

## Chicago Politicians Talk Progress at LGBT Museum in Lake View

The open-air museum honoring some of the LGBT community's biggest historical advocates was commemorated on National Coming Out Day.

By [Andy Ambrosius](#) | October 11, 2012

Along with Oct. 11 being the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of [National Coming Out Day](#), let it be known that from this day forward, it will also be remembered as something else in Illinois: Legacy Walk Day.

That's according to [Gov. Pat Quinn](#) (D-IL) who issued the proclamation in honor of Chicago's newest open-air museum, the [Legacy Walk](#). Eighteen bronze plaques featuring the faces and biographies of some of the LGBT-movement's biggest advocates were unveiled Thursday afternoon on North Halsted Street in front of supporters.

Politicians like [Ald. Tom Tunney \(44<sup>th</sup>\)](#), who along with [Ald. James Cappleman \(46<sup>th</sup>\)](#) make up Chicago's only two openly gay aldermen, spoke at the event, recounting how far the LGBT community has come.

"It's really about bringing communities together with a common agenda about civil rights for everyone," Tunney said. "...The Legacy Project celebrates the history of the LGBT community, closeted or not. And there are still a lot of closeted individuals that are in Chicago, in our state and our country, and (the Legacy Walk allows) them to recognize that they too can be the next Barbara Jordan or the Harvey Milk or the Oscar Wilde of the future."

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But Tunney and Cappleman were not alone. Other area politicians like [Rep. Sara Feigenholtz \(12<sup>th</sup>\)](#), [Rep. Greg Harris \(13<sup>th</sup>\)](#) and Commissioner of Chicago's Department of Human Relations [Mona Noriega](#) also showed their support.

While neither Gov. Quinn nor Mayor Rahm Emanuel could attend the ceremony, both wrote statements about Chicago's LGBT community that recognized the efforts of both the game-

changers engraved in bronze and Legacy Project Founder and Executive Director Victor Salvo.

And according to Tunney, with important work like Salvo's Legacy Project, the future for the LGBT community can only get brighter.

"We will have many more days to celebrate, and many more historical projects to work on together," Tunney said. "And if it wasn't for you, for the private donations, for the public support, we'd be back in the closet. Let's face it. And we cannot go back. History is on our side, and the people that we're celebrating today have really set the path for us to actually do bigger and better things."

The event on National Coming Out Day is just phase one of a long road ahead to commemorate the major players in the LGBT movement. Starting in 2013, members with the Legacy Project will continue to add even more of the bronze biographical plaques to the towers, eventually totaling 34 historical markers.

And while it's still in the planning stages, the group anticipates opening a new visitors center along the Legacy Walk in 2014 to add even more plaques to the museum. It's all part of the Legacy Project's overall plan to continue to remember those who crafted the current LGBT movement.

What's more, according to the [Northalsted Business Alliance](#), the plaques could be a gift that keeps on giving, the [RedEye](#) reports. It's estimated the "museum walk" could double the amount of visitors to the street each year, positively affecting the local economy in Lake View.