

# Tour of LGBTQ Rochester Women's History



## LGBTQ LANDMARKS INITIATIVE

*Sharing our Pride of Place*

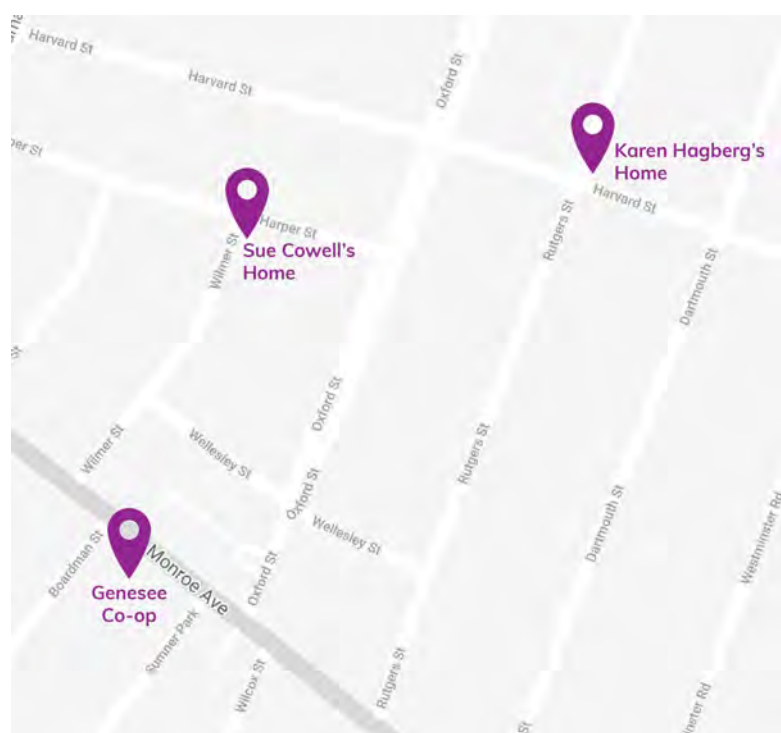
The Landmark Society launched this groundbreaking new initiative in 2016 to educate the Rochester community about the history of the local LGBTQ movement and to enhance the sense of pride about the place that our city occupies in the fight for civil rights & human dignity throughout our nation's history. 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 585.537.5954  
to get involved in the LGBTQ Landmarks project.

## TOUR PATH



### Monroe Village

The tour path begins in the urban residential area of what is identified as Monroe Village on the corner of Wilmer/Harper and Rutgers Streets, and ends on the commercial strip at 713 Monroe Ave (very near the 490 interchange) between Interstate 490 and City Center. Monroe Village is one of the most pedestrian-friendly and hip sections in Rochester, packed with bars, restaurants, and shops. Here you might even mistake Rochester for a big city. Bike lanes were added on the Monroe Avenue in 2013. Important intersections are Alexander Street, Meigs Street, South Goodman, and Oxford Street.



## A Lesbian Cultural, Political and AIDS Activist Hub

Sue Cowell's Home Corner of Wilmer and Harper St. in Monroe Village area

*"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



In 1977, Sue purchased a large double house on the corner of Harper and Wilmer St. a block off Monroe Ave. With four bedrooms in each unit, it was home for many lesbians in Rochester for short and lengthy periods of time. Sue's house was a hotbed of political, social, cultural, and medical activism. Late in 1981, Sue, who at the time was a Nurse Practitioner, at the U of R Health Services, called a few prominent members of the Rochester gay community to a meeting on her front porch to talk about GRID (gay-related immune deficiency) – HIV/AIDS. This meeting began Rochester's response to the AIDS Crisis. In 1983, Sue Co-founded the Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS and AIDS Rochester, two more beginnings that would become part of Sue Cowell's legacy. This home is in the Park Avenue Historic District and qualifies for tax credits through the Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Credit Program.

## The Cradle of Gay Liberation - Karen Hagberg's Home 126 Rutgers St.

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

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

Karen Hagberg, an original member of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) at the University of Rochester, began the GLF Speakers Bureau in 1970. Karen bought the house at 126 Rutgers St. where she lived until 1980 while she completed her doctorate at the U of R in 1976, and where Karen wrote speaking engagement presentations and articles on women's issues. In 1970, RJ Alcalá, another founding member of the GLF, was living with Karen on Rutgers St., when he came up with the name for The Empty Closet newspaper at the kitchen table. In 1978, she quit her full-time job at the Sibley Music Library to work on the New Women's Times. Rutgers St. was where Karen wrote speaking engagement presentations and articles on women's issues. Karen became a founding member of Rochester Women Against Violence Against Women, an activist women's group in support of women's rights. Karen, now retired, remains active in the LGBTQ community and the women's rights movement. This home also is located in the Park Avenue Historic District.



## First LGBTQ Woman's Organization In Rochester, NY Lesbian Resource Center (originally GROW) 713 Monroe Avenue in Monroe Village Area

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

- Out Alliance, Rochester, NY

When GROW (Gay Revolution of Women) was threatened by a lawsuit from Greater Rochester Older Workers who used the same acronym GROW, GROW changed its name to the Lesbian Resource Center (LRC) and became an affiliate group under the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley (Out Alliance). An active and identifiable service group, LRC was a support group creating an atmosphere of understanding, support, and community for women in various stages of adjustment and acceptance of their lifestyle who may be experiencing feelings of frustration, isolation, and discrimination as a direct result of their chosen sexual preference. The original office of LRC was in the Genesee Co-op building at 713 Monroe Avenue. This building is National Register Eligible, and The Landmark Society hopes to get it listed, due to its important role in Rochester's LGBTQ history.

