

# 4th LGBTQ Historic Walking Tour

## Resistance in the '70's: Have We Come Full Circle?



### LGBTQ LANDMARKS INITIATIVE

*Sharing our Pride of Place*

The Landmark Society launched this groundbreaking new initiative in 2016 to educate the Rochester community about the history of the local LGBTQ movement and to enhance the sense of pride about the place that our city occupies in the fight for civil rights & human dignity throughout our nation's history. Just as Rochester is celebrated for the instrumental role that it has played in the abolitionist and women's rights movements, so should it be recognized for its contributions to LGBTQ equality. The Landmark Society, with its preservation-based mission, is uniquely positioned to honor this history. We'd like to thank our partners that worked together to plan this walking tour, the City of Rochester, the Human Rights Campaign, and the Out Alliance, as well as our additional partners on the initiative: ImageOut, LGBT Giving Circle, Q Center at RIT, Rochester Area Community Foundation, Susan B Anthony Center at U of R, Trillium Health, U.S. Assemblyman Harry Bronson, U.S. Senator Kirstin Gillibrand, and WXXI & The Little.

### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

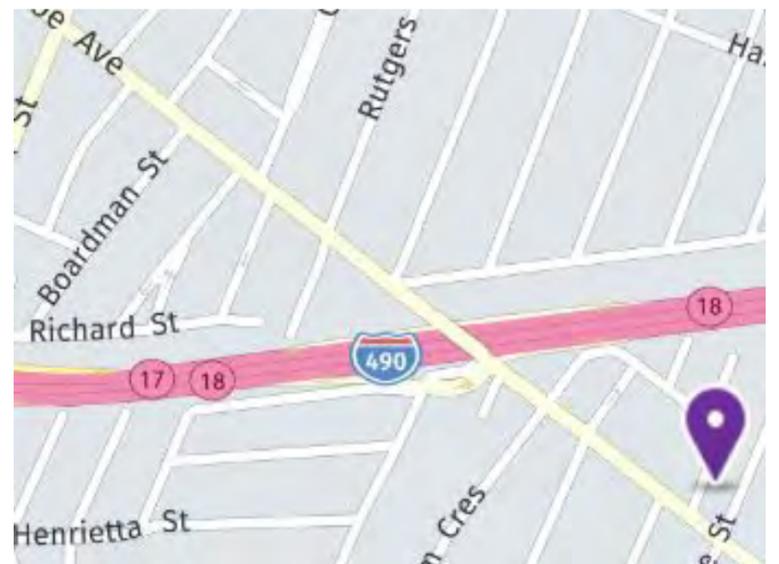


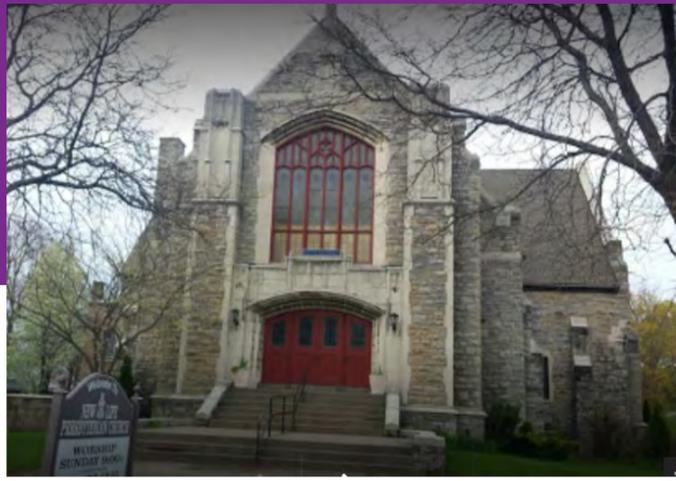
Contact: Larry Francer - [lfrancer@landmarksociety.org](mailto:lfrancer@landmarksociety.org) or 585.546.7029 X14, to get involved in the LGBTQ Landmarks project.

### TOUR PATH

Our 4th Historic Walking Tour takes us for a stroll down Monroe Avenue, known, in the 80's, as a street in the "Lavender Valley." We begin the tour just beyond I-490 in the Upper Monroe Neighborhood in the Southeast Quadrant, the first home of Metropolitan Community Church. Identified by City Newspaper in 2015 as the "Best under-the-radar-neighborhood," it is quiet and upscale with a suburban feel in comparison to Monroe Village, where our tour takes us next.

Monroe Village, an eclectic portion of Monroe Avenue, is one of Upstate New York's biggest and most vibrant pedestrian-oriented urban villages. It was also the home of the Out Alliance, then the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, at the Genesee Coop from 1973 through 1990. An amalgamation of two buildings, the Coop, originally a food buying club, provided the community with shelter to a number of social and political groups, and a wide variety of low-cost courses through its "communiversity." We continue our tour down the Avenue to the home of Silkwood Books, a woman's bookstore, possibly the first, and Paul's Grocery, where you could find just about anything. We end our tour at the Avenue Pub, the longest running gay bar on the Avenue.





## Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church

**“The City of Rochester is proud to continue the legacy of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass and to welcome all voices in charting our future.”**

**- Lovely Warren, Mayor of Rochester, NY**

Our first tour stop is Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, established in June, 1981, at 243 Rosedale St. The Universal Fellowship of MCC recruited Reverend Willie White (former pastor of St. John’s MCC in Raleigh, N.C.) to form a Church in the Rochester area. On Aug. 16, 1981 at 7:30pm, the first worship service of the MCC of Greater Rochester was held at New Life Community Church with an attendance of ten people. In April, 1985, the name of the church changed to Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church. Today it has a new home at 68 Ashfield St., Rochester, NY 14620

Reverend Mulcahy, A former Hospice chaplain, transferred his credentials to UFMCC, and was installed as pastor of Open Arms MCC in August, 2004. In 2001, Rev Mulcahy performed the first openly gay marriage in Rochester at Washington Square Park. This was the catalyst for the drive to pass the Marriage Equality Act of New York State. Today, MCC continues to be a powerful voice in the LGBTQ equality movement, for those who are marginalized and oppressed, and in working for social justice.



## The Genesee Center for the Arts & Education

**“You need to know your history to be adequately prepared for the future!”**

**- Carol Ebersole-Weiss,  
HRC National Board of Governors & Western NY Coordinator**



The Out Alliance began in 1970 as the Gay Liberation Front on the University of Rochester River Campus. In 1973, Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley was formed and came under one roof at the Genesee Coop at 713 Monroe Avenue. Over the next fourteen years, the Gay Alliance would see its education, advocacy, and youth programming expand. In 1990 the Alliance moved to 179 Atlantic Ave, and after 11 years at the Auditorium theatre, in the Fall of 2015, the Alliance moved to its current location at 100 College Avenue.

The Genesee Coop is an amalgamation of two buildings. The right side, designed in 1895 by Frank A. Brockett, served as the firehouse for the Hook and Ladder Company No. 4. In 1904-05, the left side was constructed for Engine Company No. 15, to address Rochester’s growing need for firefighters. In 1972 Genesee Street Corporation bought the firehouse to provide a variety of community services including a grocery, restaurant, shelter to a number of social and political groups, low cost courses, and the Genesee Pottery. Today the Genesee Center for the Arts and Education continues to provide art services and art education to all community members.



## Silkwood Books & Paul’s Grocery

**“The Out Alliance is proud to partner with the City of Rochester, the Landmark Society, and HRC on the Historic LGBTQ Walking Tours to recognize Rochester LGBTQ early history of resistance and advocacy.”**

**- Out Alliance, Rochester, NY**



Among the first women’s bookstores in Rochester, Silkwood, at 633 Monroe Avenue, opened on October 31, 1982, and closed her doors for the last time on June 3, 2000. The store was more than just four walls and an address on a popular street. Silkwood was about growth, community, connections, change, and acceptance.

Over its 18 year life it sold tickets for events, had poetry readings, and supported women and the community. The Rochester community owes a debt of gratitude to owner Linda Pancoast for her commitment to women and the community.

Paul’s Grocery, at 644 Monroe Avenue, is best known for its support of Rochester women’s softball, which began in 1977. In 1983, the women’s softball league had 12 teams. Paul’s Grocery Team of 1982 had such legends as Sue Cowell, Patty G., Jo Cummings, Jane Barish, and Sandy Fuhs. Each year for the Gay Pride Picnic, Paul’s Grocery would store the hot dogs and burgers in their freezer until they were transferred on the day of the Picnic to the Genesee beer truck.

Today, new and different commercial storefront businesses occupy 633 and 644 Monroe Avenue. However the memories live on!

