



Mission

To secure equality and justice for Florida's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Our greatest achievements include:

We Advocate for Local Policies. Since our formation, more than 30 local policies have passed in Florida that prohibit discrimination in the workplace, protect LGBT students from harassment and violence in schools, and recognize our relationships through Domestic Partnership. Today, more than 10 million Floridians, a majority of our state residents, live or work in a community that prohibits antigay discrimination. We continue to provide staffing, training, support and technical assistance to local campaigns across the state.

We Make Schools Safe. When Equality Florida began, the harassment and violence targeting LGBT students was an epidemic largely ignored by our state government. Over the last 10 years, we've built the Safe Schools Coalition, a group of more than 100 organizations including school PTAs and SGAs, as well as the NAACP, FEA, Planned Parenthood and many others. Together, we have made Safe Schools a top priority in local school districts, at the Florida Department of Education, and in the state legislature. As a result of our work, over 80% of Floridians now support safe schools laws that specifically include protections for LGBT students.

We Oppose Florida's Adoption Ban. Through public education, aggressive lobbying and the hard work of our Coalition for Fair Adoption, we are winning the fight to end Florida's 30 year old ban on gay and lesbian adoption. Just a few years ago only one-third of Floridians believed gay and lesbian families should be allowed to adopt. Today, a majority of Floridians support adoption rights for LGBT families. We are working closely with our allies in the legislature to bring an end of this infamous policy.

We Support Marriage Equality. We are leading the effort to defeat a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same sex marriage in Florida. We are also building a statewide grassroots campaign of thousands of volunteers working in every corner of the state – from small towns to major cities – to identify 500,000 fair-minded Floridians who will stand with us in opposing this amendment.

We Defend Our Community. Throughout our existence, we have maintained a full-time presence in the state capitol during the legislative session. We have defeated repeated efforts to repeal anti-discrimination, safe schools, and domestic partner policies in Florida. Under our watch, no anti-gay legislation has passed in Tallahassee.

We Mobilize Voters. Nearly everything we care about depends on the election of fair minded candidates. Through our TurnOut Florida campaign, we've built the largest coalition ever assembled to mobilize the gay vote. We mobilize over 350,000 LGBT-friendly voters. Every election cycle we poll thousands of candidates, distribute hundreds of thousands of voter guides, and mobilize our community to the polls.



www.EQFL.org

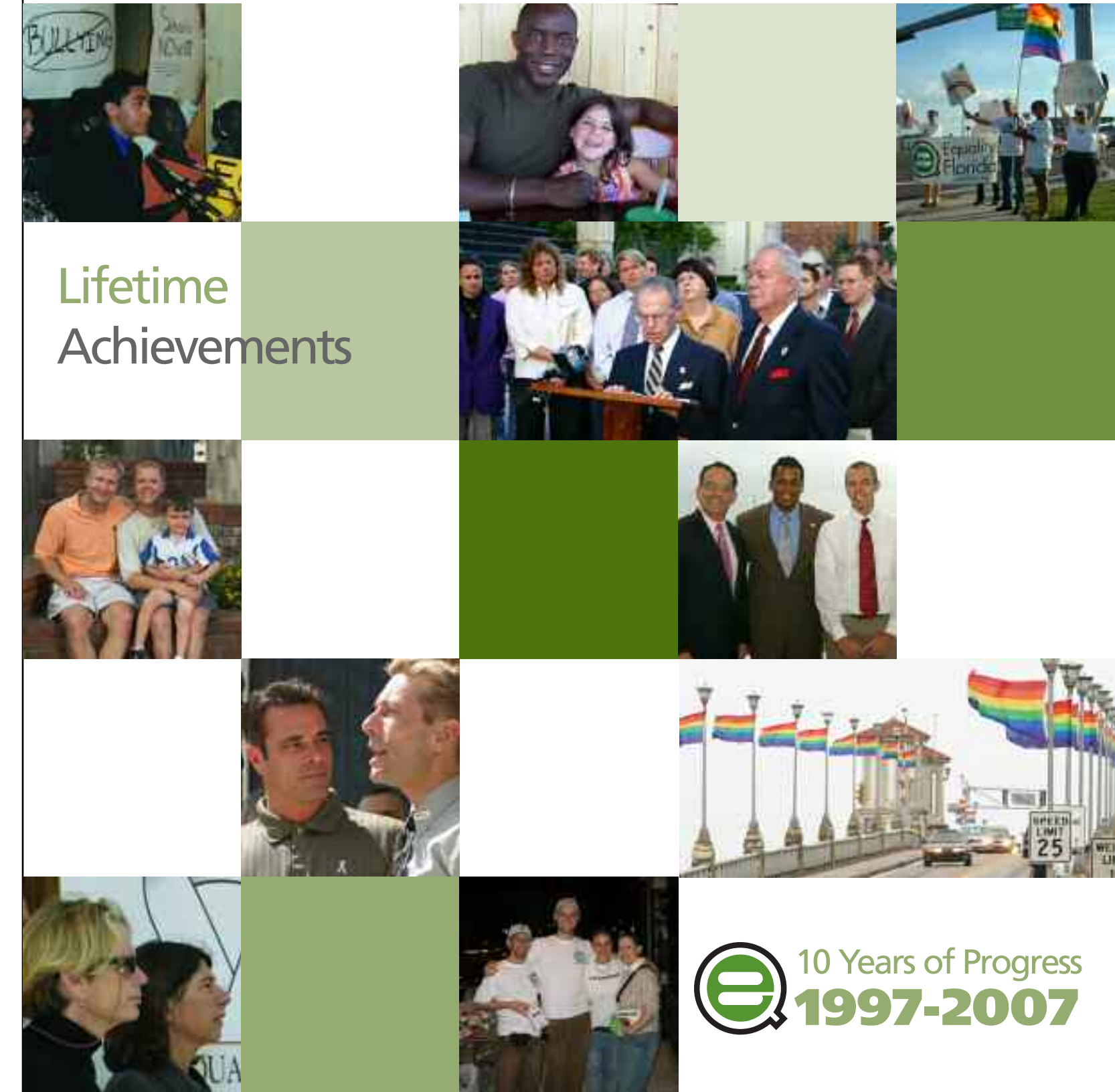
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Lifetime Achievements



 10 Years of Progress
1997-2007



History

During the early 1990's, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups in Florida worked in loose coalitions to block local and statewide anti-gay ballot initiatives and laws. In 1997, despite the coalition's efforts, the Florida legislature overwhelmingly passed a law that not only denied marriage equality to same-sex partners, it also denied recognition of such marriages created in other states or countries. The need for a strong statewide group dedicated to education and advocacy became clear.

1997

- Equality Florida was formed.
- Held First Statewide Leadership Conference for Florida's LGBT organizations.
- Launched Countdown 100,000 – an effort to ID 100,000 LGBT supportive voters

1998

- Equality Florida established a full-time presence at our state capital during legislative session.
- First Statewide LGBT Lobby Day at the Capital draws 100 participants. Held annually since.



1999

- Introduced a statewide Domestic Partnership bill for the first time.
- 1000 people attend "Rally in Tally" Florida's first-ever, statewide LGBT conference on human rights
- Equality Florida joins the Federation of Statewide LGBT organizations., which is co-chaired by Equality Florida Executive Director Nadine Smith. The federation plays a central role in the development of a state based strategy for our movement nationally.
- Equality Florida negotiates with Florida's largest employer, Darden Restaurants (Red Lobster, Olive Garden), to add sexual orientation to their non-discrimination policy and begins employee sensitivity training.

2000

- Held the nation's first statewide LGBT Safe Schools Summit and built a network of more than 70 youth advocacy groups. Held annually since.
- Mobilized 150,000 voters in national elections.
- Organized the "Love Comes Out" rally – a response to the ex gay ministries conversion therapy conferences targeting youth.
- Helped identify plaintiffs for a lawsuit challenging Florida's adoption ban, the nations' only outright ban on gay adoption; launched a public education campaign about the ban



2001

- Launched EQFL.org – a fully interactive website – hits top 1 million annually.
- Launched Dignity for All Students Campaign to ban discrimination and harassment of LGBT students.
- Legal Advocacy Project established – includes attorney referrals and discrimination reporting
- Hosted a statewide progressive leadership summit for Florida's progressive advocacy groups including top environmental, labor, economic justice, women's, and people of color organizations (held annually since).
- Produced an award winning documentary, *Losing Lois*, that tells the story of Tampa officer Lois Marrero, who was killed in the line of duty, and her wife, Detective Mickey Mashburn, who was denied survivor benefits.

2002

- Introduced Dignity for All Students Act and created the Dignity Coalition to support the legislative effort.
- Sexual Orientation protections added in 4 cities – 10 million Floridians, a majority of the state, now live or work in a community with protections.
- Dedicated staff and volunteers to help Save Dade's campaign to defend the Dade Human Rights Ordinance from repeal
- Mobilized 200,000 voters in the fall elections

2003

- Dignity For All Students Bill receives first ever committee hearing
- Blocked stealth effort by right wing legislators to repeal all Florida Human Rights Ordinances
- Sent 25,000 voter guides in local elections
- Worked with Key West and Monroe County to add Gender Identity and Expression to the HRO – the first in the state.
- Joined six same-sex couples in filing a lawsuit in Key West demanding an end to marriage discrimination in the state.



2004

- Succeeded in getting a bill filed that, if passed, would bring an end to Florida's 30 year-old anti-gay adoption ban.
- Won bipartisan support for The Dignity for All Students Act with Democratic support in the House and Republican support in the Senate.
- Worked closely with local activists in Miami Beach to introduce new protections to the human rights ordinance based on gender identity and expression



2005

- Launched FairnessForAllFamilies.org our marriage equality campaign to educate the public and to secure opposition to antigay constitutional amendment.
- Partnered with ACLU and other legal organizations to challenge the constitutionality of the anti-marriage amendment in the Florida Supreme Court



2004 cont.

- With Equality Florida's backing, Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio signed a first ever executive order providing health insurance to Domestic Partners of city employees.
- Equality Florida led a community response to the abduction of two gay men in Tampa resulting in the perpetrator's conviction."
- Opened first EQFL Field Office, located in Miami.
- Mobilized 350,000 fair-minded voters through our TurnOut Florida campaign.



- Established the Coalition for Fair Adoption, bringing together leaders from child welfare, human rights, parent and faith organizations working to repeal the ban.

2005 cont.

- Championed LGBT student groups (GSAs) throughout the state, ensuring school boards understood the legal rights of students to form without interference
- Successfully led effort to overturn the homophobic evaluation and rejection of the "We Are Family" diversity video in Broward County.
- Created a Youth & Student Outreach staff position to mobilize young voters.
- Achieved the first ever full hearing in a Senate Committee on a statewide school anti-bullying bill.
- Were instrumental in the creation of an LGBT inclusive Safe Schools Policy in Clay County
- Rallied community opposition to the passage of a Hillsborough County Commission antigay policy prohibiting the recognition of gay pride by county agencies
- Opened EQFL's second Field Office, located in Orlando.
- Launched EQFL MeetUp Program, bringing grassroots activism to every corner of Florida
- Current paid memberships exceeded 1,000 for the first time
- Partnered with local organizers to pass pro-LGBT policies in Miami Beach, Palm Beach and Gulfport.



2006

- Achieved the first legislative hearing in nearly 30 years to push for repeal of Florida's anti-gay adoption ban.
- Through our Fairness For All Families.org campaign, kept the far-right's anti marriage equality amendment off the 2006 ballot.
- Won a unanimous vote in the House of Representatives for the first-ever Safe Schools bill.
- Opened EQFL's 3rd Field Office, located in Jacksonville.
- Created Equality Florida PAC to expand our Voter Mobilization effort
- Launched a statewide Get Out the Vote effort to mobilize 350,000 LGBT supportive voters.

