



Celebrating the lives
of
John and Rudy

John Kenneth McCluskey

Rudolph Henry, Jr.

Married December 15, 2012

First United Methodist Church

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography



John Kenneth McCluskey

September 9, 1936

to

May 25, 2022

Signing of SB-6239

WA State Marriage Equality Bill

Olympia, WA

(12/13/2012)

Photo: Janine Unsoeld





Rudolph Henry Jr.

July 14, 1934

to

March 16, 2023



Rudy's 81st birthday

Lobster Shop South, Tacoma

(7/14/2015)

Photo: Geoff Corso





Delbert and John McCluskey

John is the younger brother

Pawhuska, OK

C 1937-38

Photo: From Scott Downes' collection



John McCluskey

High School Graduation

Springfield High School

Springfield, OR

1954

Photo: From Scott Downes' collection



Daniel McCluskey (Father)

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Lillian McCluskey (Mother)

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John McCluskey

Springfield, OR

1972

Photo: From Scott Downes' collection





John McCluskey

Family Reunion

Champoeg State Park, OR

Circa late 1980's

Photo: From Scott Downes' collection



Pete-e Petersen

*

John McCluskey

*

Rudy Henry

*

Jane Abbott Lighty

The first WA State marriage license
issued to a same-sex couple was
issued by King County to
Pete-e and Jane

Signing of SB-6239

WA State Marriage Equality Bill

Olympia, WA

(12/13/2012)

Photo: From Michelle Douglas' collection





John McCluskey

*

Rudy Henry

*

Michelle Douglas

Pierce County Auditors Office
issued its first marriage license to a
same-sex couple,
John and Rudy

Photo: From Michelle Douglas' collection



The Wedding Planner

Rudy Henry
*
Michelle Douglas
*
John McCluskey

First United Methodist Church

Tacoma, WA

(12/15/2012)

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography





Wedding Officiants

*

Mayor Marilyn Strickland

*

Reverend David T. Alger



First United Methodist Church

Tacoma

(12/15/2012)

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography





Rudy Henry
and
John McCluskey

First United Methodist Church

Tacoma
(12/15/2012)

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography



Rudy Henry
*
John McCluskey

Married – at last!

Groomsmen

Geoff Corso

Marshall McClintock

First United Methodist Church

Tacoma, WA

(12/15/2012)

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography



Groomsmen

*
Jeffrey Owings

*
Geoff Corso

*
Marshall McClintock

*
Mark Hall

*
Rudy Henry

*
John McCluskey

First United Methodist Church

Tacoma

(12/15/2012)

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography



Betty McCluskey
*
Delbert McCluskey
*
Valerie McCluskey
*
With husband Mike
*
Rudy Henry
*
John McCluskey

First United Methodist Church

Tacoma, WA

(12/15/2012)

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography





John and Rudy's Wedding Reception
Ryan Mello, Laurie Jinkins, Marilyn Strickland, Debbie Regala, Jeannie Darnielle
First United Methodist Church
(12/15/2012)

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography



John McCluskey

Rudy Henry

Happiness is ...

South Monroe St. Tacoma

2017

Photo: From Michelle Douglas' collection





Seth Kirby

I probably first met John when I first started working at Oasis in 2001. At the time, due to hostility against LGBTQ people and safety concerns, Oasis was in a confidential location off Bridgeport in University Place. John volunteered for Thursday night check-ins and special events like Oasis's LGBTQ prom. The prom was a big deal, especially at the time because it was one of the few activities that was in a public space (Mountaineer's Club).

John also took the lead to ensure that youth knew about civic and organizing activities in advance of the Tacoma United for Fairness Campaign (TUFF) to get citywide LGBTQ non-discrimination protections. He was often the point of contact for Oasis when we attended campaign events at the TUFF headquarters (Barb Montro's building).

In 2011, Oasis founded Bridge-Builders, a community action council of youth and adults coming together to tend to the specific needs of LGBTQ youth countywide. John was a founding Bridge-Builder and was generous in lending his time, money, and attention to an effort that was radical because it brought young people and adults together to shape the future of the organization and our community. John did the same with Oasis and Rainbow Center co-located a few years later.

John inspired, shaped, and deepened the civic commitment and participation of several generations of Oasis youth members across at least two decades.

Email to Geoff Corso, July 3, 2022





Jeannie Darneille

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"... I will always remember [John's] twinkling eyes. Grace-filled, kind to all, generous always, natty dresser, a drop-everything-and-help gentleman. We will always look back on his leadership and be thankful for all he shared with us all."

Email from Jeannie Darneille to Geoff Corso
June 25th, 2022

First United Methodist Church
Tacoma, WA
12/15/2012

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography



Reverend David T. Alger

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The wedding for Rudy and John was truly a wonderful experience. I was honored to preside along with Mayor Strickland. This event took place shortly before it was legal for me to preside at such a wedding...in the eyes of the church. Rudy and John were very conscious of this fact. They assured me that it would all be very low key. Before I could get downstairs for the reception, I noticed that there were literally dozens of pictures already on Facebook. The next morning a glorious wedding made the front page of the Tacoma news Tribune.. So much for low key. Anyway, it was a great honor the honor to perform a wedding for these 2 men who were so deeply in love. I will always hold them in my heart.

*

Email to Geoff Corso, June 28, 2022

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography





Pat McIntyre

“John was such a kind man. I remember my first LGBT+ volunteer gig in Tacoma was with the phones and Hands Off Washington in the 1990’s. John was the first person to greet me at the door, I almost turned around and left as I was feeling awkward as I realized everyone knew each other but me. He must have suspected that, he was so kind to stop by often during the volunteer time to chat and see how things were going. He will be missed.”

Email to Geoff Corso, June 24, 2022





Colleen Waterhouse

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“John served on the Pierce County AIDS Board for years and was a valued representative on a group that worked for several to establish a Citizen Oversight Committee for review of Tacoma Police Department activities.”

Email to Geoff Corso, June 28, 2022

“That was a really big deal. We actually managed to get it through the City Council, but Eric Anderson killed it when he arrived as the new city manager.”

Email to Geoff Corso, July 7, 2022

Parc Guell Terrace
Barcelona

Photo: From the Tom Galdabini and Colleen Waterhouse collection



Debbie Regala

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I was so lucky to meet them both. I remember meeting John early on in the debate of Marriage Equality. The love and commitment John and Rudy shared for each other was inspirational and I kept that in my mind and heart as we worked in this state to make marriage equality a reality. I remember John telling me “We would just like to be married before we die”. How wonderful it was to see that dream come true. Theirs was the first gay marriage my husband and I attended. My life was definitely enriched by meeting John.

*

Email to Geoff Corso, June 27, 2022

Photo: Joe Becker, Seldom Seen Photography





Ryan Mello

“I first met John McCluskey on the Bill Baarsma for Mayor campaign. I remember John and his husband Rudy coming into our campaign office almost every week to stuff envelopes and help plan events. I was new to politics and still relative to Tacoma, just graduating from the University of Puget Sound. They were both so kind to me, welcoming me into their friend circle. We would spend hours volunteering together, laughing, and teasing each other. From then on for many years we remained good friends, working on so many community efforts to improve the lives of LGBTQ people. We laughed so much together over the years. John taught me what leadership looks like. John taught me what showing up, being present and using our advantages for good for others looks like. John taught me what speaking up looks like. I learned so much about community leadership from John and I take those lessons into my daily work all the time. John was at the center of so many organizations from PCAF to the Pride Foundation to the Rainbow Center, to AHAT and so much more and campaigns for LGBTQ justice and LGBTQ service organizations and has left an indelible mark on our community that has strengthened it so much for so many. John, you are deeply, deeply missed, but never, ever forgotten. We celebrate you.”

*

Email to Geoff Corso, July 19, 2022





Lori Bundrock

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John McCluskey, Gloria Stancich and I used to tour
around Pierce County on a
“Gay people are just people”
type of tour back in the day.

Through email between Michelle Douglas to Geoff Corso
June 24, 2022

Photo: From the Lori Bundrock Collection



Bill Baarsma

“I considered John to be a friend and loyal supporter during my campaigns for mayor. I must say that there were many times when he was also my teacher, mentor and advisor on issues related to social justice. In this regard, I can say that I was often his student on these issues—particularly as they related to gay rights. I can recall some time back, our conversations regarding the issue of civil unions and marriage equality and how they were simply not the same. Despite his patience and I might say persistence, I confess that I just wasn’t getting it. That was until I recall him saying: “Bill, you have the option of marriage or civil union. Correct? I do not, and that’s not just or right.” At that very moment, I got it. I am delighted that through John’s efforts and many, many others, we now see nearly 80 percent of the people in this country finally do get it. John left a quite a legacy. I am honored to have known him as a friend and mentor ...”

Email to Geoff Corso, July 21, 2022

Photo: From the Bill Baarsma Collection





Seth Kirby

John McCluskey was an inspiration, mentor, and instigator. John understood that change happens bit by bit, building up to a sea change hopefully in one's lifetime. He brought together the LGBTQ community here and beyond, setting the standard for Pierce County ... the way forward is together. John dedicated countless hours to mentoring anyone willing to listen and volunteering evenings at Oasis Youth Center where youth would frequently comment that they had never met a gay man of his distinguished age. He served on many boards including Equal Rights Washington, PCAF, Oasis Youth Center, and Pride Foundation. Perhaps more than all of these investments combined, John along with his husband Rudy, taught our community how to love.

Unapologetically. Fiercely. And with lots of humor. John was sometimes a bit dramatic, uncompromising that we hold higher standards for what's possible, and willing to lead by example. While John is no longer with us, his deep love of community - for Rudy and Tacoma - will live on for decades to come.

Email to Michelle Douglas, June 29, 2022





Michelle Douglas

John had been part of the Domestic Partnership and Marriage Equality Campaigns from the beginning. As soon as we knew we had won, we started discussing, as a leadership group, who should receive the first marriage certificate. We all knew it should be John and Rudy. Part fairy godfathers, part mentors and leaders, John and Rudy are an example of fierce love persevering through time. As a LGBTQ+ community, we needed and wanted to throw them a wonderful wedding. It is rare for people to get to be active participants in making their own community better and they did that work for decades. The wedding was so special, everyone that wanted to help had a hand in creating a beautiful day and amazing memories. While we celebrated John and Rudy, we also celebrated the magic of being able to be truly seen in our community. It is a day I will never forget.

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Email to Geoff Corso, July 1, 2022





Geoff Corso

"Marshall McClintock and Geoff Corso moved to Tacoma in 2002 during the TUFF campaign. John and Rudy had an extensive network and brought us into it. When Rudy had the stroke in circa Aug. 2006, Marshall, I and many others saw an opportunity to repay John and Rudy for their community leadership and kindnesses. During the past 16 years, many people have helped John and Rudy fulfill basic needs including moving services and housing, applying for homecare services and providing homecare services, grocery shopping, bookkeeping and accounting, planning and hosting their wedding, transportation to doctor appointments and social events, and much more. Most of these services were provided for free to them, and I think this speaks volumes to the impact John and Rudy made in the community before the stroke upended their lives."

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Email to Troy Christensen, July 8, 2022





John and Rudy

Rest in peace

John and Rudy are survived by:

Sister-in-law Dee McCluskey of Milwaukie, OR

Sister-in-law Betty McCluskey of Twin Falls, ID

Many nieces and nephews across the PNW

Special thanks to:

Niece Dawn Carlile

Nephews Michael McCluskey and Scott Downes

