

STAMP SCOOP



HARVEY MILK

On his 83rd birthday this month, Harvey Milk will become the first gay activist honored on a US Postage Stamp.

Born in New York in 1930, Harvey was a popular student, football player, and choral singer, and joined the US Navy upon graduating high school. He worked a variety of jobs on both coasts before settling in San Francisco, where he opened a camera shop on Castro Street – the heart of the city's gay community. Milk, who had known he was gay since high school, had previously been quiet about his personal life. But surrounded by his motivational peers, and spurred on by a growing political spirit, Milk became an open, proud community leader. He decided to run for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1973.

With little money and experience, he lost the election, but gained a huge following as "the Mayor of Castro Seat." Two years later, he lost again for the same office, but was recognized as the voice of a powerful movement. Milk inspired gay men and women not just in San Francisco, but throughout the nation, to be out and proud about their sexuality. Above all, he preached equality for all American citizens. He gained support by politicians like city Mayor George Moscone and future US Senator Dianne Feinstein. By 1977, Milk finally won a seat on the San Francisco City-County Board, pushing a platform of childcare, public housing, and a civilian police review board. Unfortunately, Milk's time in office was tragically cut short when he and Mayor Moscone were assassinated on November 27, 1978.

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