

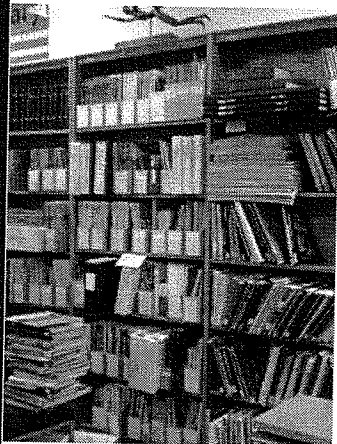
Quatrefolio

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Quatrefoil Library and the MCLU

Dick Hewetson



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Quatrefoil Library, located in St. Paul, Minnesota, is the second largest Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) lending library in the nation. It has become an institution of the Upper Midwest providing resources for students and scholars as well as the general public. In its twenty-five years of operation it has never had a paid employee and has been run by a bevy of devoted volunteers. Amazingly it is open seven days per week—closed only on major holidays.

In her Foreword to the *History of the Quatrefoil Library*, Linnea A. Stenson (Dean of Liberal Arts and Associate Vice-President Academic Affairs at Minneapolis Community and Technical College) states:

"The collection of Quatrefoil Library is in itself wide-ranging, from GLBT documentaries to gay porn, from pulp novels to serious fiction, from gay-themed posters to lesbian periodicals. But most important is the history of the people involved. Certainly most, if not all of the individuals involved in the founding

and running of Quatrefoil Library over the past twenty-plus years would say 'no, I'm not important at all—it's the books. That's why I did it. If I hadn't, someone else would have.' No false modesty here, but a genuine sense that you just do something because it is bigger and better and more important than you. Members, too, have played an important role, not only in supporting the Library through their association, but also in sustain ing the Library through the years. I think most would view their support as a "public good"—providing a service that benefits the community as a whole, straight and GLBT alike (and perhaps those who are trying to find their way from one to the other)."

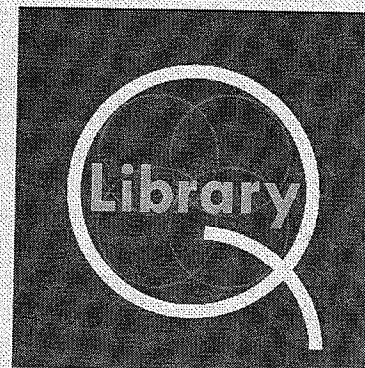
Continued Page 2

1Keim, Adam, *History of the Quatrefoil Library*, Friends of the Bill of Rights Foundation, July 2009, 144pp.

New Q Library T-Shirts!

Just in time for Pride, show your support by purchasing a new Q Library T-shirt. The shirt was designed by Q Library board member and Volunteer Coordinator James Bacigalupo.

T-shirts can be purchased for \$15 at Pride or the library.



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David Irwin, my partner, and I began our relationship in early 1976 and lived in a condominium at Grand Avenue and Dale Street in St. Paul, Minnesota. It was in this condominium that our collection of gay and lesbian materials grew to 1400 books in addition to periodicals and other materials. David had always been an avid reader and book collector. Until that time, he had read many gay books but had always disposed of them for fear that someone would find these materials in his home. These were days when most of us lived deep in the closet and often dreaded that our friends and, particularly, our relatives would discover that we were gay.

At that time, it was difficult to find books of this genre. Gay novels were usually found only in "adult" bookstores. Public libraries and mainstream bookstores had few, if any. David hunted and haunted used bookstores and rummage sales even as he traveled throughout the country. Because he had a bibliography "in his head" he could spot books that others would not have noticed and was always thrilled when he found an out-of-print book at a bargain price.

By the time I met David, I was living as an openly gay man, even where I worked at the Minnesota State Employment Service. And I had testified for the 1974 Gay Rights Ordinance in St. Paul. David, who was a special education teacher at St. Paul Central High School, needed to be more discrete. But with a new level of comfort, David began seriously amassing this collection. Our condominium had a long hallway with bookshelves on one side and cupboards on the opposite

side. He was careful to put any books whose titles contained the words "gay," "lesbian," or "homosexual" behind the cupboard doors. Later it was often said that the library grew in our "linen closet." We could show them to our gay friends while other friends and relatives did not see them.

It wasn't long before our gay and lesbian friends started borrowing our books so the idea of making these books available to the public was a natural transition. In 1983, David and I hosted a Sunday brunch at our condominium in St. Paul. During the meal we talked about the collection of books pertaining to gays and lesbians that David had amassed and how people sometimes borrowed them. At that time, it was rare to find any of these books in a public or school library or bookstore. We thought it would be wonderful if we could somehow create a library where these and other books could be available to the public. From this discussion Quatrefoil Library* came into existence. One of our guests, Ann Richtman, an attorney, volunteered to draw up articles of incorporation. Jane Lilja offered to be vice president. David wanted to be secretary/treasurer so I said that I would be president.

I had been a member of the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union for many years, and one of my earliest memories of Matt Stark was in 1981, when the Minneapolis City Council had refused for three years to allow a block of Hennepin Avenue

* In 1950, David had read James Barr's novel *Quatrefoil* that left a great impression on him because of the positive handling of gay men.

to be closed for a party during Gay Pride Week. MCLU had gone to court on behalf of the Gay Pride Committee and won

the right to have that block party. David and I, who did not often go to such events because we did not like the crowds, attended the first Gay Pride Committee party on Hennepin Avenue at which Matt Stark was the keynote speaker. There were about three thousand people on crowded Hennepin Avenue. We felt a duty to attend. Matt, then the Executive Director of the MCLU, recognized us and immediately pulled out a pack of MCLU literature for us to pass out to the crowd. He was well known always to be ready with MCLU literature at a moment's notice.

I happily went about the crowd telling the people how important it was for us to support Matt and the MCLU and gave them literature. When I ran out I realized that David had not been so enthusiastic as I was and still had most of his. So I took them and started passing them out. With my luck, about this time Matt saw me and immediately chided me for still having a handful of literature and told me to get going with the task! Matt was acknowledged later for his untiring efforts for the LGBT community when he was selected to be the Grand Marshal for the 2008 Gay Pride Festival.

Matt was well aware of our plans and had always encouraged us along the way to begin the Quatrefoil Gay Library. When David and I went our separate ways in 1984, we packed the books and put them in storage. David paid the nominal storage fee as we hoped to find a

* In 1950, David had read James Barr's novel *Quatrefoil* that left a great impression on him because of the positive handling of gay men.

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place for the library. From time to time Matt would ask about the library and always encouraged us to keep looking for a place for it.

In the fall of 1985, I received a call from Matt who was seeking funds to purchase a building for MCLU in north Minneapolis. After I agreed to contribute, he asked if we had found a place to open the Quatrefoil library. I told him that so far we had no success in finding a suitable place. He then said that the new MCLU building would have space for rent. I remember that he said they were looking for some good tenants and he knew that we were good people.

David and I made arrangements to look at the space. Along a central hallway were rooms 144 feet square. We agreed to rent two rooms for \$100 per month per room. The walls between the rooms could be removed to expand the space as one room. In December, with the help of Ed Sevals*, Dan Hanson and Keith Greiner**, we moved the books, magazines, and other materials to the MCLU building on West Broadway in north Minneapolis.

One of our first orders of business was to get insurance on the collection. We turned to the "gay" business directory for insurance agents. I do not now remember why, but those listed turned us down. Again we turned to Matt for help. He referred us to the MCLU's agent who immediately set up a policy for us with State Farm.

Although some saw this part of north Minneapolis as an undesirable location, it was located close to a police station. Matt had a rapport with the police, which meant that they paid close attention to

what was happening there. The previous owner had put bars on the windows, and the front door was solid steel. During the day people could enter the building by a buzzer system and the MCLU receptionist would greet them personally and either direct them to the library or inform them when the library would be open. In the

*Ed Sevals was a friend and co-worker of Dick Hewetson

** Dan and Keith were at the brunch when Quatrefoil Library was conceived and were untiring volunteers and board members of the Library.

evening when the buzzer rang, the Quatrefoil volunteer on duty would go to the door to greet the visitor. Not only did the MCLU rent us the space, but they also allowed us to use their conference room for meetings.

From the time we opened on February 3, 1986, GLBTers

heard about us and soon were bringing us boxes and shopping bags full of books and other materials. The collection grew exponentially. Donors often expressed their gratitude that they had found a place for their treasures. Two of our first donations came from the Gay and Lesbian Atheists and Humanists, in San Francisco, of which David and I were members, and from two men in Los Angeles who sent duplicates from their own private library. Soon we realized that we had to rent two more of the MCLU rooms because of this growing collection. Soon we grew from two to six rooms, and after only eighteen months we had grown so large that we had to move to a different location. I had to tell Matt that we were grateful for the space

but we had to move on. He was delighted to hear that we were doing so well. We were fortunate that the Richards Gordon School in the Midway district of St. Paul was available at that time. However, without first opening to the public as we did at the MCLU building, we would never have accumulated the large enough collection or the income to move into the Richards Gordon School in 1988.

Nervous and frightened adolescents who were concerned about their sexuality had no place to go for information about themselves and their feelings. Most did not dare to talk with their parents or their peers about their sexual feelings. Teachers and school librarians engaged in self and administrative censorship. Now, Quatrefoil Library became a haven for the young people. One of the early connections with high school students was when St. Paul Central High School took out a group membership so their students could use our Quatrefoil Library. Very early, college students from all parts of the state began showing up to do research for papers on human sexuality and were thrilled to find the wealth of materials that existed.

On Sunday evening, October 28, 1990, the MCLU held a retirement banquet for its distinguished Executive Director, Dr. Matthew (Matt) Stark. On that occasion the Quatrefoil Library, under the auspices of its board of directors, President Cathy Hoffman, and Executive Director David Irwin, publicly gave a special Lifetime Membership Award to Stark, which read:

"The Board of Quatrefoil Library expresses its appreciation for

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your support and encouragement of the Library since its beginnings in 1985, and the community it serves; gays, lesbians, and other sexual minorities.

"The Board appreciates your long-standing dedication to this community, and to the cause of human freedom. In token of this appreciation, the Board has voted to extend to you a Lifetime membership in Quatrefoil Library.

"It is an honor to participate in honoring you. Best wishes for your health and happiness."

In 2008, Matt Stark recruited Adam Keim to write the *History of the Quatrefoil Library* and the Friends of the Bill of Rights Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) organization he founded became the publishing arm and he was the editor. Stark secured the ISBN number (978-0-9668828-2-7) and the Library of Congress catalog card number

(2008934613) for the book. Hard copies were distributed to various libraries and organizations throughout the country including the Jean Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota and the University of Minnesota Library Archives. It was also available free in PDF on line. Stark wrote into the copyright "copies of this paper version & its electronic mate may be duplicated for educational purposes by libraries & educational institutions as long as there is no sale of either paper or electronic copies. Similarly, counselors and concerned individuals may reproduce copies for free distribution."

He also obtained two electronic sites for the book at the University of Minnesota: one was the Jean Tretter Collection in GLBT Studies, Department of Special Collections at the University of Minnesota Elmer L. Andersen Library, and the other was the U of M archives at the U of M Library. Soon thereafter, Google listed the *History of the Quatrefoil Library*, which soon had hundreds of contacts each week from members of the public.

Deservedly, Matt Stark was given a Life Membership in the Quatrefoil Li-

brary. I am convinced that if it had not been for Matt Stark and the MCLU, we may never have unpacked those first 1400 books. They may have been donated to some other institution or disposed of in some other way. In that case Quatrefoil Library may have remained only a dream.

But it is a viable reality twenty-five years later!

*Ed Sevals was a friend and co-worker of Dick Hewetson

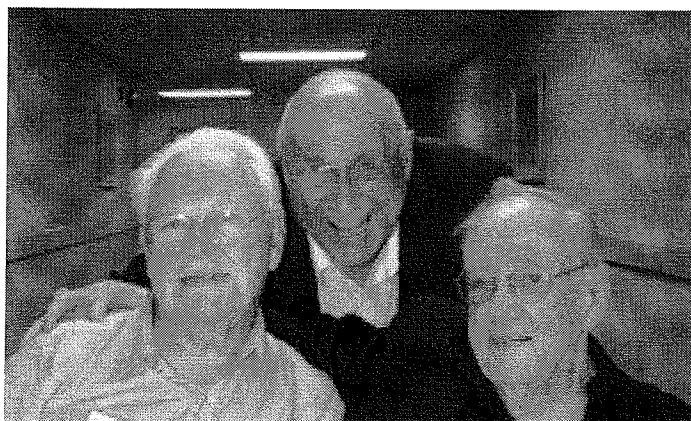
** Dan and Keith were at the brunch when Quatrefoil Library was conceived and were untiring volunteers and board members of the Library.

2 Ibid., p. 28

3 Ibid., p. vi

Ibid., p. 28

Ibid., p. vi



Dick Hewetson, Matt Stark and David Irwin

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Minnesota Led the Two Coasts on Marriage Rights, and Should Do So Again: Jack Baker and Michael McConnell

by Robert Frame

Charming. Whip-smart. Thoughtful. Funny.

These attributes describe Jack Baker and Michael McConnell; talking with them about their important public experiences from the past, and all that has transpired for LGBT marriage rights since, is as fascinating and fun as you would expect. McConnell and Baker have a clear message, one each stated in his own words: "Minnesota has bragging rights on marriage" (Baker) and "The heartland was way ahead of the coasts on these issues" (McConnell).

It started with a promise, one that must have seemed unlikely at the time. Months after they met in 1966, and on Michael's 25th birthday, Jack proposed that they merge their lives and live as a couple. Michael said yes, with one proviso: that one day they would be legally married. This "heartland" couple – at that point pursuing graduate degrees in Oklahoma, soon to move to Kansas, and after that to relocate to Minneapolis – followed up on their promise to one another and ultimately gave, as Baker says, "bragging rights" to Minnesota on gay marriage.

Baker, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, trained as an engineer, and with an MBA, was accepted into the University of Minnesota Law School; he moved to Minnesota and began his law program in 1969. Those experiences opened up two avenues by which he became well-known in the 1970s: he served two terms as University of Minnesota Student Body President (the first person to be elected for consecutive terms) and his law training served him as he worked to fulfill his promise one day to marry Michael. McConnell moved to Minneapolis in spring 1970, when

he accepted an offer as the Head of the Cataloguing Division of the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus library.

Michael and Jack firmly believe, as they did then, that they are entitled to the same benefits as every other U.S. citizen. Though same-sex marriage in the 1970s was nowhere officially recognized – nor, frankly, imaginable for most people, LGBT or not – it and the hundreds of benefits that follow from marriage were what they had promised one another and what they set out to gain. Jack's law studies had taught him legal research, which showed him that Minnesota's marriage statute indicated "two persons" could qualify for a marriage license. On May 18, 1970, they applied for their own marriage license.

I have highlighted the personal side of their actions: a promise made, lives merged, a couple who relocates so both members can have more opportunities. But this is augmented by the deliberate decisions of two thoughtful men. The date they chose to apply for their license was one day before McConnell's birthday (a nice hook for news stories that would appear on his birthday), and they publicized in advance that they would apply through a group they belonged to (Fight Repression of Erotic Expression, or FREE). McConnell and Baker were in love and wanted to have their lives together recognized AND they knew their actions would create reactions, because they were deliberately and publicly demanding equality.

One reaction came pretty quickly: the normally pro-forma end to a hiring process at the University, wherein the Board of Regents affirms a job that has gone through all the required steps,

did not happen in a pro-forma way. Rather, in July 1970 the University rescinded McConnell's job offer in the University's Library system. Though he and Baker tried through litigation to hold the University accountable to their offer, they failed. The University was supported in its position that McConnell's effort to marry the person he loved was "personal conduct . . . not consistent with the best interest of the University." McConnell then won a job in the Hennepin County Library system, where he worked the remainder of career and in which he rose to high positions. The University lost his talents for good.

Another reaction followed even more quickly: the Hennepin County Attorney advised the district court clerk that he could not issue the two men a marriage license. Baker and McConnell also took this decision into the courts (with no official or informal support from the University's Legal Aid Clinic). In November 1970, they lost this round in their court case. In 1971, the Minnesota Supreme Court, in *Baker v. Nelson*, backed the court decisions that said Hennepin County should not issue a marriage license to two men.

Should anything happen to either of them, McConnell still wanted their ability to have medical and legal powers and to inherit – all of which are defined around legal marriage – to be ensured. He still wanted them to fulfill their promise. At the suggestion of a friend, they tried a new tack; though they followed routine legal procedures, their actions were not routine. In this case, McConnell filed a petition to adopt Baker, which was legal, and that petition was approved in August 1971. (All adoption proceedings were

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confidential, but the district court clerk released those records and, over three weeks after the adoption was finalized, it made national news.)

Before that news broke, though, Michael McConnell and the newly renamed Pat Lyn McConnell (as Jack Baker's adopted name) applied for a marriage license. Still, at that point, no statute nor any legal or court decision actually forbid marriage between persons of the same sex. The district court clerk in Blue Earth County, where Mankato is located and where the two McConnells applied, issued their marriage license. They were married by United Methodist Church minister Roger W. Lynn on September 3, 1971; they married quickly, "before anyone had a chance to instigate a legal proceeding to invalidate" the license and marriage, as Baker said. Reverend Lynn was reprimanded by Bishop Paul Washburn and lost his job contract with Model Cities

As Baker was finishing law school and preparing to take the bar exam to be admitted to practice law, one additional "price to be paid for honesty" raised its head: to be admitted, attorneys need to be deemed to have "good moral character," and Baker's was questioned on grounds of "possible fraud in the application for a marriage license" (the one obtained in Mankato that led to their marriage). That charge related to the Board's misunderstanding of "residence" and "domicile." Effectively, since Baker and McConnell had included on the application an address at which they were actually staying (whether they lived there "permanently" or not), they had made no effort to commit fraud. Baker passed the bar exam, was admitted to the practice of law, and spend his ca-

reer maintaining his own practice – and, indeed, twice ran for election as a Minnesota Supreme Court justice.

These early years of the 1970s were tumultuous enough: moves, job offers made and pulled, marriage applications and litigation, marriage, law school, bar exams and examinations of moral character – and, during these years, Baker was elected, re-elected, and served his two terms as student body president. (How, I wondered, had Baker managed to succeed at law school? Both men were very clear: focus on the one task in front of you, then move to another.) Yet one big aspect of their lives in the early 1970s must be added to this story: the large amount of press attention that McConnell and Baker skillfully encouraged and navigated while trying to keep their promise to marry.

With their May 18, 1970, application in Hennepin County for a marriage license, their 1971 Blue Earth County license and marriage, and all the legal steps their marriage and their jobs had required, Baker and McConnell's actions were covered by a range of media. To discuss equality, love, and their rights as citizens, they appeared on television, radio, and at speaking engagements – including to college audiences numbering into the thousands in the United States and Canada. All this required large chunks of their time, even as it allowed them to make the case that love and marriage are rights of all. The personal impact they made on those who heard them speak or read about their struggles is incalculable: McConnell pointed out that they still have 52 binders of letters they received from people around and beyond the United States. The connections they made and the impact they

had are astounding.

Through the 1970s, the movement for equality had gained a momentum of its own. Issues other than marriage gained major attention. A new, unanticipated, and deadly focus emerged: the HIV/AIDS crisis, which would radically re-shape – and make visible – the gay and lesbian communities and the issues of concern to them and to other members of the sexual minorities communities. Baker and McConnell had always been interested and engaged in issues beyond their own struggle to marry and beyond marriage equality. (At one point, Baker had predicted hopefully, but inaccurately, that the United States would have legalized same-sex marriages by the end of the century. He was not that far off – Massachusetts began marriage equality in 2004 – but obviously the struggle continues and we have quite a way to go before marriage is equal in all 50 states and in the nation as a whole.) For McConnell and Baker, the marriage struggle became less of a personal focus: they worked on other issues and concentrated on other areas of their lives.

"We are very proud that we were part of that" movement, Baker said for them both. They can be proud to have given so much momentum to this issue simply through their effort to have their love and commitment acknowledged by their society. "Simply," since it seems in one view a very clear and fair thing to ask. Clearly, when Baker was predicting a quick move toward equality, it seemed simple. However, their personal experience and our society's experience have been far from simple. As they both exclaimed, with some wonder, "Look at the difference from the 1970s, due to standing up for ourselves: for one thing, Republican

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presidential candidates spent large parts of their debates on our lives and our issues."

In 2012, those debates were not meant to move us toward the goal Baker and McConnell began fighting for decades ago. But the LBGT civil rights and marriage movements have moved at high speed in historical terms. It does feel like we will end up with full (rather than second-class) citizenship, though it would be a mistake for us to assume it is inevitable. And it certainly still requires us to fight for the full rights and responsi-

bilities available to all other citizens. Just as our movement follows a path forged by Michael McConnell and Jack Baker, we hold the hope that for us, as for them, "our dreams [will

come] true." Both men are clear that our com-



munities need to demand full equality and citizenship, and that only by doing so will we get to practice them. Baker noted the delicious irony that "It began here [with their actions]; it should end here" by defeating this

constitutional amendment.

1 On March 18, 2012, Baker and McConnell sat for an interview about their experiences; much information in this article came from that interview. They also shared with Quatrefoil a privately written and internet-published (in 2004) history; they made many of their materials available to its author, Ken Bronson. It is *A Quest for Full Equality*; you can access it on Quatrefoil's website (www.qlibrary.org), "Our Materials," "downloadable books" (http://www.qlibrary.org/materials/QuestforFull_Equality.pdf). I have used Bronson's history in places in this article, and thank him for it. Proposal story from page 3 of
2 Bronson's PDF.
3 Bronson, 5-6.
4 Bronson, 6, 48.
5 Bronson, 10.
6 Bronson, 14-15.
Bronson, 15, 23-5, quote on 24.
7 Bronson, 34-5.
8 Michael McConnell and Jack Baker recently donated some of their personal materials to the Quatrefoil Library and may provide more

New research tool at Quatrefoil Library

By Karen Hogan

Published by EBSCO Publishing, "*LGBT Life with Full Text*" indexes hundreds of worldwide publications, from current magazines like *The Advocate* and *Curve*, to historical ones like *The Ladder* (1952) and *ONE* (1955). From browsing titles to scholarly journals, reference titles to popular books, the database covers many research needs. Our own newsletter "*The Quatrefolio*" and "*The History of The Quatrefoil Library*" book are also included. While many public and university libraries subscribe to EBSCO databases, we are one of the few who have purchased the LGBT Life package.

The database can be accessed at the library www.ebscohost.com. Current Quatrefoil members can get to the database from their home computer or smartphone. Email info@qlibrary.org with your member number and we will send you login and password information.

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For help or training on how to use the database, EBSCO has tutorials on their site <http://support.ebsco.com/training/tutorials.php> or email us to arrange a help session.

More titles include: *Classics in Ethics of Sexual Orientation with Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Theory & Social Change*, etc.

The database includes compact coverage as well as a containing over 7,500 terms.

LGBT Life with Full Text includes *The Advocate*, *Gay Parent Magazine*, *Girlfriends*, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies*, *James White Review*, *ISNA News*, *Ladder*, *Lesbian Tide*, *New York Blade*, *ONE*, *Tangents*, and many more. Additionally, all relevant bibliographic data from NISC's *Sexual Diversity Studies* is also included



Lesbian Studies, Gay Science: The Research, Handbook of Research Transgender Populations, Queer

prehensive indexing and ab-specialized LGBT Thesaurus Full-text content available in

The logo features a large, stylized letter 'Q' in a bold, black font. To the right of the 'Q', the words "uatrefoil" and "Library" are stacked vertically in a black, sans-serif font.

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