



Bringing Lesbian and Gay Rights Into the Mainstream: Twenty Years of Progress (Sexual Minorities in Historical Context)

Vicki Eaklor, Robert R Meek, Vern L Bullough

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A lively memoir of LGBT activist Steve Endean—one of the most influential political strategists ever to lobby Washington DC!

Bringing Lesbian and Gay Rights Into the Mainstream: Twenty Years of Progress is the spirited and provocative memoir that blows the lid off the complex machinations of state and national politics. LGBT activist Steve Endean's autobiographical chronicle, completed shortly before his death in 1993, tells insider stories that are sometimes rousing, other times infuriating, recounting the fight for lesbian and gay rights from the trenches of the Minnesota state capital to the Washington Beltway. Readers get a clear view of the political activism of building grassroots support systems, fundraising efforts, lobbying to rally support for bills, and the election/reelection of sympathetic political representatives.

Bringing Lesbian and Gay Rights Into the Mainstream: Twenty Years of Progress dynamically recounts Endean's activism and instrumental leadership of the LGBT movement from 1973 to just before his death in 1993. From being the first Executive Director of the Gay Rights National Lobby, founder and Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, and founder of the Speak Out mailgram campaigns for grassroots pressure on congresspersons on G/L rights issues, the author discusses with amusing anecdotes and self-effacing humor his strategies, victories, and failures as movement leader. This lively mix of the accomplishments in those crucial years and the "dos and don'ts" of political activism is peopled with well-known and lesser-known movers and shakers on the political landscape.

Bringing Lesbian and Gay Rights Into the Mainstream: Twenty Years of Progress gives an inside look at the political process, discussing:

- the political roots of Steve Endean—from his activist beginnings in Minnesota
- his rise from state to national politics
- the basics of fundraising
- lobbying representatives
- the LGBT internal conflicts
- building grassroots support
- the hypocrisy and lack of courage inherent in politics
- protest activities

"I began to get a sense of what a challenge I had ahead when Mayo asked what brought me to DC. Exhausted from a long flight, coping with tons of luggage, and very nervous about such a big move, I mustered the energy to explain earnestly that I'd been hired to be the first director and lobbyist for the Gay Rights National Lobby. To my shock, this distinguished gentleman doubled up with laughter and, in his charming Southern drawl, told me the Gay Rights National Lobby was dead as a doornail. He went on to suggest if that is what really brought me to Washington, DC, I might not want to haul all those boxes upstairs and perhaps I should just pack up and catch a return flight to Minnesota. That was my welcome to Washington, DC. Cold, white Minnesota never looked so appealing."

Bringing Lesbian and Gay Rights Into the Mainstream: Twenty Years of Progress is stimulating, eye-opening reading for educators, students, activists in search of guidance in the political process, anyone interested in LGBT history and political history, and anyone who knew the late Steve Endean.

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Curtis Russell:

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