

- The following program contains language or images of a frank or sensitive nature that may be considered objectionable by some. Listener discretion is advised.

- This is going to be different.

- It sure is.

- Because we're going to turn back the clock to November 27, 1988.

- Yep.

- When we did something that, at the time, I thought was wonderful. And at the time-- today, I guess, looking back, I know it was absolutely fabulous.

- Yes, it was.

- It was called the Celebration of Life rally. And some friends of ours, and a lot of dedicated folks from KPFT stood together on the steps of-- San Francisco--

- Of City Hall.

- Of City Hall in Houston. I'm thinking San Francisco because Harry Britt was here. And Harry Britt is the man who has sat in the same chair that Harvey Milk sat in since his death in 1978. And this rally was held here in Houston on the 10th anniversary of the killing of Harvey Milk.

And the tape that we're listening to right now is the half hour tape that we played just about as loud as we could play downtown while we were setting up the stage and getting ready for the rally to begin, before the broadcast, which was heard right here on KPFT, began.

- Oh, what a night that was.

- You're going to hear it all, live and just a little bit censored, because Bruce Cook said a couple of dirty words that we have to edit out.

- We have to edit those out, yeah.

- But other than that, it went sort of like this. This is after hours.

- It's going to be wonderful though, because we're going to be able to listen to it and hear it. We were backstage going crazy.

- Get ready and get your recorder set, because this is really something wonderful.

- This is a piece of history, kids.

- And it happened in 1988 on the steps of Houston City Hall. It was called the Celebration of Life rally. And of course it was broadcast live on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. And this is After Hours radio celebrating live from the heart of Montrose. We're here.

- And we're queer.

- And you're listening to it, sort of like it happened.

You know, we had done the show just over a year. And these songs were screaming on the steps of Houston City Hall. What a moment. Hang on, kids.

I can't remember for me the life-- or for the life of me. I can't talk tonight. I'm not thinking about doing a show. I don't have to think hard.

- Yeah. It's different, isn't it?

- Yeah. This woman that just sung the song, Kindred Spirits, is from Houston.

- Oh, I didn't know that.

- Yeah. But I don't know her name.

- Oh.

- These guys are Romanovsky and Phillips.

- Oh, yeah.

- We're listening to a tape that we played live over KPFT on Sunday, November 27, about 30 minutes before we did something that we called the Celebration of Life rally. It was the 10th anniversary of the assassination of Harvey Milk. And being involved in gay and lesbian radio for about a year back then, I thought we needed to do something for the community and do something that people would remember what we did. And not many people remember it. But if you were there--

- Or if you were at home listening.

- Yeah, that's true. A lot of people were listening.

- Yeah.

- But you know, Roger's friend Christopher was there, a young man in the crowd.

- Oh, he must have been a young teenager.

- He was a young teenager. And he has pictures of the whole thing.

- No kidding.

- I'm serious.

- I'm impressed.

- So if you were there and you remember, call us up and let us know what you remember about that night. But that night, it was very cold, much like it is tonight. It was the day, November 27, the actual day of the killing of Harvey Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone.

And about 150 to 200 people, that was all.

- That was it.

- Gathered on the steps of Houston City Hall. And we had a wonderful array of speakers, everybody. Oh God, I can't even remember all of them.

- There's so many.

- John [? Burgos ?] from the University of Houston had a wonderful speech.

- Absolutely.

- Bruce Cook, who is no longer with us.

- Had a wonderful speech.

- Was president of the PWA Coalition. It was a beautiful thing. And he's going to say those words for us in a minute.

Oh, everybody was there, including once again, Harry Britt, who grew up in Port Arthur and has been and continues to be the President of the Board of Supervisors in the city of San Francisco.

- In fact, he was elected a month or two right after this.

- As President of the Board. That's correct. And anyway, since it is the anniversary date of the killing of Harvey Milk and George Moscone, and also the killing of President Kennedy was yesterday--

- That's right.

- I just thought we needed to look back on a wonderful day. And we're going to broadcast the rally for you complete in its entirety, except for the couple of dirty words that Bruce Cook threw at us.

- You know, this rally was a turning point for me too. Because prior to that I was just kind of one of the guys who hung around during After Hours and maybe said a little something on the air and answered phones and stuff like that. And you got me involved in this.

- Oh, this was fun.

- We worked on it. It was hard work. And there was a lot of work up to the very last minute. And I was hooked after that.

- Unfortunately, there wasn't a lot of support. And I think this is the turning point for me when I really became angry at a lot of so-called gay people in Houston that were supposed to be leaders, and they didn't lead. And maybe I'll explain that later. Anyway, we're listening to a cassette that we've given away over the years that was made specifically for this broadcast. It was the Celebration of Life rally. And it took place on Sunday, November 22, 1988.

Oh, boy.

Listen to this.

I just remember hearing these songs downtown while we were setting up the stage, Jimmy. Do you remember?

- Yes.

- Because I was still brand new at this.

- We were all.

- The show had been on just a little over a year, and I was out at the police department. But I really wasn't that-- you know what I mean?

- Yeah. I wasn't that out either.

- To have this faggot from the police department playing all these gay songs in front of City Hall, it was really-- that was really something.

- That was.

- Looking back at it, it was really something.

- All these openly gay people performing and live on radio.

- And you know, I even went to the Lieutenant who was in charge of the special ops division at the Houston Police Department, because HPD has a division that just handles things like this, and asked him if they would send police officers down there to guard us because broadcasting this thing live, I didn't know what was going to happen.

- Oh, that's right.

- And they did. There were police that were sent down there to-- they were standing around the whole length of City Hall. Because we had politicians there.

- That's right.

- And we had a lot of leaders from the gay community. And I was just a little kind of leery about the whole thing.

- Yes.

- But even then, looking back, the police were very supportive, as they have been. It's just the gay community I've been hacked off at. Where the hell have they-- oh, well. Anyway. We're going to listen to the rally in about 10 minutes. We're just going to put it on. We went to Los Angeles and dug out the original tapes from the archives.

And I certainly hope that you enjoy them as much as we're going to enjoy bringing them to you. It's the Celebration of Life rally, originally broadcast in November 27, 1988, here on KPFT. And if you have some cassettes you better grab them because there's some dynamic speakers.

Not only that, you're going to hear the Montrose singers.

- Our favorites.

- The MCCR choir.

- Yes.

- Heart Song is going to be singing. And a very special co-host who made the whole thing flow, Cindy Friedman. And Cindy will be singing some beautiful, beautiful stuff. So stay with us. This is After Hours radio, celebrating life from the heart of Montrose. And we're getting ready to listen to the Celebration of Life rally that was broadcast live on KPFT Sunday, November 27, 1988 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the killing of Harvey Milk. Oh, God. Remember this?

- Yeah. Margie Adam.

- About this time, I knew. I said, this is right. This is just right. Boy, this is a beautiful song. Margie Adams, and *We Shall Go Forth*. And we almost didn't. If it hadn't been for the unwavered support-- is that a good word?

- That's very good.

- Of Larry Lingle and Bill White at Lobo. Because when we were trying to get Harry Britt here and we had a \$300 or \$400 airplane ticket, and I said, Larry, we need to pay for this ticket. He said, well, here's a blank check.

- It was incredible.

- And when I said we need to rent this, or we need fliers, Larry Lingle said, well, here's a blank check.

- Yeah.

- And of course, Charles Armstrong. What is it? Armstrong Investments? Charles Armstrong over on Pacific Street donated money.

- Yes.

- So if it wasn't for the support of wonderful people like Lobo and Charles Armstrong investments. And of course, who could forget the River Oaks Theater. Do you remember that the weekend before?

- Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

- The weekend before the rally in front of City Hall, through the generosity of the River Oaks Theater, and a young man in New York that I've never met or talked to since as far as that goes gave us a copy of the film, *The Times of Harvey Milk*.

We showed that movie at midnight on Friday and Saturday the weekend before the rally, and probably 800 people saw it.

- For free. Absolutely for free.

- Absolutely free. The theater was donated by the River Oaks and the fliers of course were printed and paid for by Lobo.

- Yes.

- So once again, you know, thanks Lobo.

- A lot of people took advantage of it.

- Yes. And I remember one night a few weeks after the rally, it was several weeks after the rally. We got a call from a young voice. And he said, I saw you that night at the River Oaks Theater. And I was so scared. I wanted to come up and talk to you. And I thought, wow, how weird. Isn't that weird?

- It was strange. It was strange that Saturday night because we all had to rush out early because at that time, After Hours was on at 2:00 in the morning.

- That's right.

- Ran from 2:00 to 4:00.

- And we had to get our little fannies back down here to get on the show.

- Yeah.
- Anyway, if you've listened to the show and enjoyed it over the years, you'll really enjoy this, if you're really wanting to get into something active that happened in Houston. Because back then, there wasn't a Queer Nation.
- No.
- There wasn't an ACT UP that was acting up.
- No.
- And this was a rally that was really something beautiful. There wasn't a lot of support from the leaders, so-called leaders in the city.
- No.
- I'll be nice.
- But it was amazing, the different groups and the different people.
- It was a beautiful, beautiful rally.
- That came together for this.
- And you're going to hear from a lot of people.
- Religious groups, atheists.
- Right.
- Amazingly sharing the same stage.
- Yeah. It was absolutely wonderful. And we're going to listen to it in just a moment. So stay with us. This is After Hours on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. And we're listening to the [? foreplaying ?] cassette, I guess, for the Celebration of Life rally that we broadcast live in 1988 from the steps of Houston City Hall.

We were all worried about the atheists getting up there and going crazy. And it was Bruce Cook from the PWA Coalition who said all the dirty words.

- All the dirty words. Yeah, well, everybody kind of stood up and paid attention to him.
- Yeah, well, we can't play the dirty words.
- No, afraid not.
- Because Jesse Helms don't like us. But I'm glad you like us and I'm glad you're listening. And it means a lot to us that you are listening. Because I know you haven't made the decision to come out. And I know that's one of the reasons that you do listen, because this gives you the strength to take one more step forward.

Well, get ready to take a lot of steps forward, kids, because this rally is very powerful, and it's very beautiful. And we're going to listen to it in just a second. This is After Hours on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM.

For the most part, we're not going to be saying much of anything.

- No.

- Over the next couple of hours.

- No, actually, I don't think-- you introduced a few things. I was totally backstage.

- But we will be saying, this is not live, so don't come down to City Hall, because all through the program, my lovely co-host-- and she saved the day, because I'd never done anything like this in my life, Cindy Friedman, who has, was the co-host of this rally. And she helped hold the whole thing together. Because I was nervous as a cat.

- You were.

- Anyway.

- It surprised me.

- It surprised me too.

You ready?

- I'm ready. I've been waiting all week for this.

- It originally happened on Sunday, November 27, 1988. And it was produced to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the killing of Harvey Milk, the first openly gay person ever elected to public office. And it was called the Celebration of Life rally. And you're going to hear it right now on KPFT. So here we go, kids. Thanks for listening. This is After Hours on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. We're here.

- And we're queer.

- Yeah.

- I'm here partly tonight to say some good things about Texas. I'm proud to be a Texan. I know that I could not have heard Harvey Milk's challenge to me had not something in my life in this state prepared me to hear the word of freedom that Harvey spoke to us. I am here tonight because it is time that all of us who love this state that gave us life and has nurtured us and taught us our values, to stand up and claim the history of this state for freedom and justice, and human respect, away from the forces of narrow mindedness and bigotry that too often dominate the politics of the state of Texas.

We must not and cannot fall into the trap of blaming ourselves, even though others are pointing the finger and saying we are at fault. Look at the gentle, loving people around you. Look at them. Do you believe that these people are responsible for the carnage we have seen, and the even greater carnage we are about to see?

Listen to their voices. Are those voices filled with the bitterness and hate we hear from others?

- Every time we let straight relatives bury our dead and push our lovers away, it was an act of perversion.

- With courage and guts, he fought for our lives and lost his own in the giving.

- When Harvey Milk was assassinated, I was nine years old, just beginning to deal with my own emerging sexuality. Unaware of what had happened in California, unaware of the terrible loss the gay community had suffered. But while I may have been ignorant of Harvey Milk at the time, still his life and death have affected me a great deal, for my entire generation has been the recipient of the work that Harvey Milk and so many others have carried on since Stonewall.

So today, I am here to say thank you. Thank you to Harvey Milk.

- Two days after I was elected, I got a phone call from a voice that was quite young. It was from Altoona, Pennsylvania. And the voice said, thanks. And you've got to let gay people, so that child, and thousands upon thousands like that child, will know that there's hope. I know you can't live on hope alone. But without it, life wouldn't be worth living. And you, and you, and you have got to give him hope.

- There's got to be a lot more Harvey Milks. There's got to be. There's too many young kids in little towns in Minnesota.

- Pacifica Radio presents a Celebration of Life rally to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the assassination of openly gay Supervisor Harvey Milk in November of 1978. Gay and lesbian people and their supporters came together on the steps of City Hall in downtown Houston on Sunday, November 27, 1988, 10 years after the assassination of Harvey Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone.

And now, Pacifica Radio proudly presents the Celebration of Life rally, broadcast live on Pacifica station KPFT Houston. It's 6:00 PM, Sunday, November 27, 1988. And you're tuned to Pacifica, KPFT, in Houston.

Sunday, November 27, beginning at 6:00 PM on the steps of City Hall in downtown Houston, you're invited to a Celebration of Life rally. To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the assassination of Harvey Milk, the gay and lesbian community and their supporters will come together to celebrate life on the steps of City Hall in downtown Houston.

Entertainment will be provided by Heart Song, the Montrose singers, MCCR Choir, and a variety of singers, poets and speakers. Special guest speaker will be Supervisor Harry Britt from the city of San Francisco.

The Celebration of Life rally, broadcast live over KPFT, beginning at 6:00 PM this Sunday. Join us on the steps of City Hall and help us as we remember the life, love, and courage of Harvey Milk. The Celebration of Life rally, live from downtown Houston, Sunday at 6:00 PM, right here on KPFT. Will you hear what you've been missing?

- Where am I?

- KPFT.

- Oh.

- Pacifica.

- I've heard of it.

- FM 90.

- FM 90.

- Houston.

- Texas. KPFT. It's the only place to be.

- The disorders began with a routine police raid on a homosexual bar, the Stonewall, on Christopher Street in the heart of the West Village.

[SHOUTING]

- Say it so they can hear you in the capitol. For love and for life, we're not going back. For love and for life, we're not going back. For love and for life, we're not going back. For love and for life, we're not going back.

- I want you to savor this next moment. I have the proud task of telling you that the official count of the Lesbian and Gay Rights March, the official count is over 500,000 strong.

- We must destroy the myths once and for all, shatter them. We must continue to speak out. And most importantly, most importantly, every gay person must come out.

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- As President of the Board, [INAUDIBLE] as President of the Board of Supervisors, it's my duty to make this announcement. Both Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk have been shot and killed.

- Oh.

- Jesus Christ.

- Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore.

- They've got to understand something. They've got to understand something. We are not talking about white politics. This is not a movement from the waist down. We are talking about our right to love and to choose, and to live, and I don't care about straight [INAUDIBLE] and I don't care about straight understanding. You'd better hear me in Washington. We are demanding. We are demanding our civil rights.

- And I ask. I ask people all over this country to do one thing.

- We must destroy the myths once and for all, shatter them. We must continue to speak out. And most importantly, most importantly, every gay person must come out.

- Harvey, do you have a few words for KPFA?

- Come on out. Join us.

- Difficult as it is, you must tell your immediate family. You must tell your relatives. You must tell your friends, if indeed they are your friends. You must tell your neighbors. You must tell the people you work with. You must tell the people in the stores you shop in.

[CHEERING]

Once they realize that we are indeed their children, that we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and for all.

And I ask. I ask people all over this country to do one thing. Come out. Come out, America. Come out.

- Good evening and welcome to City Hall in beautiful downtown Houston. My name is Buddy Johnson and joining me here is--

- Cindy Friedman.

- You're listening to a live broadcast on KPFT. I forgot what radio station we were in. KPFT Houston, 90.1 FM, Pacifica Radio. And tonight we're going to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the killing of openly gay Supervisor Harvey Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone. We're having a rally in downtown Houston. It'll be going on for a while. We have a wonderful group of entertainment lined up for you this evening, beginning first of all with the choir from the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection. Go ahead.

- For our listening audience listening on KPFT and also for all you wonderful people here on the steps of City Hall, we'd like to welcome the sanctuary choir. But in just a minute. Not yet.

- We're very unorganized. If you ever listen to After Hours, we're just as unorganized on the radio. But it's kind of like the gay movement. We always seem to get things done. And tonight we're celebrating live from downtown Houston for a number of people, number one for Harvey Milk, the first openly gay person ever elected to public office. Harvey served only 11 months on San Francisco's Board of Supervisors before he and Mayor Moscone were murdered in their offices in City Hall.

Tonight we celebrate life for Lyle Cantrell, a young gentleman that I met in Omaha, Nebraska who, after his family found out that he was gay and he lost his job, he drove out into a cornfield in Omaha and shot himself to death.

Tonight we're celebrating life for Larry Rodriguez, the young man you'll meet earlier that called After Hours almost a year ago afraid that someone would find out that he was gay. And tonight he joins us on the steps of Houston's downtown City Hall to celebrate life.

- Hallelujah.

- We join to celebrate life tonight for a young man that called the radio station this morning at about 10 minutes before four, before we went off the air, and said that he listened to After Hours. He was lying in the hospital dying alone, and that his mother and dad had turned their backs and walked out on him, leaving him to die alone in the hospital.

We also celebrate life tonight for the hundreds of thousands of gay men and lesbians, straight women and children, and everyone, everywhere, that has been touched by the AIDS crisis. So please come down.

- We celebrate life tonight, also, the human spirit of human beings all over the planet Earth who can come together with open hearts and open minds and celebrate life together here under the stars.

- That's right. It's not just a gay and lesbian movement. It's not just a Black and white movement. It's a people movement. And tonight we're glad you're listening. And we're glad you're here. Come down and join us at City Hall and Cindy will introduce our first choir.

- Our first choir. We're thrilled to begin the evening with music. Music always opens the heart. Here before me right now on the steps of City Hall is the Sanctuary Choir of the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection. They refer to themselves as God's choir on Decatur, under the direction of Milton Jones. Please welcome the choir from the MCCR.

Thank you so much. Music is so wonderful, and we're so glad you could be here with us. Anytime I was told-- for those of you listening on the radio, KPFT Houston, come on down to City Hall under the stars with us. We're celebrating life tonight.

Also a little bit later in the program, in addition to other speakers, we'll be hearing from our own City Councilman, Vince Ryan, and also from one of the current members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the man who sat in the seat once occupied by Harvey Milk, Harry Britt will be joining us tonight too.

Right now I'd like to welcome Reverend Gloria Root. She's the Assistant Pastor at the MCC of the Resurrection. She was the first openly Lesbian Gay student accepted to the United Theological Seminary, the United Methodist school in Dayton, Ohio. And she's proud and we're proud to have her with us tonight. Please welcome Reverend Gloria Root.

- It's a pleasure to be here with you tonight. This light is a little intimidating. I know there's people out there. I can hear them. All I can see is the lights.

I stand before you tonight as a representative of an institution, namely, organized religion, that for many lesbians and gay men, has been anything but life affirming. Many of us were forced at one time in our lives to make a choice whether we were going to continue in the religion in which we were raised, or whether we were going to leave it and gain some sanity.

And I think that one of the tragedies of having to make that decision was that some of us, when we made the decision for sanity and to leave our religious backgrounds, also left behind our spirituality. And we're here tonight to celebrate life. And it's my belief, my strong belief, that unless we are striving to be the whole people we were created to be, and that includes a spiritual element in our lives, that--