

# ■ ■ ■ ■ LILLIAN AND ALBERT SMALL CAPITAL JEWISH MUSEUM

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## **The Capital Jewish Museum Announces Special Exhibition: LGBTJews In the Federal City**

*A landmark exhibition exploring the stories of Jewish activists  
and communities during a century of momentous change*

**Washington, DC (May 16, 2025)** - The Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum is pleased to announce that their new major exhibition, *LGBTJews in the Federal City*, is on view through Sunday, January 4, 2026. This is a local story with national resonance, turning the spotlight on Washington, DC, to show the city's far-reaching impact on LGBTQ+ history and culture in the United States. In addition, it is the first major exhibition to explore momentous change for LGBTQ+ people within Jewish spaces.

*LGBTJews in the Federal City* opens concurrently with DC's first-ever hosting of **World Pride (May 17 - June 10)** along with the **50th Capital Pride** celebration (June 6-7). The timing is also apt as May is **Jewish American Heritage Month** and June is **LGBTQ+ Pride Month**.

*LGBTJews in the Federal City* presents more than 120 artifacts and over 100 photographs, representing the region's Jewish LGBTQ+ celebrations, struggles, joys, and personal stories. Highlights from the exhibit include:

- Revisiting history with campaign posters and photographs from prominent gay activist **Frank Kameny's** long struggle to open federal employment to LGBTQ+ workers.
- Viewing a panel from the **AIDS Memorial Quilt** that features Library of Congress employees, including a Jewish Washingtonian who was lost during the AIDS epidemic.
- Listening to clips of LGBTQ+ Washingtonians sharing personal stories in their own voices, from oral histories conducted in partnership with the **Rainbow History Project**.
- Viewing the first-ever display of materials from **Bet Mishpachah** —America's fourth-oldest LGBTQ+ friendly synagogue.
- Learning from archival records such as the **Washington Blade** collection, held at the **DC Public Library**.
- Witnessing ephemera and memories from various protests, marches, and vigils in the nation's capital.
- Exploring the wide variety of changes made at area synagogues, including new ritual practices and new, expansive language.
- Learning some words from the **Nonbinary Hebrew Project**, a third-gender grammar system for Hebrew.

Stories focusing on the federal side of DC will tell the story of change over time in the nation. Examples include:

- The **U.S. Federal Government's** "Lavender Scare," and more.
- The incarceration of homosexuals at **St. Elizabeths Hospital**.
- The inclusion of non-Jewish gay victims at the **US Holocaust Memorial Museum**.
- The **U.S. Supreme Court's** decision to recognize gay marriage.

Through prompts, questions, and thoughtful design throughout the exhibition, visitors are encouraged to ponder new ways to understand Jewish teachings and values as they relate to gender and sexuality. After leaving the exhibition, visitors can contribute to the Museum's collecting and storytelling, by sharing photographs, personal archives, or by recording stories.

A centerpiece of *LGBTJews* is a new Museum acquisition: **The Bet Mishpachah Collection**. The DC LGBTQ+ friendly congregation was founded in 1975, and this year celebrates its 50th anniversary. This assemblage represents one of the most extensive archives of an LGBTQ+ Jewish congregation in the nation. Selections from the collection are on view for the first time.

The Capital Jewish Museum's archive, collected over the past five years in preparation for this exhibition, includes many other items on view here for the first time. These include:

- A lesbian feminist Haggadah from the 1980s.
- The **David Green Collection**, documenting the life and work of Green (1952-89), a member of Bet Mishpachah who worked at the Library of Congress and became an AIDS educator and activist.
- 18 recent oral histories produced in collaboration with the Rainbow History Project.

This collecting initiative underscores the Museum's commitment to representing the diversity of the region's Jewish community. Seeing LGBTQ+ stories proudly displayed in a Jewish history museum is an important step toward the goal of true recognition and belonging.

"As Board President at the Capital Jewish Museum and longtime member of both the Jewish and the LGBTQ communities in DC, I am very proud that we are the first museum to bring to life the stories of the LGBTQ+ Jewish community in the federal city," noted **Chris Wolf**, President of the Board of Directors. "These are stories with broad appeal to everyone, whether a member of the community or not."

"We are deeply honored to present this show, our first self-curated special exhibition—adding Jews into the rich, proud history of LGBTQ+ DC," noted **Beatrice Gurwitz**, Executive Director. "This exhibition will help write the local, regional, and national history of the Jewish LGBTQ+ community."

*LGBTJews in the Federal City* is curated by **Sarah Leavitt**, Ph.D., Director of Curatorial Affairs, and **Jonathan Edelman**, Collections Curator. The exhibition is designed by **The Design Minds**.

Museum hours are 10am-5pm, Wednesday through Sunday. Admission to *LGBTJews in the Federal City* is \$12-\$10 and Free for ages 12 & under. Ongoing exhibitions are free with a suggested donation.

*LGBTJews in the Federal City* is made possible by Premier Sponsor, Jeffrey Z. Slavin and Lead Sponsors, Stuart S. Kurlander and David L. Martin. Additional support is provided by Major Sponsors: Susie and Michael Gelman; Alfred Munzer and Joel Wind; Christopher Wolf and James Beller; Contributing Sponsors: William H. Davis; Occasions Catering; Shards of Light Foundation; Partner Sponsors: Debbie Goldberg and Seth Waxman; Debbie and Jamie Heller; Craig Hoffman and Albert Lauber; Dr. Stuart Sotsky; and Friend Sponsors: Patrick DiBattista and Alfredo Gomez; Rochelle Granat and Rhoda Schulzinger; Ms. Karen Lehmann; Larry Neff; Craig Pascal; Dr. Robert and Patricia Silverman; Gigi B. Sohn and Lara A. Ballard; and Michael Tubman and Samir Luther. Media Partner: The Washington Blade

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**The Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum** opened to the public in June 2023. The new Museum explores the Jewish experience in the national capital region and inspires visitors to connect personally and collectively, reflect on the relevance of the past to today, and act on behalf of their communities and values. With its experimental spirit, the Museum connects the past to the present through thought provoking exhibitions, dynamic programming, and creative public experiences. The Museum's archival collections are available to the public by appointment.

**For more information about the Capital Jewish Museum, please visit:**

<https://capitaljewishmuseum.org/>.

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**For additional information, please contact:**

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**Exhibition Images: LGBTJews in the Federal City**



Exhibition Title Wall



1990s to the Present (left) and Capital Moments



Capital Moments (left) and AIDS Quilt



Capital Moments



Welcoming Spaces