

Outstanding Unmarried American

The American Association for Single People is pleased to confer the Outstanding Unmarried American Award on Mr. Lloyd E. Rigler – philanthropist, human rights advocate, and founder of AASP.

For several decades, Rigler has contributed his time, talents, and financial resources to protect and broaden the rights of unmarried individuals, couples, and families.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, he was active with the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). SIECUS promoted the inclusion of comprehensive and age-appropriate sex education in public schools. Rigler believed that having accurate and complete information was necessary for young people to make responsible choices.

After voters added the right of privacy to the California Constitution in 1972, Rigler worked for passage of a Consenting Adults Act to get the government out of the bedrooms of its unmarried citizens. Private sexual conduct was then a felony.

He knew that enacting such a law would require a progressive Governor in the state Capitol. Rigler became treasurer of Jerry Brown's first campaign for Governor, successfully working with campaign aide Gray Davis to get Brown elected.

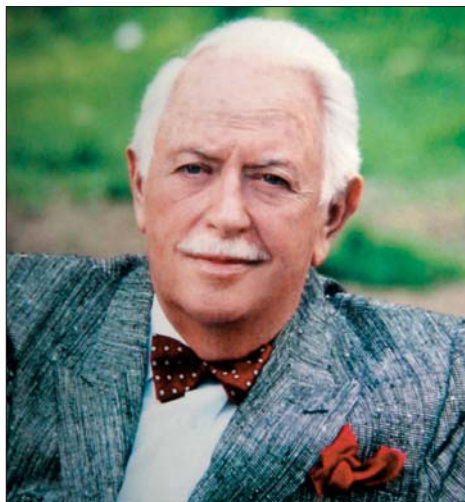
In 1975, the Legislature voted to decriminalize the private sexual conduct of consenting adults. Governor Jerry Brown signed the privacy bill into law.

In the 1980s, Rigler's human rights activities shifted to family diversity and domestic partner benefits. In 1983, he was introduced to attorney Thomas F. Coleman by then-Los Angeles City Attorney Burt Pines.

Rigler and Coleman shared a similar philosophy of inclusion. As a result, advocacy efforts focused on generic issues such as protecting personal privacy, the use of inclusive definitions of family, and promoting equal rights for domestic partners, as well as ending marital status discrimination against workers, consumers, and taxpayers.

Rigler's philanthropic organization, then known as the LEDLER Foundation, supported Coleman's legal work in important court cases and helped to underwrite major public policy studies.

The LEDLER Foundation also helped to



Lloyd E. Rigler

subsidize the first law school class in the nation on Rights of Domestic Partners. Coleman started teaching the class at the University of Southern California in 1985 - a time when only two cities in the nation had passed domestic partner laws.

With Rigler's financial support and Coleman's educational work and advocacy, the concept of gender-neutral domestic partnership rights began to catch on. Various types of legal protections and benefits for domestic partners now exist in many states and dozens of municipalities. Thousands of private employers now offer such benefits to their employees.

Support from the LEDLER Foundation enabled Spectrum Institute, the precursor to AASP, to file legal briefs in major test cases, resulting in precedents such as:

- A decision by the highest court in New York broadening the definition of family to include people not related by blood, marriage, or adoption.
- A ruling by the Georgia Supreme Court validating domestic partnership laws passed by the City of Atlanta.
- A landmark decision by the California Supreme Court prohibiting landlords from refusing to rent to unmarried couples.

The LEDLER Foundation also assisted the work of the Los Angeles City Task Force on Family Diversity, City Attorney's Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination, California Legislature's Task Force on the Changing Family, and California Insurance Commissioner's Anti-Discrimination Task Force.

In 1999, Rigler decided to create the American Association for Single People. He asked Coleman to direct AASP.

"Mr. Rigler was firm in his belief that unmarried and single Americans needed a major organization to advocate for their rights," Coleman said. "He believed that such an organization could stimulate economic and legal changes in the workplace, marketplace, and government programs such as unfair tax policies".

"When he founded the organization, Mr. Rigler said that he wanted AASP to be his human rights legacy to the nation," Coleman added. "If we can broaden the base of financial support by securing grants from other foundations, sponsorships from corporations, and create a large membership of unmarried and single people, then his dream will come true".

Over the years, Rigler has been a major benefactor of the A.C.L.U. and the National Organization for Women.

Now 87, Rigler would like AASP to become a viable national organization with strong financial backing and a mass membership.

"The best way for people to pay tribute to Mr. Lloyd E. Rigler for all of his human rights activities over the years, would be for them to become involved in AASP and to invite others to support the organization", Coleman emphasized. "The vitality and endurance of his legacy requires broad-based participation". ▲▲

Mr. Rigler may be contacted by email at: mail@unmarriedamerica.org.



The Academic Advisory Board of Spectrum Institute met in June. Spectrum Institute is the Research and Policy Division of AASP. The Board plans to conduct a survey of professors at universities throughout the nation to determine which classes are being taught and what studies have been done on issues affecting single people. (from left to right) Dr. Michael F. Valente, Professor E. Kay Trimberger, AASP Executive Director Thomas F. Coleman, Professor Bella DePaulo, and Professor Stan Charnofsky.