrate Pride and commemorate the 50 years of progress since Stonewall, it is important for LGBT people and allies of all ages to recognize the current needs of many of the LGBT pioneers who led the way.

Many of the young activists who were on the front lines of Stonewall and the push for LGBT equality at that time are now in their 70s, 80s and 90s. These activists and advocates pushed back barriers on all fronts, decriminalizing homosexuality, eliminating sodomy laws, creating compassion, understanding and availability of health care through the AIDS epidemic and beyond, and helped establish marriage equality.

LGBT older adults face many unique challenges as they age. Policymakers and providers who serve older adults must ensure that LGBT seniors have every opportunity to age successfully. Fifty years after Stonewall, these LGBT elders have earned the right to grow older while being treated with dignity and respect.

Barriers to care for LGBT elders

LGBT older adults have experienced lifetimes of discrimination, including years when homosexuality was criminalized and labeled as a mental disorder. As a result of this social and legal mistreatment, LGBT elders encounter a complex array of social, emotional and physical health needs, including elevated rates of social isolation, depression, suicidal ideation, HIV/AIDS, chronic illness and premature mortality.

Past discrimination in housing, employment and access to benefits have contributed to LGBT older adults experiencing high rates of financial strain. Systemic discrimination has left LGBT elders disproportionately reliant on public insurance programs like Medicare and Social Security.

When compared to their non-LGBT counterparts, LGBT seniors are also disproportionately likely to be single, childless and living alone. These factors are largely consequences of past legal restrictions on marriage and adoption, as well as societal definitions of “family.” Many LGBT older adults have also been estranged from their biological families throughout their lives.

This lack of familial supports become particularly apparent as individuals age and need to rely on others for support in managing their health, transportation and activities of daily living. Most caregiving in the United States is provided by family members – not by homecare aides and health care workers. For LGBT individuals aging alone without spouses, children and grandchildren, there is a heightened reliance on community-based services. Sadly, these services are often unprepared to serve the unique and complex needs of LGBT older adults.

Discrimination in Aging Services and Health Care

LGBT elders often express concern over receiving services from the aging services network due to expectations of discrimination which are often rooted in personal and historic experiences of discrimination in housing, health

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LGBT Elders Need More Support
Continued from page 3

care and employment. Many report fears of having to go back “into the closet” in order to get care from the aging services system. As such, LGBT older adults are less likely than heterosexuals to utilize senior centers, meal programs and other aging services.

In research from SAGE (https://www.sageusa.org/) on the attitudes and experiences of LGBT people between 45 and 75, 13% of LGBT people and 25% of transgender people reported having been discriminated against because of sexual orientation and gender identity, respectively, when searching for housing.

A 10-state investigation from the Equal Rights Center found that same-sex couples experienced adverse differential treatment when attempting to access senior housing. Similarly, qualitative research from Justice in Aging identified numerous incidents of LGBT bias and discrimination in independent living and assisted-living facilities.

These issues are particularly pronounced for transgender and gender nonconforming older adults. In recent research from AARP, two-thirds of transgender older adults sampled reported concern that the quality of their health care will be negatively impacted because of their gender identity, and 75% were concerned that health care providers were not sensitive to their needs. In this same study, 70% of transgender individuals expected that they will have to conceal their identities in order to move into long-term care facilities.

Developing cultural competence in the provider network

Professionals who provide services to older adults are still largely catching up to understanding the needs of LGBT elders and the ways that sexual orientation and gender identity can impact a person’s access to services, support networks and health outcomes.

There is work that needs to take place within organizations to better prepare providers – whether those are lawyers, medical professionals, social workers or others – to become more effective at working with LGBT populations. Cultural competence training from organizations like SAGE can educate professionals about the unique challenges experienced by LGBT older adults and identify strategies for better addressing the needs of LGBT elder communities.

Additionally, more deliberate outreach to LGBT communities can indicate an organization’s desire to address the needs faced by LGBT elders. Partnering with LGBT-serving nonprofits can strengthen an organization’s inclusivity. Inviting LGBT people onto boards, advisory committees or other constituent groups ensures that LGBT voices can meaningfully impact the direction of an organization.

Also, especially since Pennsylvania lacks a statewide nondiscrimination policy that protects LGBT people, it is essential that agencies develop organizational policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Once developed, these policies need to be shared and displayed publicly. Anyone entering the doors of a service agency – staff or client – should be able to see a non-discrimination statement that welcomes and affirms LGBT people.

Protecting LGBT seniors from discrimination

As noted, Pennsylvania continues to fail to protect its LGBT citizens, by state law, from discrimination. Unlike our neighboring states, such as New York and New Jersey, as well as others in the Northeast, Pennsylvania does not have statewide protections prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Discrimination can look different for older LGBT seniors. Same-sex couples are denied housing in senior
housing facilities. Transgender people are turned away from nursing homes or only offered accommodations based on their sex assigned at birth. LGBT older adults in many parts of the commonwealth face denial of services from home health aides and others responsible for caring for vulnerable populations of LGBT elders.

Legislators and advocates have been working tirelessly to pass the Pennsylvania Fairness Act, to update the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in employment, housing and public accommodations. Strong advocacy on this legislation is urgent.

**Data Collection**

While changes to Pennsylvania’s nondiscrimination laws require legislative action, other issues can be addressed through changes to policies and procedures within state agencies. Currently, most state agencies do not track data on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). Questions about sexual orientation are simply not asked and gender is treated as a simplistic male/female binary.

Beginning to collect data on sexual orientation and gender identities beyond the male/female binary would allow agencies to better understand the needs of LGBT people and how they are – or are not – receiving services. Collecting SOGI data can help improve well-documented health disparities, drive funding for needed research and encourage LGBT-specific program planning to close service gaps and better meet needs.

**Inclusion in State and Area Plans on Aging**

Increasing the focus on LGBT aging issues and improving the allocation of services, funding and outreach to LGBT older adults can also be done through influencing the strategic plans of state and local aging services entities. As a mandate of the Older Americans Act (OAA), state units on aging are required to complete a State Plan on Aging every four years. The State Plan serves as a blueprint for serving the state's older adult population and identifying priorities for enhancing programs, delivering services and allocating resources.

Pennsylvania will be responsible for creating its next State Plan in 2020. The development of the State Plan for 2020-2024 comes with great opportunity for the Commonwealth to improve the LGBT cultural competence of its aging services network and to correct the failures of previous plans, which virtually ignored LGBT aging goals and services. Updating data collection methods to include sexual orientation and gender identity and increasing resource allocation toward underserved LGBT communities are vital to an appropriate 2020-2024 State Plan.

Additionally, each of the 52 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), which are funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging and responsible for overseeing the delivering services to seniors at the county level, will also have to develop their own 2020-2024 Area Plans on Aging.

The inclusion of LGBT older adults in individual county Area Plans is essential to the financial, health and social supports needed by aging LGBT people throughout the commonwealth.

**Recognition in the Older Americans Act**

Unfortunately, the federal government does not currently mandate states to identify specific plans or benchmarks for meeting the needs of their LGBT elder populations.

The OAA is the federal legislation that provides the overall framework for the delivery of aging services nationwide. It directly funds many of the services delivered by the county-level Area Agencies on Aging, including caregiver supports, preventative health programming, employment resources, and nutrition and meal programs.
LGBT Elders Need More Support
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The OAA contains requirements of targeting services to benefit older adults with the greatest economic or social need. The act defines greatest social need as “need caused by non-economic factors such as a) physical and mental disabilities b) language barriers c) cultural, social or geographical isolation, including isolation caused by racial or ethnic status.”

Given the health and economic disparities that impact LGBT elders, LGBT older adults should be identified as a population of greatest social and economic need. This designation would put in place the first-ever requirement for states to develop plans for how they target resources and services to LGBT populations.

The OAA is up for reauthorization this year, and while adding in LGBT elder rights may be an uphill battle given the current administration, recognition in the OAA of the needs of LGBT older adults is an area requiring ongoing advocacy at the federal level.

Closing
Federal, state and local legislation all have a role to play in improving the rights of LGBT older adults. State agencies and county offices of aging, in cooperation with community and nonprofit organizations, must create plans for how to best reach and serve vulnerable populations of LGBT older adults.

As we celebrate Stonewall and 50 years of advocacy and achievement by and for LGBT older adults, both within and beyond the LGBT community, we must ensure that necessary resources and services are available and accessible to effectively meet the needs of LGBT elders.

1 Equal Rights Center. (2014). Opening Doors: An Investigation of Barriers to Senior Housing for Same-Sex Couples. Washington, DC.
2 National Senior Citizens Law Center. (2015). Stories from the Field: LGBT Older Adults in Long-Term Care Facilities. Washington, DC.

David Griffith is the director of programs & outreach for the LGBT Elder Initiative, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit focused on community education and advocacy for LGBT older adults. He has a Master of Social Work (MSW) and Master of Science in Social Policy (MSSP), both from the University of Pennsylvania. To learn more about the LGBT Elder Initiative, visit www.lgbtelderinitiative.org or contact us at 215-720-9415 or info@lgbtelderinitiative.org.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

This feature provides up-to-date, brief bulletins addressing LGBTQ issues that might be relevant to readers’ lives or practices. Contributions from committee members and allies are welcome. Send the editors an item or an alert to the item.

PBA Approves Transgender Name Change Rules Recommendation

At its May 2019 Annual Meeting, the Pennsylvania Bar Association approved a recommendation to develop court rules to protect transgender persons’ safety and privacy in name-change processes. The House of Delegates approved the GLBT Rights Committee’s recommendation and report on this issue, prepared by the Transgender Name Change Task Force and presented by committee Chair Jerry Shoemaker.

The committee established the task force at the request of PBA Past President Sharon R. López early in 2018. The task force reviewed Pennsylvania name change law, including common pleas court rules and practices on publication of notice of petitions, waiver of publication and posting notices on court websites. It also studied the social aspects of name change efforts, including risks from persons who search court websites and other sources for petitions solely to harass, even threaten or injure, the petitioner because of his or her transgender status. Presently, no uniform rules address this. The task force researched other states’ approaches, the significance of name as part of identity, negative and positive reasons for name changes in American and Pennsylvania history, and gender as a key element of identity.

Task force members were: Jane Allen, Erica Briant, Stefan Dann, Ellen Fischer, Roberta Jacobs-Meadway, Benjamin Jerner, Martricia O’Donnell McLaughlin, Mária Zulick Nucci, Henry Sias and Thomas Ude. Ben headed the task force’s Legal Research Focus Group; Thomas headed
the Social Research Focus Group. Research was assisted by Emily Galik, Maura Hallisey, Sarah Marmon and James Thompson, of the University of Pennsylvania Law School’s Lambda Law, coordinated by Kenisha Askew, Assistant Director of Pro Bono & Social Justice Programs, Toll Public Interest Center; students and interns at The Mazzoni Center in Philadelphia; and Arli Christian, state policy director, National Center for Transgender Equality.

The Committee will now draft proposed rules to be shared with other interested PBA committees and sections for comment to be presented for House agreement. Then, upon agreement, they will be submitted by the PBA president to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court for consideration by the Civil Procedural Rules Committee and, for minor petitioners, the Orphans’ Court Procedural Rules Committee.

The Stonewall Riots, 50th Anniversary

June is LGBT Pride Month. This year commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, which erupted in response to New York City police entering the Stonewall Inn, in Greenwich Village, early on June 28, 1969, for the stated purpose of executing an arrest warrant for employees for serving liquor without a license. The inn catered to gay, lesbian and transgender customers and those in drag. Patrons with identification were released but waited outside and rose up when a police van arrived. They and supportive neighbors rioted in response to the police’s action, which the LGBT community and allies saw as a targeted attack. The Stonewall Riots are often seen as the start of the campaign for equal human and civil rights for LGBT persons in the United States. The Inn and other “gay bars” in New York in the 1960s have interesting histories, given state law at the time. For this history, and that of the riots, see https://www.history.com/topics/gay-rights/the-stonewall-riots; see also Columbia University’s collection of contemporary news coverage, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/exhibitions/sw25/case1.html and OutHistory’s information on efforts to obtain the police records, http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/stonewall-riot-police-reports/contents/newly-obtained-documents-revea.


Many airlines, acting as responsible corporate citizens, support Pride events and LGBTQ rights.

Alaska Airlines, based in Seattle, is Seattle Pride’s official airline. Hundreds of employees will mark Stonewall’s anniversary by helping lead the June 30 Pride March and celebration. Year-round, the airline offers GLOBE, its resource group for LGBTQ employees and allies, and is dedicated to making the LGBTQ community feel welcome onboard: https://www.seattlepride.org/2019/04/29/alaska-airlines-named-the-official-airline-of-seattle-pride/.

American Airlines will have a rainbow in its logo on social media and other platforms, and inflight programming will feature LGBT entertainers Sam Smith, Kylie Minogue, Rosie O’Donnell, Angels in America, Pride, Looking and Glee, in live concert, stand-up and film offerings.

United Airlines has a corporate policy of inclusion and diversity, which states:

[W]e believe it’s important to support the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community by upholding inclusive policies and practices, partnering with LGBT organizations, and hosting programs and engagement events to honor the LGBT community.

Virgin Atlantic will have a “Pride flight” from London to New York City on June 28, World Pride Day. Tituss Burgess will host the flight, which will feature an all-LGBT cabin crew and pilots. Passengers will be offered an onboard DJ,
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drag bingo, speed dating, a Judy Garland sing-along and other in-flight entertainment.

**Update on the Federal Equality Act**


**Doe v. Boyertown Area School District – Certiorari Denied**

On May 28, 2019, the Supreme Court of the United States denied certiorari in Doe v. Boyertown Area School District, No. 18-658, a case out of Pennsylvania. Several students challenged the district’s policy, under Title IX, allowing students to use facilities consistent with their gender identity, while addressing concerns of students uncomfortable with the policy. The district implemented it in 2016 under Obama Administration guidelines, which the Trump Administration changed in 2017. Given the court’s new composition, in Justices Kavanaugh and Gorsuch, the denial of certiorari is arguably intriguing. The certiorari petition is available at [https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/18/18-658/72545/20181119143351462_Boyertown%20Cert%20Petition%20Final.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/18/18-658/72545/20181119143351462_Boyertown%20Cert%20Petition%20Final.pdf); the nine amicus briefs supporting the petitioning students and the brief of intervenor-respondent Pennsylvania Youth Congress Foundation are available at [https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/doe-v-boyertown-area-school-district/](https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/doe-v-boyertown-area-school-district/).

**For analysis of Title IX issues pursuant to federal policy changes, see W. Burlette Carter, “Trump Withdraws Title IX Guidance; Supreme Court Pauses. What Now?”, GEO. WASH. L. REV. ON THE DOCKET (Mar. 22, 2017), [http://www.gwlr.org/gloucester-county-school-board-v-p-g/](http://www.gwlr.org/gloucester-county-school-board-v-p-g/).**

**Retired Justice Anthony M. Kennedy Honored**

Retired Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, who authored the majority opinions in four LGBTQ rights cases, Romer v. Evans, Lawrence v. Texas, United States v. Windsor and Obergefell v. Hodges, received the inaugural
Hear Ye! Hear Ye!
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Bolch Prize for the Rule of Law, from The Bolch Judicial Institute at Duke University Law School (https://judicial-studies.duke.edu/2019/02/bolch-prize-kennedy/). Comments by presenters, including Justice Samuel Alito, and Justice Kennedy’s acceptance comments, may be viewed at https://www.c-span.org/video/?459489-1/justices-alito-kennedy-duke-law-school&fbclid=IwAR1J6pp_FC-wQsWJnuNVPv7Tdpi_pR5p3u96MPaucoBSnPk3qO6p-gj5CuKJw.

International News

Supreme Court Docket: LGBTQ Employment Rights in Focus

On April 22, 2019, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) granted certiorari in three cases of concern to the LG-BTQ community.

SCOTUS will decide whether federal employment discrimination laws protect LGBTQ employees. By examining a trio of cases — two claiming discrimination based on sexual orientation (which were consolidated) and the third claiming discrimination based on transgender status — the Court will issue decisions which are expected to dramatically affect the rights of LGBTQ employees and their employers, with decisions arriving during the important Presidential and Senatorial election campaigns.

In Altitude Express v. Zarda (No. 17-1623, Vide 17-1618), the justices will decide whether federal laws banning employment discrimination protect gay and lesbian employees. A New York sky-diving company fired Donald Zarda, an instructor, who contended that he was terminated because he was gay — a violation of (among other things) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bars discrimination “because of sex.”

The trial court dismissed Zarda’s Title VII claim, reasoning that Title VII does not allow claims alleging discrimination based on sexual orientation. However, the full Second Circuit Court of Appeals reversed, concluding that discrimination based on sexual orientation “is a subset of sex discrimination.”

Altitude Express will be consolidated for one hour of oral argument with the second case involving the rights of gay and lesbian employees. In Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia (No. 17-1618), Gerald Bostock was a child-welfare-services coordinator for Clayton County, Georgia. He claimed that his firing for allegedly mismanaging public money was a pretext for a dismissal because his employer discovered he was gay. Bostock lost on his claims that his firing violated Title VII when both the trial court and the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals found that Title VII does not apply to discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In the third case, R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes v. EEOC (No. 18-107), the justices will consider whether Title VII’s protections apply to transgender employees. Thomas Rost, who describes himself as a devout Christian, owns the funeral home. Aimee Stephens, whose employee records identified her as a male, informed Rost that she identified as a woman and wanted to wear women’s clothing to work. Rost fired Stephens, because Rost believed that allowing Stephens wearing women’s clothing would violate both the company dress code and “God’s commands.” The EEOC filed suit for Stephens, who prevailed in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Supreme Court will consider whether Title VII bars discrimination against transgender people based on either their status as transgender or sex stereotyping under its decision in Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins, 490 U.S. 228, 109 S.Ct. 1775 (1989). The funeral home’s appeal will be argued separately from Bostock and Altitude Express.

Documents and additional information on these cases are available at www.scotusblog.com and www.supremecourt.gov.

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Rainbeaux Arts and Culture

This section adds a touch of the humanities, because the humanities civilize and inspire! Contributions from committee members and allies are welcome. Send the editors an item or an alert to the item.

**Film**

“The Hidden War on Trans Rights,” documentary film, Abby Martin, the empire files: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3T7c8S_Si_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3T7c8S_Si_o).

**Books**


John Waters, filmmaker of “Pink Flamingos,” “Polyester,” “Hairspray,” “Cry-Baby” and “A Dirty Shame,” has published a memoir, “Mr. Know-It-All: The Tarnished Wisdom of a Filth Elder” (384 pp.; Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2019; $27); [https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374214968](https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374214968).

**Live Performance**

Getting to Know A Member: Thomas W. Ude Jr.

Hi! Just for the record, as they say, what is your full name?
Thomas W. Ude Jr.

Can you tell our readers about your background, education and employment as an attorney?
I was born and raised in Connecticut and started practicing law nearly 30 years ago in New Haven. I have worked with the City of New Haven, Lambda Legal’s New York headquarters, the Mazzoni Center in Philadelphia, my current employment, which began in September 2014.

In my career, I engaged with amazing leaders and workers face and overcome challenges with limited resources while holding to important principles. For the past 12 years, I’ve served the LGBTQ+ and HIV+ communities through impact litigation, policy work and direct legal services.

I earned my law degree from the University of Michigan Law School and my Bachelor of Arts from the University of Connecticut. I am admitted to practice in Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut; and the U.S. Supreme Court, the Third Circuit and other U.S. Courts of Appeal, and the Eastern District of Pennsylvania (among other districts).

Where do you live and work? How do you feel about it?
I live and work in Philadelphia with my husband, Michael. I love Philadelphia because it has both the strong sense of community that’s often found only in much smaller cities with a large city’s dynamic energy and vibrancy. The legal community, in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, has been a great new home, and I’ve really benefited from the support and connections with many amazing people.

I felt at home immediately after moving here in September 2019 to join Mazzoni Center, a Philadelphia-based LGBTQ health and wellness service provider, as its legal and public policy director. The work is challenging, sometimes frustrating and challenging, but incredibly rewarding.

I love the ways in which our program, in very concrete ways, empowers LGBTQ people to assert their rights and fully claim their lives.

Why did you join the PBA GLBT Rights Committee? Does it dovetail with other professional or volunteer efforts or ventures?
I joined the committee on the recommendation of my friend and former PBA President, Sharon R. López, who reminded me of the work that the committee has done, including on a compendium of the myriad laws are connected to marital status, and of the PBA’s important role throughout the commonwealth. My membership dovetails almost perfectly with my program’s work on substantive issues and, through it, I’ve met attorneys across Pennsylvania who work on these issues.

On a lighter note, what’s your favorite vacation spot? Why?
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. It’s a beautiful tropical island that’s only a few hours away. Because my husband worked there for three years, we also have some great friends there.

Do you have a favorite book, and why do you love it?
“Wicked,” by Gregory Maguire. I loved the “Wizard of Oz” as a kid, and this takes that familiar story, flips it and challenges us to question assumptions about how people’s reputations are created and destroyed.

Do you have a favorite TV show?
That’s varied over time, but most recently it’s “The Great British Baking Show.” It’s a competition but one of the few I’ve ever seen where the contestants seem to be genuinely rooting for one another.

Do you have a favorite movie?
“Now, Voyager.” Bette Davis plays a woman who, with help of her psychiatrist, overcomes an abusive childhood to

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Getting to Know A Member: Thomas W. Ude Jr.
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transform from a severe introvert into a confident, assured
and independent adult.

What's one thing that we don't know about you?
I was active in theater and community chorus in and just
after high school, and (I’m told) listen to show tunes more
than your average person.

Do you have a favorite band or type of music?
I have very eclectic tastes – everything from show tunes
to zydeco, and lots of pop music – but Petula Clark is the
singer who always brings me up when I’m down.

Do you have any “pet peeves?”
I have no patience for people who only want to hear
themselves talk.

Is there anything special you do after a particularly
challenging day?
Read or, more likely, watch TV (a superhero series, bak-
ing or reality show).

Is there any special photo or artwork on your office wall
or in your office?
A photo of my husband and a Keith Haring print.

Do you have any pets?
A dog, Colt. He’s a 10-year-old potcake, a “rescue” from
Turks & Caicos, who my now-husband brought home as a
surprise.

If you were not a lawyer, you would be a ______.
Teacher.