Activism and Social Change, 1845-2015

An Exhibition
Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections
University Libraries
The University of Toledo
2019
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Personal is Political:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Women’s Rights Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“We Shall Overcome”:</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Civil Rights Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Nothing about Us, without Us”:</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One Hundred Years of Disability Rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>“An injury to one is a concern to all”:</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Labor Movement in the United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Restless Generation:</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Student Protest Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>From Stonewall to Obergefell:</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fifty Years of LGBTQ Activism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Protest,” is, at its core, an exhibit about people coming together for a common cause. This exhibit brings together historical materials from across the collections of the Ward M. Canaday Center and unites them around the common theme of activism. The word “activism” might bring to mind protests or demonstrations, but in this exhibit, we are exploring the many ways that Americans have acted together to bring about social and political change: through public marches and protests, through art and writing, through service and scholarship.

Today’s 24/7 news cycle and social media make us more aware of ongoing protests than in the past, but Americans have a long history of joining together to advocate for civil rights: from women marching for suffrage, from Black Americans marching for equal rights, to Americans with disabilities marching for the ADA. “Protest” explores this history of American activism through six themes: Women, the Civil Rights Movement, Disability, Labor, Students, and LGBTQ rights. Each subject is accompanied by an essay, meant to give the reader an overview of that particular social movement and how the Canaday Center’s collections reflect these themes. With such a depth of history to cover, our essays serve merely as introductions to their respective topics, rather than comprehensive histories, and we encourage interested visitors to explore our related collections more in depth.

Please note: in this exhibit, you will see terms that may seem insensitive, like “crippled” or “handicapped.” These terms have fallen out of modern usage but are presented here in their historical context. The language of identity is ever-evolving, and in preparing this exhibit, we strive to use inclusive, respectful terminology in our essays, although historical sources may differ.

We hope you enjoy the exhibit and find it thought-provoking and engaging.

Lauren White,
Manuscripts Librarian
MOVE ON OVER (BATTLE HYMN OF WOMEN)

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the flame of women's rage
Kept smoldering for centuries now burning in this age
We no longer will be prisoners in that same old gilded cage
That's why we're marching on.

Chorus: Move on over or we'll move on over you
Move on over or we'll move on over you
Move on over or we'll move on over you
For women's time has come.

You have told us to speak softly, to be gentle and to smile
Expected us to change ourselves with every passing style
Said the only work for women was to clean and sweep and file
That's why we're marching on.

CHORUS

It is we who've done your cooking, done your cleaning, kept your rules
We gave birth to all your children and we taught them in your schools
We've kept the system running, but we're laying down our tools
For we are marching on.

CHORUS

You think that you can buy us off with crummy wedding rings
You never give us half the profit that our labor brings
Our anger eats into us, we no longer bow to kings
For we are marching on.

CHORUS

We have broken through our shackles, now we sing a battle song
We march for liberation and we're many thousand strong
We'll build a new society, we've walked much too long
Now we are marching on.

CHORUS

What do you want? ERA
What do you want it? NOW

Hey, Hey, What do ye say -- Retify the ERA

1-2-3-4 - We need 3 more
2-4-6-8 - Retify in every state
"Regarding equal rights as the natural inheritance of all, and believing that the best interests of humanity may be most efficiently promoted by abolishing these false distinctions between the two sexes . . . we do hereby unite for the purpose of equalizing the right of the sexes."

- Constitution of the Toledo Woman Suffrage Association
By 1910, however, the momentum had stalled. As a result, the NAWSA increased its efforts, and between 1910 and 1914, several more states—Washington, California, Arizona, Kansas, Oregon, and Illinois—had passed laws granting women the right to vote. When Carrie Chapman Catt resumed the presidency of NAWSA in 1915, she embarked on an aggressive campaign to secure the vote in several, primarily nonwestern, states.

The relentless efforts of NAWSA and other organizations gained strength in 1917, when President Woodrow Wilson urged Congress to pass a voting rights amendment. The following year, on January 10, 1918, the House of Representatives passed a voting rights amendment, but the Senate failed to follow suit. After the end of World War I, Congress again took up the measure, with the House again voting its approval on May 21, 1919. The Senate followed up the measure, with the House again voting its approval. By 1919, however, the momentum had stalled.

Another area that the TWSA focused on was the local school board. One of its members, Emma K. Rinchart, ran for a seat, and although she lost, her effort was a sign that the TWSA was willing to step outside of the True Woman role in order to effect change. In 1904, Pauline Steinem (grandmother of feminist icon Gloria Steinem) became the first woman to serve on the school board. In 1915, the TWSA merged with the Political Equality League, with the last meeting being held in Pauline Steinem's home. After Congress ratified the 19th Amendment, the TWSA changed its name to the Toledo League of Women Voters in 1921.

The Second Wave of Feminism

Winning the right to vote ushered in a new era for many women. The idea of the New Woman was perhaps best embodied by the Flapper, a young woman who smoked, wore short, tight dresses, and was sexually liberated, and used language that was considered "unladylike." In addition, millions of women were employed outside the home as white collar workers, and the availability of birth control meant that they could also limit the size of their families. Many women, however, did not adhere to this ideal, which created tension between traditionalists and those of a more liberal bent. Over time, the ideals of firebrands such as Susan B. Anthony and Margaret Sanger fell largely silent, as media once again began to promote the ideal of the happy homemaker. This ideal persisted after World War II ended, despite millions of 'Rosie the Riveters' proving that women were capable of working in male-dominated fields. Because men returning from the war needed work, however, women were pushed out of the factories and once again told that marriage, motherhood, and homemaking were women's natural role.

Despite the stability and unprecedented prosperity that characterized much of the post-war era, many women were not satisfied as homemakers. They were educated, but could not find an outlet for their intellects due to the limited expectations placed on them. Many women had given up their dreams in order to marry and raise a family. At the same time, housekeeping was usually a full time job that left them little time to do anything else, and moving to the suburbs often resulted in women being cut off from extended family; which left many housewives feeling isolated. Books such as Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (1953) and Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique (1963) addressed the sense of despair that many women felt. Both of these works are credited with sparking the second wave of feminism.

As early as the 1950s, women began to rebel against the notion that they should be content as wives and mothers. Groups such as the National Women's Party (not to be confused with an earlier organization of the same name), National Association of Women Lawyers, and the American Medical Women's Association became the core of this emerging women's rights movement. One of the primary goals of the NWP was passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) which had been drafted in 1920 by Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman but largely ignored until after World War II. The ERA sought to guarantee equal rights of all citizens regardless of sex, and would become an important platform for other women's rights groups.

The history of women's suffrage is a story of perseverance and resilience. It is a story of women who, through their determination and collective action, were able to overcome societal barriers and secure their right to vote. This struggle was not without its challenges, as women faced opposition from those who believed in the traditional roles of women. However, through their unwavering dedication and tireless efforts, women were able to secure the right to vote, thereby opening the doors for future generations of women to participate fully in the democratic process.
The Personal is Political: The Women’s Rights Movement

The rise of the Civil Rights Movement served as further inspiration for second wave feminists. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was up for consideration in Congress, women lobbied to have an amendment prohibiting sex discrimination in employment included. Congress did so by adding Title VII, but the protections it provided were limited. One year later, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was formed to implement Title VII, but the Commission ultimately voted to allow segregation by sex in employment ads to continue. The Commission’s failure to act prompted Dr. Paul Murray, a Yale law professor and member of President Kennedy’s Commission on the Status of Women, to denounce the EEOC. Betty Friedan later contacted Dr. Murray, and the two attended the third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women held June 28–30, 1966. They were among hundreds of delegates at the conference who wanted to pass a resolution demanding that the EEOC change its stance. Although they were told that they did not have the authority to pass a resolution, they were not deterred. Later, in the presence of several other attendees, Friedan wrote the acronym N O W on a napkin while discussing an alternate means for attendees, Friedan wrote the acronym N O W on a napkin while discussing an alternate means for

Lyrics of “The Battle Hymn of Women.”

NOW’s political activities

The newly formed organization wasted little time in tackling various issues affecting women. That same year, NOW officers and 35 members filed a petition for the EEOC to prohibit sex discrimination in job advertisements. In December of 1967, NOW demonstrated at EEOC offices across the country in protest at the Commission’s failure to move on the issue. As a result, four New York City newspapers no longer listed help wanted ads by sex. In another instance of activism against sex discrimination, NOW organized a sit-in at the New York Plaza Hotel to protest a ruling that prohibited businesswomen from eating with their male colleagues. The next day, 28 women met for lunch, each providing $5.00 as dues. The National Organization for Women was born.

In 1977, NOW organized the first march in support of the ERA. One year later, over 100,000 people marched down Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C., in order to get the deadline for ratification of the ERA extended, as it was set to expire in 1979. The demand was for a seven-year extension, but Congress only allotted three more years, meaning the ERA’s supporters only had until 1982 to persuade 38 states to endorse the amendment. By 1978, only three more states were needed for ratification, but the shortened deadline—and President Reagan’s vehement opposition—contributed to the failure of the ratification of the ERA. Despite this setback, NOW continues to advocate for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equal rights for all.

Although ratification of the ERA was a major focus of NOW, the organization devoted its energies to other goals as well. Throughout the 1970s, they helped get legislation passed that protected rape survivors (Rape Shield Law) and pregnant working women (The Pregnancy Discrimination Act), and were also instrumental in the passage of the Education Amendments of 1972. The best-known section of this piece of legislation is Title IX, which guarantees equal educational opportunities. After Roe v. Wade overrode state laws prohibiting abortion, NOW chapters began escorting women to newly-established abortion clinics, as anti-abortion activists had already begun picketing them. They later established rape crisis centers, redefined rape as a violent crime, and organized the first “take back the night” marches to protest violence against women. NOW also fought for women to have equal opportunities in radio and television, and advocated for the rights of low-wage workers and for the LGBTQ community.

Toledo NOW’s activities were much the same as those of the national chapter, while also focusing on local concerns. Some of the organization’s activities over the years include participating on the Title IX Advisory Committee of the Toledo Public Schools, filing a sex discrimination lawsuit against the City of Toledo, and uncovering a bogus pregnancy clinic. NOW has worked tirelessly to secure equal rights for women in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan. As politics become increasingly partisan and rights once thought secure are under threat, the support of groups such as the National Organization for Women remain essential at the local, state, and national levels.

8 Protest: Activism and Social Change, 1845-2015

“The Personal is Political”: The Women’s Rights Movement 9
Related collections in the Ward M. Canaday Center

- Toledo Woman's Suffrage Association Records, 1903–1927
- Olive A. Colton Collection, 1867–1961
- Center for Women’s Concerns Records, 1980–2004
- Betty Morais Papers, 1976–2004
- Naomi Twining Collection, 1940s–1990s

Reference

“We have sat-in, marched and demonstrated for freedom, but we cannot sit back and revel in our achievement. We must push on until there is no vestige of discrimination in our community which prevents us from achieving first-class citizenship.”

– Dr. Lancelot Thompson, Vice President of Student Affairs at the University of Toledo in the introduction to the Black Culture Week 1976 pamphlet, “A Time for a Decision”

**Voices Rise in the Fight for Equality**

The dawn of the modern Civil Rights Movement has often been attributed to the murder of Emmett Till in 1955. Till was a fourteen-year-old African-American boy who was lynched in Mississippi after a white woman claimed he offended her. The court acquitted his killers and the outrage that followed drew attention to the persecution of blacks in America. Later that same year, Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat in the “colored section” to a white passenger in Alabama, leading to her arrest for civil disobedience. Her actions inspired the Montgomery bus system boycott, which lasted 381 days and resulted in the Supreme Court declaring that segregated seating was unconstitutional.

Although these significant events gave rise to the Civil Rights Movement, they were trigger points in a long history of violence and oppression against African-Americans. Despite the abolishment of slavery in 1863 and the ratification of the fifteenth amendment in 1869 that granted black males the right to vote, the fight for equality was only beginning. The Jim Crow laws of the 1870s and 1880s in the southern United States enforced racial segregation under the “separate but equal” doctrine and suppressed the voting rights of blacks through poll taxes and literacy tests. The laws succeeded until the United States Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first major civil rights legislation since the Reconstruction era and the Civil Rights Act of 1875, ensuring the right to vote for all male Americans.

Through the 1957 act, Congress sought to demonstrate the federal government’s support of racial equality, especially in light of the events of 1955, which spurred an increase in grass roots initiatives and activist organizations. One such organization was the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), which was responsible for the Montgomery bus system boycott in December 1955 after Rosa Parks’ arrest. It also put Martin Luther King, Jr., one of the leaders of the MIA, front and center of the Civil Rights Movement.

The act was also in response to the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954, a groundbreaking case that declared segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional. One example of early integration of schools involved the Little Rock Nine, nine African-American students who enrolled at the previously all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. They attempted to attend the school in September 1957 and met with violent resistance. After two efforts wherein angry mobs and the Arkansas National Guard denied the students entrance into the high school, President Dwight D. Eisenhower called in troops from the United States Army to escort the students.
At the dawn of a new decade, the level of protest against racial inequality grew. In 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) formed as one of the major Civil Rights Movement organizations of the 1960s. The committee was founded partly due to the Woolworth’s lunch counter sit-in in Greensboro, North Carolina. On February 1, 1960, four male African-American students sat at the lunch counter and politely requested service, which management refused. They remained seated until closing. They returned the next day, with 300 other students. The numbers grew as the days went on and similar sit-ins took place at other businesses in North Carolina and soon in other Southern states. Boycotts also occurred, leading to significant financial losses for the targeted stores. By late July 1960, many stores ended their segregation policies and lunch was finally served at Woolworth’s.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s also saw Martin Luther King Jr. rise to prominence in the fight to end racial inequality. After King led the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, he became the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957, an organization that utilized the moral authority of black churches to organize nonviolent protests to bring about civil rights reform. By the end of 1957, King was addressing national audiences. He gave his most notable speech, “I Have a Dream,” in August 1963 at the March on Washington to a crowd of 250,000 protesters gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. The march was an effort to bring attention to the continuing challenges and inequalities faced by African Americans.

Two years later, Martin Luther King Jr. with the SCLC and in partial collaboration with SNCC organized a voting rights march that would start in Selma, Alabama and end in Montgomery. Two initial attempts failed, with the first referred to as “Bloody Sunday” due to the violence perpetrated against the marchers. The third attempt succeeded on March 25, 1965. King later participated in marches further north. In 1966, protesters planned several marches in Chicago to demonstrate against unfair housing practices by real estate offices. King also publicly opposed the Vietnam War and participated in anti-war protests in New York in 1967. In 1968, he formed the Poor People’s Campaign and traveled the country to address issues of economic injustice.

Martin Luther King Jr., who had fought thirteen long hard years for racial equality, was assassinad by James Earl Ray as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968. A week later, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was passed that provided for fair housing legislation, which prohibited discrimination in housing and housing-related transactions based on race, religion, and national origin. The Act is considered to be the last legislation enacted during the civil rights era.

**From Civil Rights to Black Power**

The Black Power Movement of the 1960s and 1970s fought discrimination differently. Disenchanted with the predominantly pacifist Civil Rights Movement, members of the Black Power Movement sought more direct action. The SNCC separated from the reformist and nonviolent ideals of the Civil Rights Movement in 1965 after the race riots in Watts, California, and the assassination of human rights activist and Nation of Islam leader Malcolm X, and developed a more militant approach. In 1966, the Black Panther Party emerged, a political organization whose original practice included openly carrying weapons to protect its members and monitoring the actions of police officers in a challenge to police brutality. Later, the Party created community social programs to help with hunger, healthcare, and education for black communities.

It was at this time that black communities on the campus of the University of Toledo were fighting for their rights as students. A notable and successful effort occurred in 1970 with the Black Student Union. After the mass shooting at Kent State University that resulted in the deaths of four students, the University of Toledo cancelled classes in recognition of the massacre. When eleven days later, two black students were killed at Jackson State College in a similar manner, there was no formal response by the University of Toledo. As a result, members of the Black Student Union barricaded themselves in University Hall and President William S. Carlson’s office until the administration sat down and talked. Their action led to the establishment of a black studies program at the university. The Black Power Movement reached its peak in the early 1970s and in the 1980s it declined in the size of membership in its organizations. The movement is still active today, though action is rare.

**Protest in Art**

Demonstrations were not the only manner in which individuals took action against oppression. The Black Arts Movement emerged in the wake of the Black Power Movement in 1965. It included politically motivated artists, writers, dramatists, poets, and musicians who sought the creation of art as a means of showing pride in black culture and history. Members of the movement established scholarly and literary journals, such as *Black World* and *The Black Scholar*, as well as increased the recognition of artists like Gwendolyn Brooks, Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, and Etheridge Knight. The movement lost momentum in the mid-1970s.
Protests continued throughout the 1990s, most notably the Million Man March in 1995. A massive gathering of black men took place in and around the National Mall in Washington D.C. on October 16. The march aimed to unite the black male community against economic and social oppression, as well as to gain the attention of politicians for urban and minority issues. Female leaders organized a National Day of Absence wherein they encouraged the black community to use October 16, 1995 as a day of reflection and to call off work or school to attend places of worship or hold teach-ins in their homes.

More recently, a new movement formed: Black Lives Matter (BLM). The organization holds regular protests to speak out against violence and systemic racism towards black people. Founded in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, BLM became nationally recognized after demonstrations in 2014 following the deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Eric Garner in New York City. Since then, Black Lives Matter continues to demonstrate and fight for racial equality, much like their predecessors in the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement.

Unity in Protest

Collections represented in the exhibit

Social Chaos

The early 1990s saw the first massive riot since those that followed MLK’s assassination in 1968. In 1992, unrest occurred in Los Angeles in response to the beating of black motorist Rodney King by four police officers, which was caught on tape. The acquittal of the police officers ignited the riots the same day the verdict came in and intensified over the next two days in a violent protest against police brutality. The riots lasted a total of six days and resulted in the deaths of 55 people and more than 2,000 injuries.

The objective of the Black Student Union at the University of Toledo is to ‘raise the level of consciousness of students of all colors in relation to the Black experience in America’. The sponsor a variety of events including film festivals, concerts, fashion shows, lectures, and forums that bring light to the African American experience and celebrates black culture.

The records of the Black Student Union include event fliers, newspaper clippings, press releases, constitution and by-laws, and photographs.

Other student activist groups working towards racial equality at the University of Toledo:

- Black Interest Groups
- Association for the Advancement of African American Women
- Society of Black Unity
- Student African-American Brotherhood

Etheridge Knight’s papers document his work since his release from prison until his death. Examples include fliers of festivals and workshops at which he was a guest speaker, poems, and his second published book of poetry, Black Voices from Prison.

Etheridge Knight began writing poetry in prison. When he received support and encouragement from poet Gwendolyn Brooks, he tried to get other prisoners interested in writing. Black Voices from Prison was Knight’s second book, published in 1970.

Etheridge Knight's papers document his work since his release from prison until his death. Examples include fliers of festivals and workshops at which he was a guest speaker, poems, and his second published book of poetry, Black Voices from Prison.

Etheridge Knight’s papers document his work since his release from prison until his death. Examples include fliers of festivals and workshops at which he was a guest speaker, poems, and his second published book of poetry, Black Voices from Prison.

Etheridge Knight’s papers document his work since his release from prison until his death. Examples include fliers of festivals and workshops at which he was a guest speaker, poems, and his second published book of poetry, Black Voices from Prison.

Etheridge Knight’s papers document his work since his release from prison until his death. Examples include fliers of festivals and workshops at which he was a guest speaker, poems, and his second published book of poetry, Black Voices from Prison.

Some magazines and journals emerged during the late 60s and early 70s to promote the literary, theatrical, and musical works of African-Americans that reflected their culture and experiences as part of the Black Arts Movement.

Etheridge Knight’s papers document his work since his release from prison until his death. Examples include fliers of festivals and workshops at which he was a guest speaker, poems, and his second published book of poetry, Black Voices from Prison.

Etheridge Knight’s papers document his work since his release from prison until his death. Examples include fliers of festivals and workshops at which he was a guest speaker, poems, and his second published book of poetry, Black Voices from Prison.

Etheridge Knight’s papers document his work since his release from prison until his death. Examples include fliers of festivals and workshops at which he was a guest speaker, poems, and his second published book of poetry, Black Voices from Prison.
Ella P. Stewart’s papers consist of scrapbooks that document her activities in the various service organizations of which she was a part.

**Casey Jones Papers, Ward M. Canaday Center Manuscripts Collections**

Casey Jones served as Ohio State Representative (Democrat) from 1969 to 1995. He is best known for his sponsorship of bills relating to migrant labor, crime victims, literacy, and minority issues. Jones is credited for enacting a law enabling a portion of interstate highway 475 to be named in honor of prominent civil rights figure, Rosa Parks, as well as the dedication of a holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The papers of Casey Jones include correspondence in response to house bills he sponsored, press releases, and legislative budgets.

**Toledo City Papers—Board of Community Relations**

The Toledo City Council established the Board of Community Relations (BCR) in 1946. The board’s charge was to promote “amicable relations among the racial and cultural groups within the community” and “to take appropriate steps to deal with conditions which strain relationships.” The BCR was comprised of twenty-five volunteers and together they sought to establish equal opportunity for all residents of Toledo, from education to employment to housing.

The papers of the BCR primarily consist of reports and surveys on employment for African Americans and affirmative action policy.

**Other related collections represented in the exhibit:**

- Jan Waggoner Suter Papers, Ward M. Canaday Center Manuscripts Collections
- Journal titles about the African-American Experience, Ward M. Canaday Center Rare Books Collections
  - Black Books Bulletin
  - Black Dialogue
  - The Black Scholar
  - Black World

**Toledo City Papers—Board of Community Relations Reports, Ward M. Canaday Center Manuscripts Collections**

The Toledo City Council established the Board of Community Relations (BCR) in 1946. The board’s charge was to promote ‘amicable relations among the racial and cultural groups within the community’ and ‘to take appropriate steps to deal with conditions which strain relationships.’ The BCR was comprised of twenty-five volunteers and together they sought to establish equal opportunity for all residents of Toledo, from education to employment to housing.

The papers of the BCR primarily consist of reports and surveys on employment for African Americans and affirmative action policy.
Charities for the Crippled: Disability Rights in the Progressive Era

The narrative of the modern disability rights movement blazes a path from institutionalized care to independent living. The movement has its roots in Victorian and Progressive Era reforms. Prior to this period, people with disabilities were cared for in the home, kept away from public view, and considered abnormal, cursed, or “monsters.” However, in the mid- to late-Victorian period, there began a movement for “moral treatment” of those with disabilities. Helen Keller acted as a national “poster girl” for the humanizing of the disabled, and her story and others like it were inspirations and rallying cries to charities of the day.

During the Progressive Era (1890–1930), charities and non-profits formed to provide services for the disabled. Many Toledo-area disability rights organizations began during this period: the Ability Center of Toledo, the Hearing and Speech Center of Toledo, the Toledo Sight Center, and the Rotary Club of Toledo, for example.

The Rotary Club of Toledo

The Rotary Club of Toledo, a service organization for community and business leaders, is one organization whose early members were dedicated to helping those with disabilities. The Toledo Rotary was founded in 1912 as the 44th Rotary Club charted by Rotary International, and its members were inspired by the story of Toledonian Alva Bunker. Alva Bunker was born without hands and feet in 1901 in North Toledo. Given the prevailing attitudes of the time about people with disabilities, he was believed mentally deficient and had never been taught to read or write as a child. In 1917, the Toledo Rotary championed his cause and sent him to Detroit to be fitted with artificial limbs. While there, he attended school and graduated from the eighth grade in just eight months. Bunker’s success showed the Rotary that children with disabilities could become self-sufficient and inspired the Toledo club to found what became known as the “Crippled Children’s Movement.”

Also in 1917, the Toledo Rotary founded a school for children with disabilities: Glendale Feilbach School, now part of the Toledo public school system. In its first year, the school assisted 315 children, 35 with polio. The school remained in operation until 1975 when the federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act required that children with disabilities be given equal educational opportunities within public schools.

Today, the Rotary Club of Toledo is the 11th largest in the world and continues its mission of serving children with disabilities.

“I propose that we of the disability communities unite with all who love justice to lead a revolution of empowerment.”

– Justin Dart Jr.
Organizations like the Rotary Club of Toledo centralized services for the disabled in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but the greatest changes in disability rights began after World War II.

**Disability Rights after WWII: Landmark Legislation**

World War II left many veterans disabled and advocating for better rights and governmental support. Accessible care for those with disabilities began to move from the realm of the private home and charities to the responsibility of government entities. In 1946, the National Mental Health Act established the National Institute of Mental Health: in the same year, the Hill Burton Act allowed states to receive federal grant money to build hospitals and public health facilities for the rehabilitation of the disabled. Social Security Amendments were also expanded during the 1950s to provide support for the disabled.

In the 1960s, the wider Civil Rights Movement expanded disability advocates reach. South Carolina enacted the first architectural barrier act in the US in 1964, and a year later, Medicare and Social Security expanded disability advocates’ reach. South Carolina enacted the first architectural barrier act in the US in 1964, and a year later, Medicare and Social Security expanded disability advocates’ reach. Social Security Amendments were passed to address the rights of people with disabilities. In 1968, the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, written by activist Hugh Gregory Gallagher, became law. The first federal statute addressing accessibility of public spaces, the ABA required that federal buildings like post offices and courthouses be accessible to persons with physical disabilities. The act specifies requirements for elevators, ramps, parking spaces, fire alarms and other accessible architectural features.

In 1973, the Rehabilitation Act was passed after activists lobbied and marched on Washington. The law prohibited discrimination based on disability for employment within the federal government, and Section 504 of the act mandated equal access to public housing and transportation for the disabled. 1968 was a landmark year for disability rights: the Architectural Barriers Act, written by activist Hugh Gregory Gallagher, became law. The first federal statute addressing accessibility of public spaces, the ABA required that federal buildings like post offices and courthouses be accessible to persons with physical disabilities. The act specifies requirements for elevators, ramps, parking spaces, fire alarms and other accessible architectural features. The Architectural Barriers and Rehabilitation Acts paved the way for greater access to public buildings for persons with disabilities, but real world changes did not take place overnight.

The Architectural Barriers and Rehabilitation Acts paved the way for greater access to public buildings for persons with disabilities, but real world changes did not take place overnight.

Student activists at the University of Toledo joined together to make more immediate changes. The Handicapped Affairs Coalition—later the Handicapped Student Association (HSA)—was formed in 1977 to raise awareness on campus of the challenges the disabled faced in attending UT. The group organized accessible class registration sessions, advocated for a more accessible campus environment, and arranged workshops for faculty on how to teach students with disabilities. The HSA also organized programs and events like the Very Special Arts Festival, a showcase of the work of disabled artists, and Handicapped Awareness Week. During Handicapped Awareness Week in 1977, 40 UT community leaders were issued wheelchairs, blindfolds and white canes, or hearing aids to experience a day in the life of someone with disabilities navigating UT’s campus. Twenty-eight teams also inspected campus buildings during the event, assessing barriers like narrow doorways, hard-to-open doors, inaccessible restrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains. In addition to raising awareness of disability rights, HSA effected permanent change on UT’s campus: through their efforts, the university hired a full-time disability services coordinator in 1981 and began renovating parking spaces, classrooms, and dorms for improved accessibility beginning in the late 1970s. The HSA remained active through the late 1980s.

In October 1989, the Ability Center of Toledo together with Barrier Free Toledo sued the University of Toledo for violating Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act when planning construction of new Greek housing on campus. There were seven proposed residences for sororities and fraternities, each building four stories tall without any elevators. Activists lobbied the governor and university president Frank Horton for support of their cause, and protesters gathered in Lot 10 outside the Glass Bowl during the UT Homecoming football game to raise awareness of the issue. The suit, The Ability Center of Toledo et. al v the University of Toledo, was settled on November 30, 1989. The university agreed to install chair lifts in each building, make common areas like recreation rooms and kitchens more accessible, and provide accessible bathrooms within the residences. The university also agreed to consult the Center for the Physically and Mentally Challenged (now the Office of Student Disability Services) prior to any new construction to ensure UT remained in compliance with accessibility laws.

Student Disability Services (known throughout its history by several names including Handicapped Student Services, the Center for the Physically and Mentally Challenged, and the Office of Accessibility) provides students with disabilities at the University of Toledo the appropriate accommodations to succeed in the classroom. In the 1980s, the office provided large print dictionaries, TTY phones, text-to-speech machines and educational resources for students with disabilities. The office also offered lecture.
transcription, sign language interpretation, and a testing center. As the decade progressed, the office’s services continued to grow: in 1987, Student Disability Services assisted 67 students with disabilities. 459 in 1989, and 627 in 1991.

The Ability Center of Toledo provides a rich example of local disability activism. The Ability Center was founded by members of the Toledo Rotary Club in 1920 as the Toledo Society for Crippled Children. The organization’s initial mission was to provide physical treatment and support for physically disabled children: many of its clients during the first few decades were children with polio. After WWII, the Ability Center adopted a wider mission of advocating for people with disabilities in Northwest Ohio. The Center began offering educational and recreational programs for disabled children and adults, and in 1976, the organization changed its name to the Toledo Society for the Handicapped to reflect its broader mission. In the 1980s, the Ability Center increased its advocacy for disability rights in the Toledo area. It expanded its programs to offer swimming sessions in partnership with the YMCA, barrier-free vocational training for high schoolers and self-advocacy workshops for people with disabilities. In addition to the lawsuit filed against the University of Toledo for more accessible dorm rooms, the Center also advocated for more accessible public transportation in the Toledo area. In 1986, members of the Ability Center protested in downtown Toledo outside a TARTA board meeting. The city had issued a press release in 1975 stating that it would expedite a plan for more accessible city buses by December of that year: eleven years later, no changes had been made. Three years after that downtown protest in October 1989, however, TARTA began its paratransit bus service TARPS for people with disabilities.

In 1990, the organization changed its name from the Toledo Society for the Handicapped to the Ability Center of Toledo: a change inspired by their focus on independent living and self-advocacy. 1990 was also a pivotal year for disability rights on a national level.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Capitol Crawl

On March 12, 1990, over 1,000 disability rights activists joined forces in Washington, D.C., to protest the delay in passing the Americans with Disabilities Act, a proposed law that would offer broad civil rights protections for the disabled. Over 60 activists left their wheelchairs and mobility devices to crawl the 83 steps of the Capitol building, chanting their support for the ADA: “What do we want?” “ADA!” “When do we want it?” “NOW!” Photographers like disability rights activist Tom Olin caught the stirring event on film, serving as a moving visual reminder that the disabled were not content to be excluded from society or hidden away: they demanded equal rights and equal access.

Impact of the ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act often considered the most important disabilities civil rights law: the ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all spheres of public life, including employment, education, transportation, and access to public spaces. In the over 25 years since the ADA, public life has become more accessible for the disabled. Curb cuts in sidewalks, wheelchair lifts on public buses, workplace accommodations, accessible web sites and telephones are just a small sample of some of the more immediate effects of the ADA. In a 2015 survey by the University of Texas Health Science Center two-thirds of individuals with disabilities report that the ADA has been the most significant cultural and legal influence on their lives.

Disability Rights in the 1980s: The Fight for the ADA

On the national level, disability rights activists in the 1980s fought for a single, broad civil rights statute centered on the rights of the disabled. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, and sex but did not protect the rights of those with disabilities. Activists wanted a unified civil rights law, rather than the piecemeal approaches of existing legislation.

The Ability Center of Toledo

The Ability Center of Toledo was a leader in local disability rights activism throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Shown here are photographs of Ability Center protests of Greyhound and TARTA services, featured (top) is Toledoan Mike Eakin.

When the Architectural Barriers Act and the Rehabilitation Act lay the groundwork for federally mandated accessible public spaces, and although change did not come at once, by the late 1980s many public institutions like the University of Toledo had renovated their buildings to be barrier-free. The greatest improvements, however, were yet to come.

The Office of Student Disability Services at the University of Toledo formed in partnership with Toledo Public Schools and self-advocacy workshops for people with disabilities. In addition to the lawsuit filed against the University of Toledo for more accessible dorm rooms, the Center also advocated for more accessible public transportation in the Toledo area. In 1986, members of the Ability Center protested in downtown Toledo outside a TARTA board meeting. The city had issued a press release in 1975 stating that it would expedite a plan for more accessible city buses by December of that year: eleven years later, no changes had been made. Three years after that downtown protest in October 1989, however, TARTA began its paratransit bus service TARPS for people with disabilities.

In 1990, the organization changed its name from the Toledo Society for the Handicapped to the Ability Center of Toledo: a change inspired by their focus on independent living and self-advocacy. 1990 was also a pivotal year for disability rights on a national level.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Capitol Crawl

On March 12, 1990, over 1,000 disability rights activists joined forces in Washington, D.C., to protest the delay in passing the Americans with Disabilities Act, a proposed law that would offer broad civil rights protections for the disabled. Over 60 activists left their wheelchairs and mobility devices to crawl the 83 steps of the Capitol building, chanting their support for the ADA: “What do we want?” “ADA!” “When do we want it?” “NOW!” Photographers like disability rights activist Tom Olin caught the stirring event on film, serving as a moving visual reminder that the disabled were not content to be excluded from society or hidden away: they demanded equal rights and equal access.

The Capitol Crawl was a pivotal moment in the fight for the ADA, and the act was finally passed into law on July 26, 1990.

"Nothing About Us, Without Us": 100 Years of Disability Rights
Adapting the ADA

The ADA was pivotal in establishing federal protections for the rights of the disabled, and although a civil rights law like the ADA did not banish discrimination, the statute provided the legal means for people with disabilities to defend their rights, in cases such as *Olmstead v. L.C.*

*Olmstead v. L.C.* was a landmark Supreme Court case involving the ADA. Two women with developmental disabilities, Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson, were voluntarily admitted to a mental hospital in Georgia after completing treatment. They were ready to be released to a community-based program. However, Curtis and Wilson remained institutionalized for several years. In 1995, they filed a suit under the ADA and disability rights activists rallied around their cause. In 1999, the case made its way to the Supreme Court, which ruled that “unjustified isolation” is a form of discrimination. People with disabilities, therefore, have a right to receive support and services within their communities rather than being institutionalized. The ruling solidified the rights of the disabled to live independently.

In 2008, significant changes to the ADA became law. Thanks to the efforts of activist groups like the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, the National Council on Independent Living, and the American Association of People with Disabilities, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) was signed into law in September 2008. The ADAAA requires that courts base ADA discrimination rulings on whether the individual experienced discrimination—not on whether or not their disability fits within certain definitions. The law broadens the legal definition of disability as well, granting protections to a greater number of disabled Americans.

*Olmstead v. L.C.* and the ADAAA adapt and update the ADA to reflect changing conceptions of disability. In recent decades, instead of framing disabilities in terms of disease and medicine, activists advocate for thinking about disability from a more cultural and social perspective.

**New Ways of Thinking about Disability**

Traditionally, disabilities have often been perceived as medical problems to be “fixed.” Many of the non-profit organizations and charities of the Progressive Era, for example, were originally founded to treat physical disabilities like blindness, deafness, and mobility impairments like polio. In the decades since, activists have supported a more inclusive model of disability, one that places emphasis on how the disabled interact within a community.

The Independent Living Movement is an excellent example of this change. Organizations that advocate for independent living, like the Ability Center of Toledo, propose that the disabled are the most qualified experts on their own needs and that people with disabilities have the same rights to equal participation in society as the non-disabled. Legislation like the ADA has made the movement towards independent living more achievable for many.

**Disability Studies at the University of Toledo**

In 2002, the Ability Center of Toledo partnered with the College of Arts and Letters at the University of Toledo to create the first Disability Studies program in the nation. The department’s founding goals were to “teach students to look at disability as a social and political issue, not a medical condition to be treated” and to train the next generation of disability rights advocates. The program offers a Minor in Disability Studies and the only Major in Disability Studies in the U.S.

Shortly after the creation of the Disability Studies program, the Canaday Center began actively collecting archives of local, regional, and national disability rights organizations. At the time, the lives of people with disabilities were poorly represented in archives and written history. The Canaday Center and other archives across the US have since grown their disability history collections, ensuring that the legacy of people with disabilities is remembered and celebrated.

Thanks to a partnership with the Ability Center, the Disability Studies department at the University of Toledo began offering courses in the early 2000s. In 2015, the University of Toledo began the country’s first major in Disability Studies.

**Disability Activism Today**

In the one hundred years since organizations like the Toledo Rotary, the Toledo Sight Center, and the Toledo Hearing and Speech Center were founded as charities for treating the physically disabled, the disability rights movement has brought significant change. The Architectural Barriers and Rehabilitation Acts of the 1960s and 1970s were the first major steps for national accessibility legislation, but it was the Americans with Disabilities Act that codified disability civil rights at the federal level.
The civil rights protections of the ADA have improved the lives of many with disabilities, but implementation of the law is not perfect, and activists continue to advocate for their rights. In 2017 and 2018, for example, activists have protested the repeal of the Affordable Care Act with public protests, marches, and “die ins.” Social media fuels today’s disability activism: initiatives like #CripTheVote encourage the disabled to vote and be politically active.

People with disabilities now have greater access to public life and more freedom to live independently than ever before, but the fight for disability rights is not over. “We just want to be treated like everyone else,” said Toledoan Mike Eakin in 1986—a sentiment that still applies today.

Related collections in the Ward M. Canaday Center
Ability Center of Greater Toledo Records
Bittersweet Farms Records
Disability Studies Department Records
Handicapped Affairs Coalition Vertical Files
Handicapped Student Services Records
Hugh Gregory Gallagher Papers
Tom Olin Papers
Sight Center of Toledo Records
Toledo Hearing and Speech Center Records
Toledo Rotary Records
The Early Years

The fight for unionization in the United States has rarely been easy. Some of the earliest efforts to unionize were resisted not by industry, but by workers themselves. Accustomed to having autonomy over their own workshops, the idea of working indoors and having their lives regulated by the chiming of bells was a foreign concept to artisans, tradesmen, and their apprentices. Once industrialization became a fact of life, however, it was not long before employees formed workers’ associations in order to protest the harsh conditions and unfair labor practices that had come to characterize industrial work.

One of the first labor activists was a woman named Sarah G. Bagley, a former schoolteacher who moved to Lowell, Massachusetts in 1837. Lowell was the earliest manufacturing hub in the United States, due to “Lowell fever”—the desire to find work in the city’s numerous textile mills. Although factory work seemed a promising alternative to the drudgery of farm life, it was not long before the drawbacks of the “Lowell Miracle” became apparent. Workers complained about the grueling hours spent working in the mills: they were busy from dawn to dusk, and there was little time to eat or sleep. They also had to endure poor ventilation, extreme summer heat, and the fumes of whale-oil lamps in winter. Bagley wrote about these unsavory aspects in the labor periodical Voice of Industry, while also mocking visitors to Lowell who came away with rosy ideas about factory life after a brief, carefully orchestrated visit.

By the 1840s, labor in New England began fighting for the ten-hour workday, and Bagley became a leader in the movement. In 1845, she and the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association—a group she helped create—submitted a petition demanding a ten-hour workday to the Massachusetts state legislature, the first legislative hearing regarding laborers’ rights. The workers’ attempts proved unsuccessful, although Massachusetts did eventually enact the ten-hour workday in 1874. The millworkers’ struggles also resulted in women advocating for equal pay, voting rights, and other issues unique to their sex, which in turn set the stage for the country’s first significant women’s rights movement.

The Gilded age to the Progressive Era

The Gilded Age (1870–1900) represented a significant period for the labor movement. The railroad, mining, and banking industries rapidly expanded, as did factories. Better wages attracted millions of immigrants, mostly from Europe. These positives, however, disguised the many problems of the period: rising economic inequality, poor working conditions (including the use of child labor), and political corruption. This period also saw the rise of worker unrest and expansion of labor unions as a means of addressing some of these problems.
One of the most contentious clashes between management and labor was the Great Strike of 1877. A work stoppage that began on July 16 of that year in Martinsburg, West Virginia soon spread across the country, engulfing the cities of Pittsburgh, Louisville, Galveston, Chicago, and St. Louis. Although railroads were the principle target, railroad employees were not the only workers involved; sewer workers, textile workers, dock workers, miners, and others also participated or were encouraged by the strikers to join the fight. From coast to coast, workers clashed with soldiers, law enforcement, and vigilantes, resulting in injuries and deaths. In Chicago alone, there were thirty fatalities. Despite the upheaval caused by the Great Strike, it served as proof of the power of labor in general and the strike in particular.

The fight for a shorter workday also continued during the Gilded Age. The eight-hour movement had begun during the Civil War, with one man, Ira Steward, securing an eight-hour day resolution from the Machinists and Blacksmiths union in 1863. After the war, New York, Boston, Detroit, and Baltimore enacted eight-hour days for municipal employees. In 1868, the federal government mandated the same workday for mechanics and workmen in the federal arsenals and navy yards. The panic of 1873, however, put a damper on the crusade for a shorter working day, as labor now had to contend with layoffs and wage cuts. However, a new organization, taking interest in the movement, which led to tragedy in the Haymarket riot in Chicago. During a peaceful demonstration in Haymarket Square on May 4, 1886, an unknown individual threw a bomb at a police officer who responded with gunfire. By the time the chaos ended, seven policemen had been killed, as had four workers. Many more on both sides were wounded. The incident outraged the public. Although no one knew the identity of the bomb thrower, eight anarchists were convicted of conspiracy, and four of them were executed. The riot had something of a chilling effect on the labor movement, and led to unions being more willing to effect change by working with employers instead of against them.

The late 1890s to early 1900s were characterized by widespread reforms ranging from sanitation to temperance to women’s suffrage. And the labor movement was no exception. The Progressives’ attitude toward labor organizations was that it was better to treat them respectfully and to see them as a democratic check against management. This new attitude toward labor became known as “industrial democracy.”

One of the most significant examples of industrial democracy was the New York City garment industry, which was wracked by two major events in the early 1900s. The year 1909 saw the “uprising of the 20,000,” a strike led by the mostly-female members of the Ladies’ Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) that originated at Rosen Brothers. Enduring low pay, poor working conditions, sexual harassment, and unfair rules, and angry over their inability to file grievances to address these issues, the ILGWU led a five-week work stoppage. Rosen Brothers gave the workers a 20 percent pay increase, recognized the union, and established a grievance system. The success encouraged workers to strike at other garment factories in the city, including Leiserson’s and the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. The latter proved to be much more hostile to the idea of industrial democracy than smaller garment companies, and it had managed to rebuff the ILGWU’s efforts during the 1909 strike and a second strike led by the union the following year. However, a devastating factory fire in 1911 that killed 146 of its 600-700 workers horrified and infuriated the public, and led to a concerted effort to pass laws against industry negligence. The later years of the Progressive Era led to other improvements in the lives of working people, such as workers’ compensation, more focus on workplace safety, and the elimination of child labor.

Unions again faced setbacks in the years following World War I. Determining that it was better to tie production goals to the idea of patriotism, providing job benefits, and fostering feelings of camaraderie among workers, employers were able to reverse some of the earlier gains of the labor movement. The re-emergence of the “open shop” (a place of employment where employees are not required to join a union) was tied to the “American Plan,” which construed unions as an “alien” (i.e., foreign) concept at odds with the American values of freedom and choice. These factors, plus an increase in the number of company-created unions, dealt a blow to traditional labor unions and left them vulnerable to the crises caused by the Great Depression.

The Great Depression and World War II

The Great Depression time saw a significant decrease in union activity, as many unions were too impoverished to take action. Instead, organizations such as the Communist Party USA helped organize protests by hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers. Because of the ongoing economic crisis, the Roosevelt administration passed the National Recovery Act in 1933, which granted employees the right to unionize and also included provisions for a minimum wage and maximum hours. World War II saw a major increase in union membership. Members supported the war effort and crushed strikes during this time, but after the war’s end, waves of strikes led by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) swept the country. However, public backlash against the strikers allowed conservatives to take power in Washington, and Congress passed the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which limited the power of unions. Most notably their ability to strike.

Unions in the Post-War Era

In 1955, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) merged with the CIO to form the AFL-CIO, but by the 1950s, union membership had begun to decline. At the time of the merger, a third of the American workforce was unionized, but the method of organizing by company instead of by industry hampered the ability of unions to advocate for workers. Over the following decades, conservative opposition, union corruption, cheaper imports, outsourcing, and a decrease in interests by politicians have contributed to the steady weakening of organized labor in the United States. However, unions continue to advocate for the American worker, and in some states union membership increased from 2016 to 2017. Most recently, the success of the ongoing 2018 teachers’ strikes across the country serve as proof that unions can still be a force for change.

Protest: Activism and Social Change, 1845-2015
Labor Activism in Toledo

As an industrial city, labor has had a presence in Toledo for nearly 140 years. One of the city’s earliest labor unions was the Trade and Labor Council of Toledo and Vicinity, founded in 1879 and reorganized two years later as the Central Labor Union. Thirteen separate trade union groups joined together as the Central Labor Union for mutual protection and to advocate for the eight-hour workday, fair wages, anti-child labor legislation, and better working conditions. The union also encouraged its members to be well read and well informed, so it provided a library for its workers.

Local labor leaders also showed their concern for working women, and in 1909, the Laundry Worker’s Union endorsed the establishment of a Working Girls Home Circle to promote the mental, moral, and physical development of young girls. Women’s suffrage also appears to have been supported by labor. An article in the June 7, 1912 issue of the Toledo Union Leader asked, “do you believe in democracy? Then you must also believe in suffrage.”

Labor and the Auto Industry

Toledo has played an important role in the manufacturing of automobiles since the early 1900s. With this, however, has come a history of disputes between labor and management, some of which turned violent. A 1919 strike at the Willys Overland plant aimed at securing a 45-hour workweek involved over 7,000 workers, which caused the plant to shut down. Striking workers clashed with those who were loyal to the company, and the strikers eventually fought with armed guards hired by the plant. On June 4th, the guards shot into the crowd, killing at least two people and wounding others. Mayor Cornell Schreiber asked Governor James M. Cox to send troops to end the violence, but the governor refused. A federal court order finally put an end to the dispute.

The conflict at the Willys Overland plant occurred long before the establishment of an auto workers’ union. More familiar, however, is the infamous clash between Federal Labor Union Local #18384 and the Electric Auto-Lite Company that occurred in 1934.

The Battle of Toledo: the Electric Auto-Lite Strike

The United Auto Workers Local 12 was founded in the summer of 1933, when a small group of workers led by Lawrence “Fuzzy” Haynes employed in the body shop of Willys-Overland joined with employees in other departments at the company in order to establish a union. They applied to the National Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor to become a federal union. On August 4, 1933, the AFL granted them a union charter as FLU Local #18384.

The desire to unionize soon spread to other local auto businesses, including Spicer, Auto Lite, Bingham Stamping, and Logan Gear, and it did not take long for the union to become involved in its first labor dispute. On February 21, 1934, it took its first strike vote. Two days later, workers at Auto Lite, Spicer, Logan Gear, and Bingham Stamping went on strike. The strike was successful enough that all four companies finally recognized Local #18384.

The union’s initial success, however, was short-lived. Despite receiving recognition, there was still no sign of a permanent agreement between the plants and their workers. Negotiations between Auto-Lite and the union eventually broke down, and the workers walked out. The first signs of serious tension occurred on the fourth day of the strike. When sympathizers gathered across the street from the Auto-Lite plant, Judge Roy A. Stuart granted a temporary injunction against the Lucas County Unemployed Council, which both the strikers and Auto-Lite blamed for inciting violence. While injunction hearings continued, the strike dragged on and grew increasingly violent. Members of the Lucas County Unemployment Council began openly defying the injunction, and police responded with increased arrests.

The crisis finally exploded on May 22nd, when the police found themselves battling a crowd of nearly 150 people, which resulted in reinforcements being called in to stop what was quickly becoming a riot. The National Guard and the 145th and 148th Infantry Regiments arrived to provide additional security. The next day, strikers gathered bricks and stones and prepared to throw them at plant workers, but the employees fought back with tear gas thrown from the plant windows as well as with clubs, iron bars, and a fire hose. On May 24th, the striking workers continued their assault on the plant. Eventually, some of the soldiers fired into the crowd, killing two young men. Although some acts of violence continued after this, negotiations went on.
The end of World War II brought more worker conflicts, as factory workers whose pay was frozen during wartime demanded a pay raise to keep up with the increased cost of living. Gosser, serving as Regional Director of the UAW, came together with Toledo Vice Mayor Michael DiSalle, management attorney Edward Cheyfitz, and Libbey-Owens-Ford president John Biggers to create the Toledo Labor Management Citizens Committee. The organization's objective was to resolve disputes between labor and management before workers committed to striking. Gosser was appointed to the committee in 1946 after its official recognition by city council. He was also instrumental in the creation of the Toledo Industrial Development Committee, whose purpose was to bring new industry to Toledo. The first years of the committee resulted in the creation of 24 plants and 15,000 jobs.

Richard Gosser: An important figure in the history of UAW Local 12 was Richard Gosser, who was influential in the fields of business and politics as well. He was born in Toledo in 1900 and worked at Willys-Overland, eventually becoming an assistant chief electrician. At the time, the auto industry was infamous for rapidly aging its workforce and granting few rights to workers; plant owners often replaced workers who had reached the age of 40 with younger men. Gosser sympathized with the workers and took their side against management, which got him demoted. He used his position as a rank-and-file employee to help his fellow workers become unionized, and he rose steadily through the ranks, becoming shop steward, plant chairman, and in 1938, president of UAW Local 12. He later became Regional Director of the UAW, and a member of its international executive board.

Richard Gosser speaking at Army Navy “E” Award program, January 28, 1943.

Gosser’s concern for his fellow workers also led him to establish the Willys Diagnostic Clinic, which opened in July of 1955 and provided workers with physical examinations, x-rays, and laboratory testing. Before the clinic’s creation, some workers supposedly had not seen a doctor in years. Two years later, the clinic began providing services to all union members in Northwest Ohio. A pharmacy and a retirement center opened in 1960, with the retirement center also providing physical therapy for retired workers. On December 13 of that year, Mayor Michael Dumas issued a proclamation declaring Dick Gosser Day, in recognition of Gosser’s extensive record of service to both the unions and the city of Toledo.

Richard Gosser was an employee at Willys-Overland employee and president of UAW Local 12. He was known as a strong advocate for his fellow workers and for UAW employees in other parts of the United States. His papers consist of materials pertaining to the United Auto Workers union, including correspondence, scrapbooks, and union publications.

**Central Labor Union of Toledo and Vicinity records, 1915–1971**

The Central Labor Union of Toledo was founded to support such causes as the eight-hour workday, fair wages, equal pay, and anti-child labor legislation. The union later merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations and still exists today as the Greater Northwest Ohio AFL-CIO. This collection contains correspondence, minutes, financial records, and organization yearbooks, as well as the constitution and bylaws created after the union’s merger with the AFL-CIO.

**References**


**Related collections in the Ward M. Canaday Center**

- International Chemical Workers Local 901 Records, 1935–1986
- United Food and Commercial Workers Local 954 Collection, 1930–1993
- Timothy J. McCormick Papers, 1940–1964
“I know that the magnitude of the problems and the frustrations we face would discourage any but the stouthearted. Has the college student a stouter heart, a tougher mind, a fuller sense of responsibility than his fellow citizen? I hope so.”

– University of Toledo President William S. Carlson in an address in the Student Union on May 5, 1970, the day after the Kent State Shooting

The 1950s was a time of peace and prosperity; however, in the eyes of the youth, it was one of complacency, overspending on material wealth, a lack of planning by the country to prevent future wars, and a willful blindness to the plights of black Americans. This vision by the younger generation, whose numbers had swelled beyond previous generations due to the post-war “baby boom” and thus put more students in college than ever before, transformed into action in the 1960s. Students for a Democratic Society formed and became one of the most prominent activist groups of the time. Their push for a participatory democracy became the platform for the student movement during this period.

The Restless Generation: The Student Protest Movement

by Sara Mouch

In Defiance of Bad Butter: The Early Days of Student Protest

In 1766, Harvard University senior Asa Dunbar complained of the rancid butter served to students, a result of diminished food provisions. The administration punished him for insubordination and thus started the first recorded campus protest in the United States. For a month thereafter, Dunbar’s classmates echoed his complaint, instigating contention with the administration. The president suspended half of the student body until the governor stepped in and the crisis was over.

The Bad Butter Rebellion was the tipping point for student activism in America. Riots broke out in the campus commons in defiance of an “unjust sovereign” during the Colonial times. The Revolutionary era saw boycotts of British goods and Bible burnings to protest religious indoctrination. During the years before the Civil War, campus speeches and periodicals demanded participation in university decision-making and supported the abolitionist and anti-slavery movements. In the 20th century, students stood against college administrators’ morality watchdog policies and militarism, female students fought for the right to vote, and black students moved to counteract white students’ racial violence and division. Rallies and strikes proliferated to speak out against fascism and war, and there was a push for conservatism in a post-World War II patriotic America.

There was no lack of social issues to impassion students, and in the sixties and seventies campus activism exploded.

The Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam took place on October 15, 1969 throughout the country as a massive demonstration and teach-in against the United States’ involvement in the Vietnam War.

The Counter-Culture Era

The 1950s was a time of peace and prosperity; however, in the eyes of the youth, it was one of complacency, overspending on material wealth, a lack of planning by the country to prevent future wars, and a willful blindness to the plights of black Americans. This vision by the younger generation, whose numbers had swelled beyond previous generations due to the post-war “baby boom” and thus put more students in college than ever before, transformed into action in the 1960s. Students for a Democratic Society formed and became one of the most prominent activist groups of the time. Their push for a participatory democracy became the platform for the student movement during this period.
In the early 1960s, students participated in the fight for civil rights for blacks, to end poverty, and to gain respect as individuals and adults by college and university administrations. By the middle of the decade, the free speech movement gained momentum in response to bans on leafletting and demonstrations that were being instituted on campuses across the nation, most notably at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1964. Students also joined in the anti-war movement against the United States’ participation in Vietnam. By 1965, protests in the form of rallies, boycotts, demonstrations, and marches became a common sight on the American landscape. In 1965, the University of Michigan hosted a teach in where students and teachers came together to examine America’s Vietnam policy and discuss how they could change that policy. One hundred and twenty other colleges and universities held similar events, establishing a spirit of questioning authority and the impact of common citizens on policy-makers that became the core of the anti-war movement.

Students also sought to assist in ending the war by joining the political campaign of Eugene McCarthy, who ran in 1968 for the Democratic Party nomination on the issue of ending the Vietnam War. However, Richard Nixon won the presidential race in 1968 and, shortly thereafter, the war expanded into Cambodia. The numbers of protesters swelled on the streets of major cities, leading to violent confrontations. University and college campuses hosted anti-military demonstrations wherein students burned their draft cards, picketed ROTC buildings, and sought to close down local draft boards.

"They can’t kill us all"

The student protest movement reached a crescendo on May 4, 1970 with the shooting of thirteen unarmed students on the campus of Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, by the Ohio National Guard. Four students were killed and nine wounded, with one student suffering permanent paralysis. Some of the students had been protesting the invasion of Cambodia, an escalation in a war that appeared to have been winding down in 1969. Others had been walking by or observing the protest at a distance.

In the aftermath of the Kent State shooting, 4 million students nationwide protested and as a result, over 450 college and university campuses closed down. On May 15, 1970, eleven days later, police officers shot and killed two students at Jackson State College during a protest, and thirteen others were wounded. The events at both Kent State and Jackson State led President Nixon to form the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest, chaired by former Pennsylvania governor William Scranton, in June 1970. The commission’s charge was to study the dissent and violence breaking out on college campuses, including the national student strike that was afoot for several weeks in late May, 1970.
occurring at the time. They published their findings in a report, commonly referred to as the Scranton Report, in September 1970 and concluded that the shootings at Kent State University were unjustified.

Student activism in the United States in the late 1970s and thereafter did not reach as high a peak as it did in the sixties and early seventies. There were fewer causes for student involvement. However, the anti-apartheid movement in the 1970s, defiance against U.S. support for the Contra in the 1980s, and the fair labor and Fair Trade movements of the 1990s did engage college campuses. Female students continued to participate in the fight for equal rights for women. The Occupy Movement that started in 2011 spurred students to join the fight against social and economic inequality. Since then, issues of institutional racism, demands for safe spaces, the effort to promote sexual assault awareness, protests against hate speech inspired by the 2016 presidential election, and the Black Lives Matter movement have all inspired students to take a stand.

A Legacy of Protest

Student activism has brought about social change in a variety of ways. Students successfully battled the assumptive role of administrators in loco parentis and achieved minority representation on decision-making bodies. Colleges and universities changed their missions in the 1970s from mere study and teaching to creating an environment free from racism, sexism, and homophobia. The killings at Kent State University garnered worldwide attention for the anti-war movement and in some measure contributed to the withdrawal of U.S. troops in Vietnam in 1973. The legal voting age dropped from 21 to 18 in 1971 due in part to the student protests of the 1960s. These victories continue to influence student voices today.

COLLECTIONS REPRESENTED IN THE EXHIBIT

Office of the President, William S. Carlson Papers, University of Toledo Archives

William S. Carlson became the tenth president of the University of Toledo in 1958. Immediately faced with a financial crisis that was averted by a tax levy in 1959, things settled down on campus during the first few years of his tenure. However, the Vietnam War and the anti-war movement strained his relationship with the student body. Carlson sought to overcome that strain by employing a style that avoided heavy-handedness and talked directly to students. He protected the First Amendment on campus, and some of his actions helped to reduce violence at UT. For example, protests against the war in Vietnam generally turned into protests against the ROTC and the U.S. Reserve unit stationed on campus. To quell controversy, Carlson arranged with the U.S. Department of Defense to move the reserve unit off campus. Some Toledians criticized the action, but it calmed campus and enabled the ROTC to continue its work. In addition, after the Kent State University shooting, Carlson called a three-day mourning period with optional classes and ordered all flags flown at half-mast.

Carlson retired from the University in 1972. His papers document the campus unrest of the 1960s and early 1970s through annotated reports and correspondence.

Students for a Democratic Society—Toledo Chapter, Vertical Files, University of Toledo Archives

The Toledo SDS papers include newspaper articles, fliers for meetings and rallies, and propaganda leaflets.

Young Americans for Freedom of the University of Toledo, Vertical Files, University of Toledo Archives

The Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) was established as a coalition between traditional conservatives and libertarians on American college and university campuses. Members advocate for public policies that promote social welfare and individual freedom and align with the Sharon Statement. The YAF’s statement of founding principles that was drawn up in Sharon, CT on September 11, 1960. They rebutted many of the radical student movement groups of the sixties, including Students for a Democratic Society, and supported Vietnam veterans and their causes.
The UT chapter of YAF was established in 1966. While there has been a resurgence of Young Americans for Freedom on a national level in recent years, the organization no longer operates on campus.

The Toledo YAF papers include newspapers articles, fliers for meetings and rallies, and propaganda leaflets.

Other student activist groups at UT:

- College Republicans/Young Republicans
- Fate for Action and Teaching on the Environment
- Students of Toledo Organized for Peace (STOP)
- Toledo Committee for a Reasonable Settlement in Vietnam
- Toledo Revolutionary Youth Movement
- University Earth Conservancy

Northwest Ohio Peace Coalition, Ward M. Canaday Center Manuscripts Collections

Students also participate in activist organizations that aren’t tied to their university or college. The Northwest Ohio Peace Coalition was established in 2001 in an effort to build a nonviolent movement for peace, social justice, and environmental responsibility through marches and demonstrations. One notable demonstration covered the lawn of Centennial Mall at the University of Toledo in faux headstones to represent the deaths of American soldiers to date due to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Other related collections represented in the exhibit:

- Charles DeBenedetti Papers, University Manuscripts, University of Toledo Archives
- Phyllis Zibbel Collections, University Manuscripts, University of Toledo Archives
- Jan Waggoner Suter Papers, Ward M. Canaday Center Manuscripts Collections
Stonewall and Gay Rights in the Disco Decade

The word Stonewall is often synonymous with the start of the modern movement for LGBTQ rights in the United States. In the early hours of June 28, 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn, a prominent gay bar in New York City. Due to sodomy laws, which banned expressing same-sex attraction and all sex acts between individuals of the same sex, homosexuality was illegal. It was an era of hiding one’s sexual orientation and identity, remaining “closeted” for fear of persecution or worse legal troubles. Many gays, therefore, met in queer-friendly spaces like gay bars where they were welcomed more openly. The FBI tracked gay men and their meetups during the 1950s and 1960s; police raids of gay bars, therefore, were common. Tensions were high between police and gay civilians on the night of the Stonewall raid, and riots broke out over the next few days.

After the Stonewall riots, activist groups rallied. The Gay Liberation Front was the first organization to use “gay” in its name, and the first Pride parade was held in New York in 1970 on the anniversary of Stonewall. Within two years of those pivotal riots, there were gay rights organizations in many major cities across the U.S.

Through their activism, the gay rights advocates of the 1970s achieved many milestones nationwide. In 1974, Kathy Kozachenko became the first openly gay public official when she won a seat on the Ann Arbor, Michigan city council. The Briggs Initiative of 1978, California Proposition 6, would have banned “homosexuals” from teaching in public schools; a group of activists, led by Harvey Milk, not campaigned to turn public sentiment against the proposed law. It was also in the 1970s that sodomy laws were repealed in twenty-nine states, including Ohio. Ohio became the 8th state to repeal its sodomy law in 1974, although public expression of same-sex attraction remained illegal in the state until the 1979 court decision State vs. Thompson. In 1979, over 100,000 people joined in the first March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

Activists in Toledo and Ohio too formed groups during this foundational period. The Personal Rights Organization of Toledo (PRO Toledo) began in 1968 as the Mattachine Society and changed its name in 1969. The group was formed to ‘reaffirm individual pride and agency regardless of sexual expression’ and to ‘eliminate the public stigma which is attached to such expression.’ It began publishing a newsletter, PRO/Gram, in the early 1970s and offered a telephone counseling program later in the decade. Telephone counselors operated a “help line” and offered advice to callers on gay-friendly doctors, therapists, legal advisors, churches, restaurants and businesses, as well as relationship advice and other tips for navigating life in Toledo while queer—vital information that was difficult to locate elsewhere.

“As long as prejudice and discrimination continue to exist there is need for a Gay rights movement and Gay civil rights legislation.”

– Ohio Gay Rights Coalition

From Stonewall to Obergefell: Fifty Years of LGBTQ Activism

by Lauren White
A prominent local publication for the gay community in the 1970s, *Raping Paper* was first published in Toledo in 1975. In addition to erotica, the magazine featured articles on gay history and current events and civil rights issues as well as ads for Toledo and Midwestern gay businesses, bars, and discos. Articles such as “Arrested?”—appearing in the magazine’s first issue and discussing what to do when arrested for sodomy—demonstrate the “underground” nature of gay culture at a time when it was illegal to be gay and police aggression and raids, like Stonewall, were a frequent occurrence.

The University of Toledo Gay Student Organization was born as an idea developed in a study room of Carlson Library and officially formed in 1979 with 40 members. Its constitution outlines the group’s mission: “to achieve the goals of human liberation, secure just human rights, and aid the betterment of all gay people.” The group sponsored fundraising bake sales and movie nights of gay rights films, but its most important event was the Speaker’s Bureau. GSO members visited classrooms across UT’s campus to speak about homosexuality. Many professors refused to allow the speakers to visit, claiming they were “trying to recruit more homosexuals.” Nevertheless, members of the GSO reached out and educated their fellow students about homosexuality via the Speaker’s Bureau. The Gay Student Organization was formally recognized by the University of Toledo until 1984.

### The AIDS Epidemic Devastates the LGBTQ Community

The 1980s brought the end of the “disco decade” and drastically changed the tone of LGBTQ rights activism with one simple acronym: AIDS. AIDS was first recognized by the CDC in 1981 under the name GRID, “gay-related immune deficiency,” but the name AIDS, “auto-immune deficiency syndrome,” was coined shortly thereafter in 1982. There nevertheless remained a perception that it was a “gay disease.” The epidemic was clouded by fear and misconceptions about AIDS. Many people believed it could be spread by casual contact, for example.

By 1985, there were over 400,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS in the US and a rate of over 130,000 new infections. In 1985, the US military began testing potential recruits for HIV, and those found positive for the virus were not allowed admission into the armed forces. Two years later, Congress adopted the Helms Amendment which prohibited spending of federal money on educational materials that would “promote or encourage, directly or indirectly, homosexual activities.” Even though the Surgeon General had issued a report in 1986 that stressed that transmission of HIV was not possible through casual contact, fear and misperceptions remained. AIDS/HIV was prevalent among the LGBTQ community, which gave rise to further stigma against the queer and discrimination against gay men in particular.

Ryan White helped change the tone of AIDS outreach. He became a poster child for the AIDS epidemic after he was diagnosed with AIDS following an infected blood transfusion at age 13 in 1984. His campaign to re-gain the right to attend school following diagnosis gained national attention and helped combat perceptions that HIV/AIDS was only a “gay disease.” In 1990, one month prior to his high school graduation, White died from AIDS-related complications. That same year, federally funded AIDS treatment centers were established in his name.
AIDS Activism in Toledo

David's House Compassion was incorporated in 1989 to provide support for those living with HIV/AIDS. Inspired by the story of a young man, David J. Gercak, who died of AIDS-related complications in 1988, David's House provided education, financial assistance, and a residential program for individuals with HIV/AIDS in northwest Ohio. The organization also offered programs addressing therapy and prevention, employment, and legal issues affecting those with AIDS. In 1992, David's House merged with the grassroots support network NOVA (No One's Victory Alone) and then, after over a decade of serving the community, closed its doors formally as 'David's House' in 2004. Its legacy, however, lives on as Equitas Health.

AIDS in the 21st Century

By 1995, AIDS was the leading killer of Americans aged twenty-five to forty-four, but the following year gave rise to a more promising treatment in the form of combination therapies of antiretroviral medications. These drugs proved much more effective at managing the virus and the outlook and life expectancy of those with AIDS greatly increased. By the year 2000, over 750,000 cases of AIDS had been reported in the US alone, and there were 430,000 deaths due to AIDS related complications. In 2002, the Lucas County Department of Health estimated that only half of those living with HIV in the county sought treatment. And the Medical College of Ohio reported treating 100 people that year alone. Even though treatments have improved and public fear over AIDS has decreased, there is still no cure for the disease. There are over one million people living with HIV/AIDS today in the US, many of whom are women or people of color. Education and prevention, therefore, remain as important as ever.

Toledo gay and drag bar Caesar's Showbar also supported HIV/AIDS awareness through its charity drag performances and fundraisers, like the ‘Sex, Drag and Rock n Roll’ event.

The Medical College of Ohio (now the University of Toledo Medical Center) was also a pioneer in the treatment of HIV/AIDS. Nurse Ann Locher started a free, anonymous testing site in the early 1980s, and MCO's role in treating HIV in the Toledo community grew in the following decades. In addition to free testing, MCO offered clinical trials of AIDS medications, prevention education, and financial counseling to both individuals and families with HIV/AIDS.

LGBTQ Activism in the 1990s and 2000s

Queer activism in the 1990s and 2000s broadened the conversation from discussing just gay men and lesbian women to include a wider spectrum of genders and sexualities. Significant achievements in civil rights for LGBTQ folks were also made in this time period, although they also faced new setbacks. In 1993, the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy became law, declaring homosexuals to be an ‘unacceptable risk’ in the US military. In 1996, President Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act, which denied federal benefits to same-sex spouses should gay marriage be legalized and allowed individual states to disregard same-sex marriages performed in other states. Despite these challenges, the 2000s saw several advancements in LGBTQ rights legislation. In 2000, Vermont became the first state to legalize gay civil unions, and in 2003, the Supreme Court ruled that sodomy laws were unconstitutional in Lawrence v. Texas. In 2009, the Matthew Shepard Act expanded the definition of the Federal Hate Crime Law of 1969 to include discrimination on the basis of gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

LGBTQ Activism in Toledo: Gay and Lesbian Student Union

The Gay and Lesbian Student Union at the University of Toledo was officially recognized in April 1991. Its goals as per its constitution were to provide places where "GLBi people and their supporters are free to express themselves," educate the campus and larger community about GLBi people, and to "confront homophobia and hate crimes directed at GLBi people." One of the group's first initiatives was to offer a lending library for students because they felt the books in Carlson Library about gender and sexuality were too clinical and that students were too embarrassed to request them from a library setting. In 1994, the GLSUs activism efforts made an impact on UT's administration, and the university's equal opportunity policy was revised to include sexual orientation.

In 2000, the group changed its name to the more inclusive "Spectrum." Its new constitution reflected changing terminology in the queer community. Spectrum’s purpose is to create a positive, supportive environment for all gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, two spirit, same gender loving, and ally students at the University of Toledo and promote awareness through social and political activism.” Spectrum began supporting and participating in a wide variety of activism activities including: fundraisers for HIV/AIDS, National Coming Out Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, LGBT History Month and a Matthew Shepard Vigil for victims of hate crimes.
In 2002, Spectrum began the Safe Place Program on the campus of UT. The program provides confidential spaces on campus where those who identify as LGBTQ can feel welcome and included. Safe Places are indicated by a rainbow sticker, and those faculty and staff in these offices have pledged to act as allies for the queer community.

The organization is still going strong on the UT campus, and in 2017, it changed its name to Prism.

Recent Progress in LGBTQ Rights

In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in Obergefell v. Hodges (a case that originated in Ohio) that same-sex marriage is a constitutional right—one of the most significant achievements in LGBTQ equality to date.

Achievements in LGBTQ rights have continued in the Toledo and Ohio region since that landmark ruling. Cincinnati became the first city in the US to ban gay conversion therapy of LGBTQ youth in 2015. Conversion therapy is the process of attempting to change someone’s gender identity or sexual orientation via techniques such as counseling. In earlier decades, conversion therapy sometimes included chemical castration, electrical shocks, or hormonal drugs. Today, conversion therapy typically includes only counseling and other psychological treatments; nevertheless, it has been widely dismissed among the medical and mental health communities as ineffective, dangerous, and unnecessary, as homosexuality is not a “mental illness” to be cured. Toledo became the 13th city in the US to ban this type of therapy in February 2017 and also made gender identity a protected class in discrimination ordinances in the Toledo Municipal Code. In October 2017, the University of Toledo started its first LGBTQ scholarship in honor of poet Rane Arroyo.

In the almost fifty years since Stonewall, LGBTQ rights activists have made great strides toward achieving equality regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Gay marriage is now legal in all fifty states, sodomy laws have been repealed, and discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation is now recognized as a hate crime in federal statutes. Activism itself is changing too with the recognition of trans, intersex, asexual, gender-queer, bisexual and other queer identities in conversations about gay and lesbian rights. The path to winning formal recognition of these rights hasn’t always been a smooth one, and discrimination and prejudice against queer folk still exist. It is through the valiant efforts of activists like those featured in this exhibit that the march for LGBTQ equality will forge ahead.

Related Collections in the Canaday Center

Caesar’s Showbar Collection
Sue Carter HIV Activism Collection
David’s House Compassion Records
Kurt Erichsen Papers
Gay Student Organization Vertical Files
Rapping Paper Periodical
Spectrum Student Organization Records
Jan Waggoner Suter Papers
Toledo Area Gay and Lesbian Alliance Newsletters
Toledo Lucas County Health Department Collection
PROTEST:
Activism and Social Change, 1845-2015

An Exhibition
Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections
University Libraries
The University of Toledo
2019