

Women's History

No. 18 April 5, 1848

To Reeder Smith

Dear Sir:

The question of admitting females as scholars is a very important one. It is what I did not contemplate, and it is liable to objections. At the same time it may be possible to make an arrangement by which a branch of this institution, if it should be prospered, may be devoted to them. No one can estimate too highly the importance of a thorough female education: at the same time, it has proved highly injurious to some seminaries where it has been attempted in connection with that of the males. Besides other bad results it has lowered the standard of scholarship, or has prevented its being elevated as it otherwise would have been: it has made high schools of institutions which were intended for and ought to have been colleges. The plan which you suggest of separating the female department from the other, and making it a "preparatory school" entirely distinct from the College or Institute though under the same charter, may be successful. It is a matter for serious consideration, and other persons more experienced in such matters can give you better advice than I can. As you



Lawrence was one of the first coeducational colleges in the country. Men and women were enrolled together from the first day of classes in 1849. The first graduating college class of 1857 included four men and three women. *Men from left to right: Henry Colman, William Dolphin Storey, Allen Jeffrey Atwell, and Justin Martyr Copeland (the last two are possibly in reverse order.) Women from left to right: Francena Kellogg Buck, Adelaide Grant Carver, and Lucinda Darling Colman.*

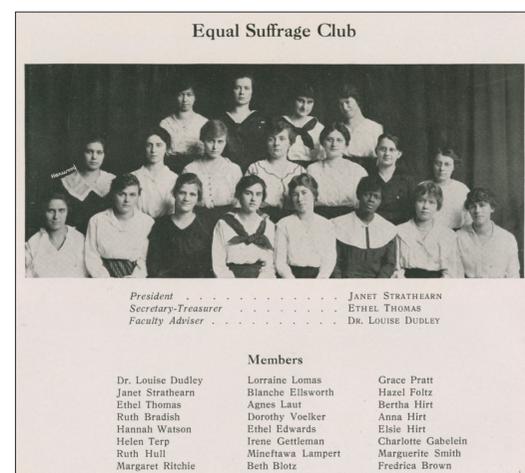
Lawrence University's founder and namesake, Amos Adams Lawrence, would have preferred a men's college. He lived in Boston, where coeducational colleges were uncommon at the time. But the people who were actually here in Wisconsin establishing the university (Methodist ministers, mostly) decided to make it coeducational anyway. Existing records do not illuminate what motivated this choice, but it was likely a mix of pragmatism and egalitarianism.



Milwaukee-Downer College was formed in 1895 with the consolidation of two women's colleges: Milwaukee College and Downer College of Fox Lake, Wis. Milwaukee College had been founded in 1851 as the "Milwaukee Normal Institute and High School," with the guidance of Catharine Beecher, a leading proponent of women's education. Milwaukee-Downer provided a liberal arts education for generations of women students before its consolidation with Lawrence College in 1964.



Emma Kate Corkhill was the Edwards-Alexander Chair of English Literature at Lawrence from 1903 to 1913. While Lawrence had had women faculty members since the beginning, Corkhill was the first woman to hold an endowed chair.



Lawrence's Equal Suffrage Club, 1917

Women's Sports at Lawrence: Taking the Worry Out of Being Equal

The passage of Title IX legislation in 1972, prohibiting discrimination against college students or employees on the basis of sex, expanded opportunities for women athletes. By November 1975, Lawrence had established varsity women's programs in tennis, basketball, swimming, and track. *Title of article from July 1975 Lawrence Today.*

Discrimination by Disciplines

While the overall number of male and female hired for full-time appointments compares very favorably with the national average for PhD's awarded by sex, in particular areas and disciplines, the comparison is not so favorable. The following (extracted from Table VI) suggests the range of variation:

	Faculty Women Hired in 5 years	Women Awarded Degrees in 1969-70
Fine Arts	35.3%	12.5%
Sciences	5.9%	9.3%
Social Sciences	8.7%	17.7%
Humanities	16.0%	25.5%

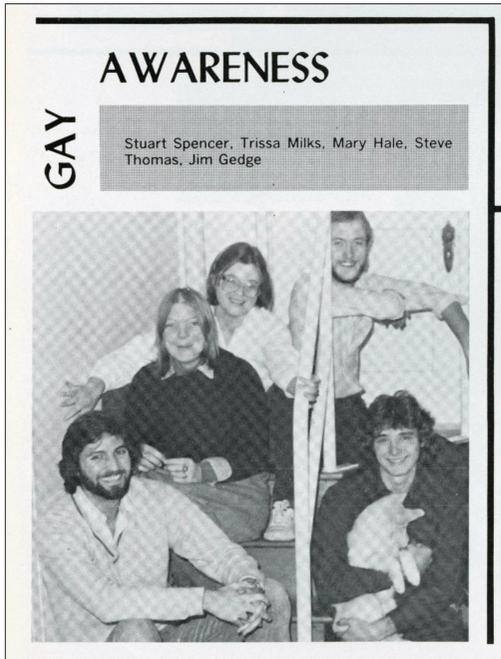
The Humanities here include the disciplines of Philosophy and Religion, disciplines which nationally award a very small percentage of PhD's to females. If these are excluded, the category might more properly be titled Languages, in which case some discrimination begins to suggest itself. In the Languages during the last five years, 18.7% of the new appointments have been female. This compares (Table VII) with 33.1% of the PhD's in these areas being awarded to women.



Women faculty members faced discrimination in hiring through much of Lawrence history. This report from 1972 concluded that "as a group, women have not always been given equal opportunities for employment and those hired have not always been paid equally."

For several years in the 1970s, students in Downer Feminist Council and the Black Women's Association organized an annual Women's Week. The event featured a series of guest speakers and activists. Photographs above are from Women's Week, 1975.

LGBTQ+ History



The Committee for Gay Awareness, 1979

While certainly members of the Lawrence community throughout our history have had a variety of sexual orientations and identities, this subject is not documented in archival records until the 1970s. The first student LGBTQ+ student organization at Lawrence was the Committee for Gay Awareness, founded in 1977. The following timeline shows the evolution of LGBTQ+ student organizations over time:

- 1977-1980: Committee for Gay Awareness
- 1985-1988: Gamma Alpha Iota (GAI)
- 1988-1990: Gay and Lesbian Awareness
- 1992-1996: Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Awareness (BGLA)
- 1996-1998: Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Straight Society (BGLASS)
- 1998-2002: Pride
- 2002-2017: GLOW (Gay, Lesbian, or Whatever), discontinued in 2017



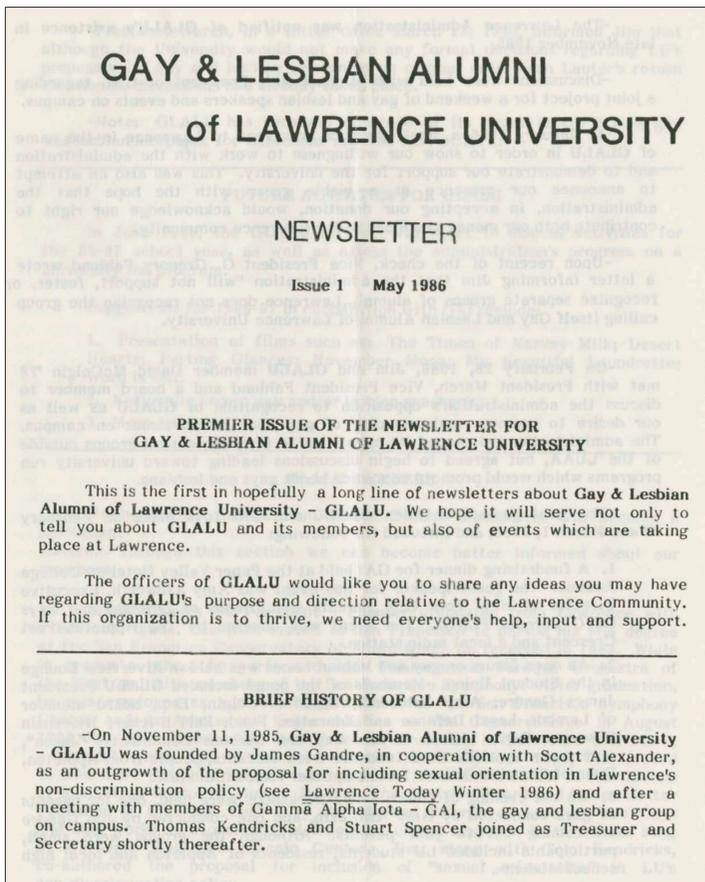
The Laave Street wall was festooned with the names of famous bisexuals and homosexuals as part of Gay and Lesbian Awareness Days. Photo by Dan Marshall

G.L.A.D. days were 'positive'

Gay and Lesbian Awareness Days, or G.L.A.D., was, "incredibly positive," said Elise Brunelle, Gay and Lesbian Awareness president. "The point of G.L.A.D. was to educate the Lawrence community about issues surrounding different sexualities," said Brunelle. "G.L.A.D. was incredibly positive." - Elise Brunelle G.L.A. president

"Hopefully, it will erase some of the homophobia on this campus." G.L.A.D. started Friday Apr. 26 with a poetry reading, a movie the next day with an informal lecture by Professor Peter Glick on homophobia and an informal discussion about sexuality in the intervening days. Brunelle said about 50 people showed up for the lecture including President Richard Warch.

The Lawrentian, May 3, 1991



LGBTQ+ alumni during the 1980s organized a group called Gay and Lesbian Alumni of Lawrence University (later Lawrence Gay and Lesbian Alumni, or GALA), with the primary goal of providing needed support for LGBTQ+ students on campus. The memo below is from Greg Fahlund, Vice President for Development and External Affairs, to President Rik Warch. It illuminates their concerns regarding the formation of GLALU.

Pride promotes tolerance, inclusion

BY JESSICA ATHENS

On Friday, May 1, the group formerly known as BGLASS (Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Society) ushered in a new term with a new president, a picnic, and a name change.

According to freshman president-elect Joanna Messer, the club decided to rename themselves Pride in order to stay as inclusive as possible. Specifically, the BGLASS acronym left out "transgendered." As issues concerning transgendered people are closely linked with those confronting gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, the group felt compelled to change the name.

Pride's new goals stem from the issue of inclusion. According to Messer, awareness and education about GLBT issues are key. The meetings are open to all who are interested in GLBT issues, she said.

During the meetings, the members discuss different concerns of the GLBT community

and plan programming for the Lawrence community as a whole. All in all, Messer said, "more tolerance, that's our mission."

Still, with all the work Pride has done to welcome all members of the Lawrence community, problems arise. "We have 65 on the voicemail tree, but only 15-25 come to meetings, and we'd like to change that," Messer explained.

According to former Pride president Joe Tennis, only 10 people regularly show up. "Any identity group has a problem with the way it works," he stated.

What may be a priority for some is not for others. Because meetings are weekly, people may feel their commitment isn't worth the time if their concerns are not addressed. Also, said Tennis, some members of the LU community may still think of Pride as "a gay male group" and feel excluded. With a new woman president, perhaps they will feel more welcome.

Some of the different programming the GLBT community has done this year includes activities throughout October (Gay and Lesbian History Month), with Oct. 11 as National Coming Out Day. In Term II, Pride usually hosts a conference; this year's theme was "Life Outside." The club invited a diverse group of



Pride (1996-97 school year BGLASS photo): Front row: David Phippen, Trina Grieshaber, Susan Scola, Katie McKee. Middle row: Jessica Westphal, Yayoi Kambara, Miranda Bouressa. Back row: J.P. Mohan, Mike Princer, Avery Sundling, Joe Tennis, Nathalie Hartwig, Luis Rubschlager, Amanda Graff. Photo courtesy of Pride



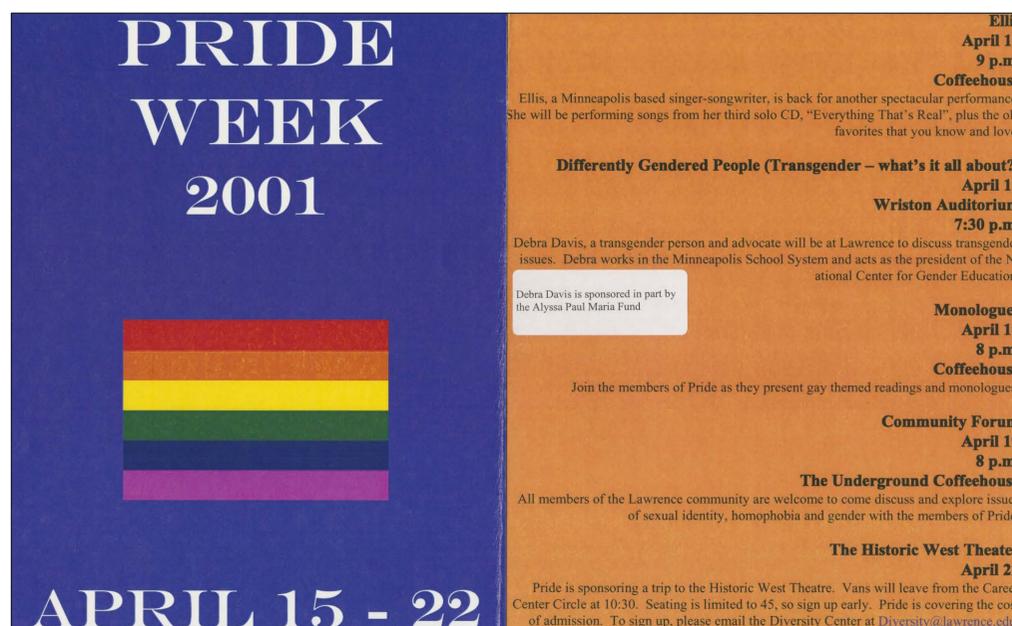
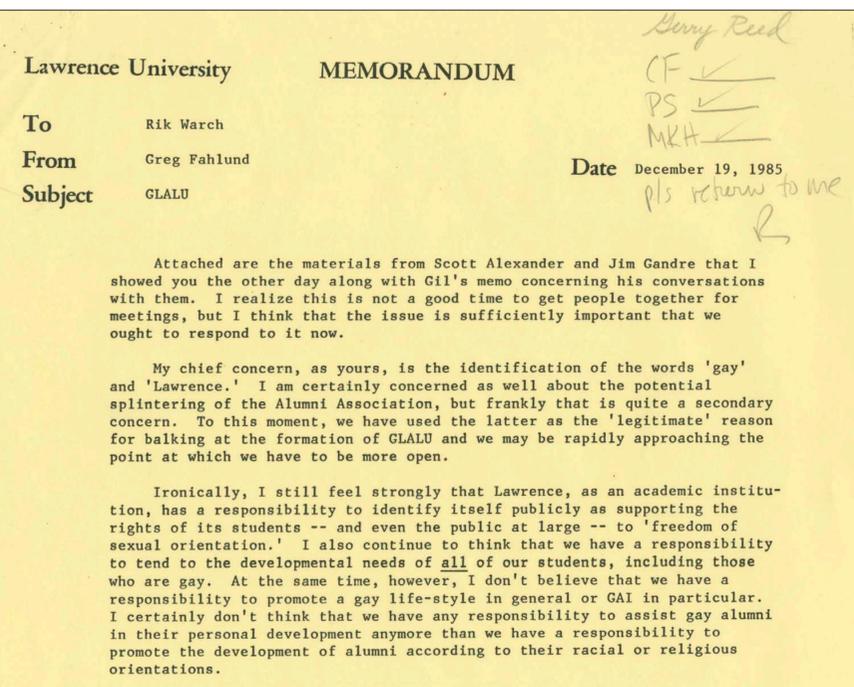
alumni to discuss being "out" as gay or lesbian in the workplace. In addition, Pride hosted movies on a variety of GLBT issues during the conference week.

So far in Term III, Pride has hosted a picnic and plans to sponsor a trip to see the movie "Object of my Affection" in the next couple weeks.

With the help of DFC and the Dean of Students Office, Pride also takes part in maintaining the Resource Room, which includes books and periodicals on GLBT and women's issues. Most evenings, the Resource Room is staffed with volunteers to help with questions.



The Lawrentian, May 14, 1998



Pride Week poster, 2001

History of Religious and Spiritual Life

No. 1. 1845 or early 1846:
latest possible date,
February 19, 1846

To H. Eugene Eastman

I have been thinking more of the establishment of an institution of learning or college on the Williams land, and there seems to be a good opportunity, not only for improving the tone of morals and the standard of education in that vicinity, but also of conferring a lasting benefit on a portion of our countrymen who most need it. I have a high opinion of the adaptation of the principles of the Methodists to the people of the West, and I think, from all that I can learn, that their institutions are carried on with more vigor, and diffuse more good with the same means, than any other. It seems to me decided by experience, that all literary institutions must be controlled by some sect, and efforts to prevent this have often blasted their usefulness. I should desire most of all to see a Protestant Episcopal institution; but that is out of the question, as our form of worship is only adopted slowly, and never will be popular in this country. I think the old-fashioned

Letter from Amos A. Lawrence to H. Eugene Eastman, February 19, 1846

Lawrence was founded as a Methodist institution, with the \$10,000 gift from Amos Adams Lawrence matched by the Wisconsin Methodist Conference in 1847. The university's first seven presidents were Methodist ministers, and campus life until the 1920s was significantly influenced by Methodist strictures (e.g.: no dancing.) Students were never required to be Methodist, but attendance at daily chapel services was mandatory through the 19th century. Henry Wriston (1925-1937), the first president who was not a Methodist minister, took steps to diminish the church's influence on campus.

Attention is called to the following regulations:

1. Students are expected to be in their rooms during study hours as far as possible. These extend during periods of recitation and after eight o'clock in the evening.
2. Chapel attendance is required of all students not excused. All students are required to attend two religious services on Sunday at such churches as they shall choose. Sunday school or the services of the Christian associations may count for one of these services.
3. Smoking, card-playing, dancing or profanity are not allowed in the college buildings or on its grounds.
4. Students who visit saloons or other disreputable places will be at once dismissed when the faculty become acquainted with the fact.

Excerpt from rules and regulations for students, circa 1905

THE 1926 ARIEL



Greenspoon Goldin Abelman Meyer B. Chudacoff Solinger
Rosensweig Benyas E. Chudacoff Belzer Bahcall Cohen

Rho Beta Phi

*Jewish Women's Sorority
Founded at Lawrence, 1924*

For many years fraternities and sororities discriminated against students who were not white and Christian. A group of Jewish women established their own sorority chapter, Rho Beta Phi, in 1924. It only lasted for a few years.

The letter below is from President Thomas Barrows to the president of the national Pi Beta Phi Fraternity (for women), dated July 1, 1939. Barrows was hoping to establish a Pi Phi chapter at Lawrence and was concerned about what he called "the race problem" – a Jewish student wanted to pledge. She was ultimately convinced by members of the Lawrence administration that it would be "better for everyone" if she did not pledge Pi Phi.

Miss Amy Burnham Onken
Grand President, Pi Beta Phi Fraternity
Chapin, Illinois

Dear Miss Onken:

Thank you for your letter of the twenty-ninth. I am glad to learn what your attitude on the race problem is. I agree completely with everything you say (for three years I was headmaster of a preparatory school in New York composed entirely of Jews, and, although they were the *creme de la creme*, I recognize the difficulties and dangers, as few people do). It seems to me that no chapter should have more than one or two who have Jewish background, else their clannishness may raise an issue trying to get others in. For the time being, at least, I shall guard against this situation myself. When the group has become Pi Phi I assume there will be no need for me to worry about it. (You may notice I said "when" not "if").

Muslim Student Association concludes a busy first year

David Rubin
Associate Features Editor

Although the Muslim Student Association is one of the youngest groups on campus – in its current incarnation, that is – it is also probably one of the most active, especially since the start of the 2010-11 academic year.

After a hiatus of a few years, MSA re-formed in fall 2009 shortly after Eid-ul-Fitr, the Muslim holiday marking the end of the month of Ramadan.

But the MSA is not exclusively a religious organization. Its members hail from all over the world, and come from a wide variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. Some are very observant of Muslim religious practices, but others less so. Indeed, in diversity of membership, the MSA parallels many other student organizations on the Lawrence campus.

The Lawrentian,
October 22,
2010



Rabbi Emanuel Gerechter was a professor of Hebrew and German at Lawrence and rabbi at the Zion Congregation in Appleton from 1894 to 1918.

Entering Class Sets Record As 415 New Students Arrive

Friday, September 24, 1965

Twenty - five religious groups are listed by the incoming students compared with 19 last year. **PRESBYTERIANS** are the largest numerically with 58, followed by 55 Methodists, 52 Congregational and United Church of Christ, 47 Lutherans, 41 Episcopalians, 40 Catholics, 29 undesignated Protestants, and smaller numbers of 19 other religious groups.

The Lawrentian, September 24, 1965

"ALTERNATIVE TO FUTILITY"

RELIGION IN LIFE CONFERENCE

Lawrence College
February 5, 6, 7, 1952

Sponsored by the Student Executive Council

Non-Christian Religions on Talks Agenda

3-Day Conference On Campus Opens Wednesday Night

"Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions" is the theme of Lawrence college's annual Religion-in-Life conference Wednesday through Friday on the campus. Judith Schwendener, Hinsdale, Ill., is chairman of the steering board for the conference. Opening the three days of discussions and lectures will be Frank Bessac, of the Lawrence anthropology department, who will speak at 8 p. m. Wednesday in Harper hall. He will discuss the theme from three angles: the problem of religions in the world community, areas of contact and conflict of the various major religions, and the effect of the West on the religions of the East. Keynote speaker Dr. Huston Smith, professor of philosophy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will address the student body at the 11 a.m. convocation Thursday in Memorial chapel. Three topic discussions are scheduled for 3 p.m. in the

Worcester art center. Subjects are "Moral Patterns: Exclusiveness and Relativity," "Effects of Religious Ethics on International Affairs," and "Religious Motivation and Creativity in the Arts." A coffee hour in the Memorial union will follow.

Thursday evening events include a panel discussion at 7:30 p.m. in the Memorial union, and dormitory discussion groups in various residences beginning at 9:30 p.m.

"Zen Buddhism" is the topic of a discussion at 3:30 p.m. Friday in the Memorial union. Dr. Smith plans to show a filmed interview with a Zen scholar, which will be followed by a discussion led by Dr. Mojmir Povolny and Frank Bessac, both of the Lawrence faculty.

Final address of the series will be given by Dr. Smith at 7:30 p.m. Friday in the Memorial union. The 8-day program will be concluded by a coffee hour after the speech.

Appleton Post Crescent,
February 1960

The Student Executive Council (forerunner to LUCC) sponsored a "Religion in Life" conference annually from 1952 to 1966. Themes included "Faith Seeking Understanding," "Religion and Science," "Religion and Art," "Moral Dilemmas of Our Time," among others.