



**SOUTHERN  
ARIZONA  
SENIOR  
PRIDE**

# SENIOR LGBT Elder Voice FORUM

**PRIDE IS AGELESS.  
CELEBRATE!**

**EL ORGULLO NO TIENE  
EDAD. ¡CELEBRA!**

**May-June 2021**

**Volume 17 Issue Three**

*Celebrating, Supporting, and Uniting LGBTQI+ Older Adults*

## **LGBTQI+ SENIOR HOUSING -- DREAM BIG FOR TUCSON?**

By Keith Ashley

When Senior Pride volunteers met in October 2020 for a “future visioning” session, they were invited to dream big about what services and support could be provided to Southern Arizona’s LGBTQI+ older adult community in an ideal future. One of the most popular topics to arise was affordable LGBTQI+ senior housing. The discussion ranged from a mobile home park to any kind of physical facility, but with a decided emphasis on affordable. LGBTQI housing is a reality across the country now. On their website, SAGE, (Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders) offers resources for LGBT housing in 13 states. Arizona is not one of them .... yet.

An interesting and very recent project is the **Montrose Center’s new Law Harrington Senior Living Center in Houston, Texas**. The center has 116 units, 60 of which had been claimed as of March 2021, before construction was complete. Eighteen seniors have already moved in and five are profiled in a detailed article from *OutSmart: Houston’s LGBTQ magazine* (March 3, 2021). <https://www.outsmartmagazine.com>



Photo: By Rudy Corral

KEITH ASHLEY

Montrose LGBTQ Center leadership first began discussing their vision for the housing project in 2010. Just 11 years later it has become a reality. Funding to launch the \$26.5 million project was secured from grants, tax credits, and community donations. Construction began in 2019.

An interesting step along the way to making this housing a reality was the Montrose Center screening of *Gen Silent*, a documentary

48% of older same-sex couples have experienced housing discrimination — SAGE-National LGBT Housing Initiative

exploring the struggles of six LGBTQ seniors. The film’s troubling content hit home as locals knew that two of Houston’s LGBTQ

senior activists had themselves become extremely isolated in nursing facilities.

SAGE reports that 48% of older same-sex couples have experienced housing discrimination and we know that isolation is an acute problem for many LGBTQI+ older adults. Seniors lacking a support network are routinely bullied and sometimes forced back into the closet as they find themselves



**Celebrating, Supporting, and  
Uniting LGBTQI+ Older Adults**

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## LGBTQI+ Senior Housing continued

navigating healthcare and housing systems that aren't equipped to welcome our community's needs.

As the nation's largest organization serving LGBT older adults, SAGE launched a national multi-year LGBT housing initiative in 2015 and their website is overflowing with resources to help communities tackle the problem. From a housing development toolkit with three modules to lists of LGBT-friendly housing developers, SAGE has laid the groundwork for communities around the country to launch their own initiatives for LGBT elder housing.

Could Tucson be next?

### SOURCES:

<https://www.sageusa.org/what-we-do/national-lgbt-housing-initiative/>

<http://www.outsmartmagazine.com/2021/03/montrose-center-opens-texas-first-lgbtq-affirming-senior-living-facility/>

[https://www.sageusa.org/news\\_category/housing/](https://www.sageusa.org/news_category/housing/)

<https://www.nextavenue.org/lgbt-friendly-affordable-housing-answers-growing-need/>

## WARNING—BE ALERT

By Judith Weiser

<https://cp.email.arp.org/fraudwatchsignup>

Don't let yourself be a victim of the many scams targeting us older folks. These range from technicians offering to fix a "compromised bank account" or a "virus-infected" computer to people posing as bank employees (Caller ID may even show your own bank's name) or a relative in trouble. If anyone ever offers you services in exchange for gift cards, that is a big red flag!

You can find lots of information about fraud on AARP's website, [AARP.org](http://AARP.org) (search "Fraud" from the homepage). Also, they have a biweekly "Watchdog Alert" sent by email or text (your choice) with the latest scam information.



Pima Council on Aging

**Help Line: 520.790.7262**  
(M-F 8:30am-5pm)

[help@pcoa.org](mailto:help@pcoa.org)

To learn about in house LGBTQ Elder Care specialists on PCOA's staff,  
email: [SBahnsen@pcoa.org](mailto:SBahnsen@pcoa.org)



Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation

Senior Forum is printed in-house by the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF), whom we thank for their many services as Senior Pride's fiscal sponsor.

# Community Profile: RICHARD MAY

By Bruce Hyland

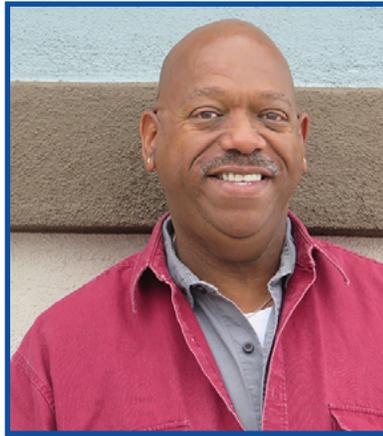
Public Health Management (retired)

“I am not my age. I am Richard.” “I am an amalgamation of my own ideas, life experiences and the ideas, experiences of other people who I learned from.”

Richard’s lineage comes from a loving and open, multi-hued “rainbow family.” His grandparents were a multi-racial couple 100 years ago! One of his regrets is not asking them what that was like. He’s interested in genealogy and is learning so much more about his family than he knew as a kid growing up in Indiana. Through the last century his entire family has embraced “difference.”

Years ago, he and his partner came to Tucson to visit a friend. Richard was having trouble getting into nursing programs in Indiana, and by accident or fate, checked

Photo: By J. Bolinger



RICHARD MAY

Aging is just a number.

Be you.

Not a number. — Richard May

into the nursing program at Pima Community College. He went on to be a nurse and finished his career as Division Manager at the Pima County Health Department. He retired in November of 2020 and is now in search of new endeavors.

Now he spends time with his family’s two dogs, Charlotte and Cammie. He’s in a long-term polyamorous family with his two partners...one for 31 years and the other for 20 years. He loves spending time nurturing succulents, being outside, and making jewelry.

“Sure, I’ve experienced difficulties, especially with racism, but it didn’t break me. I have to be strong with my ‘difference’”. He came to realize he didn’t need to fit into any particular box. He didn’t have to follow any standard practice in living his life.

Richard’s message to Senior Pride: Develop mentoring relationships. Share your life experiences to make life better for people. Aging is just a number. Be you. Not a number.

## Now on Senior Pride’s YouTube Channel

### A ROMP INTO THE PAST

A panel of long-time Tucson LGBTQI+ activists take a look at what life was like for us back in the 70s, 80s and 90s.

Natalie Perry, Colette Barajas, and Randy Spalding tell stories of tragedy and times of fun – turning points, struggles, on-the-sly secrets, places, people, and so much more.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClyYqDQwZooNMuNZ2H\\_libA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClyYqDQwZooNMuNZ2H_libA)



Natalie



Colette



Randy

*The thing that struck me most about finding this community is how we take care of one another. Even now, with Senior Pride, we don’t leave people behind. We’re constantly... trying to keep people connected. — Colette Barajas*

# COMING EVENTS

For more information and registration  
visit our website:  
[www.SoAzSeniorPride.org](http://www.SoAzSeniorPride.org)

## SENIOR PRIDE SPEAKERS

**POLICY REPORT:  
WHAT'S AHEAD IN 2021  
FOR OLDER ADULTS?**

**Tuesday, May 11 2-3 pm**

After a year of stress and uncertainty, what do you need to know programs and policies affecting the lives of older people and their caregivers?

**Maddy Bynes**, Director of Public



Policy & Special Projects for Pima Council on Aging and Statewide Coordinator for the Arizona Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and Senior Pride's **Robert Bell**, Immediate Past Chair of PCOA's Board, explain what's ahead. We celebrate Older Americans Month.



Register on website:

<https://soazseniorpride.org>

## SENIOR PRIDE HOSTED AA MEETING (on Zoom)

**Every Monday, 7-8 pm**

An open 12x12 Step meeting for LGBTQI+ older adults. Contact [aaright@gmail.com](mailto:aaright@gmail.com)

## LGBTQI+ ELDER SUPPORT

**May 1, 15, 29 • June 12 and 26  
Alternate Saturdays, 1-2:30 pm**

The LGBTQI+ Elder Support Group is an open and welcoming forum.

Contact facilitator Claire Ellington for Zoom link: [info@soazseniorpride.org](mailto:info@soazseniorpride.org)

## Senior Pride Presents:

### Letters to Young Carlos

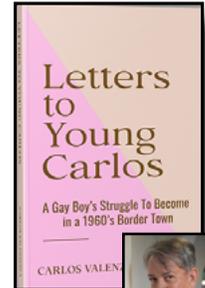
**Tuesday, June 8 2-3 pm on Zoom**

Carlos Valenzuela discusses his newly published fictional account of growing up gay in a world full of judgment.

A tender coming of age story set in a small Mexican border town, young Carlos discovers love does not come from those

given to him but from those he finds along the way.

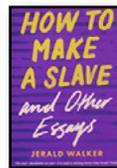
Carlos is a compelling storyteller who will make us laugh, cry, and sigh.



## SENIOR PRIDE BOOK CLUB

**Third Wednesday: 2-3:30 pm.**

**May 19 • How to Make a Slave and Other Essays** by Jerald Walker

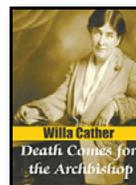


"No one I've read is writing better than Jerald Walker about race, being black, and the depths and complexities of our humanity." Charles Johnson, author *Middle Passage*.

Register on website:

<https://soazseniorpride.org>

**June 16 • Death Comes for the Archbishop** by Willa Cather



Willa Cather's story of the missionary priest Father Jean Marie Latour and his work of faith in the wilderness of the Southwest.

Register on website:

<https://soazseniorpride.org>

## HONORING A LIFE

Zoom workshops give LGBTQI+ older adults necessary documents and guidelines for making sure their health care wishes are known. **Erin Russ and Bruce Hyland** lead. In addition, they offer optional Meet and Complete sessions for those wanting extra help.

**Next Workshop dates**

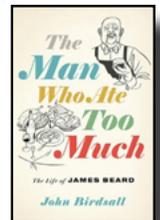
**Fri. May 14 • 10 am — Tues. Jun 22 • 3 pm  
Mon. Aug 2 • 9:30 am**

Contact Erin: [eol@soazseniorpride.org](mailto:eol@soazseniorpride.org)  
or (520) 312-8923.

## IN THE KITCHEN CLOSET

**May 5, 10 am**

Author John Birdsall and Food Network Star Ted Allen discuss the secret gay life of culinary giant James Beard.



Register at: <https://soazseniorpride.org/event/in-the-kitchen-closet/>



## Senior Pride Connects Our Community -- Your Donations Keep Us Strong!

Senior Pride's cultural events, support groups, Community Cares Program, workshops, website with local resources, Facebook page, YouTube channel and weekly news updates provide a hub for our community.

**This work is made possible by supporters like you. Please donate today.**

**By Check:** Payable to our Fiscal Sponsor: SAAF  
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Write **SENIOR PRIDE** in the Memo Line

**Online:** Go to our website  
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Click on "Donate"

**By Telephone:** (520) 547-6119

Specify: **Senior Pride**

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