

# ONE INC. AND REED ERICKSON

## The Uneasy Collaboration of Gay and Trans Activism, 1964-2003

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People who are today known as transgendered and transsexual have always been present in homosexual rights movements. Their presence and contributions, however, have not always been fully acknowledged or appreciated. As in many other social reform movements, collective activism in gay and lesbian social movements is based on a shared collective identity. Homosexual collective identity, especially in the days before queer politics, was largely framed as inborn, like an ethnicity, and based primarily on sexual desires for persons of the same sex and gender.<sup>1</sup> However, such definitions make sense only when founded on clearly delineated distinctions between sexes and genders. It becomes considerably harder to delineate who is gay and who is lesbian when it is not clear who is a male or a man and who is a female or a woman. Like bisexual people, transgendered and transsexual people destabilize the otherwise easy division of men and women into the categories of straight and gay because they are both and/or neither. Thus there is a long-standing tension over the political terrain of queer politics between gays and lesbians, on the one hand, and transgendered and transsexual people, on the other.

These boundary issues, with which recent gay and lesbian social movements have struggled, have been intrinsic to definitions of homosexuality since the concept of homosexual identity was first consolidated at the turn of the last century.<sup>2</sup> Early sexologists and their contemporaries commonly assumed that homosexuality was epitomized by females who seemed to want to be men and by males who seemed to want to be women.<sup>3</sup> For example, J. Allen Gilbert's 1920 article in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, which described the 1917 gender transformation of Lucille Hart into Dr. Alan Hart, was titled "Homosexuality and Its Treatment."<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Radclyffe Hall's book *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), about a (transgendered) female who yearned to be a man, almost single-handedly defined lesbianism in the popular imagination for much of the twentieth century and is still widely acclaimed as a classic of lesbian literature.<sup>5</sup> It is not surprising, then, that many gays and lesbians who are not transgendered have been eager to make it clear that they are not, given that their societies

commonly use gender transgressions to enforce homophobia. Yet others, eagerly seeking to valorize presumed homosexual people from the past, have adopted gender transgressiveness as a symbol of gay and lesbian pride. Nearly a hundred years since homosexuality was formally defined, news reports and gay and lesbian activists still routinely claim both historical and contemporary transgendered people as lesbian and gay.<sup>6</sup>

Only more recently have differently gendered people named themselves transgendered and transsexual and begun to build politicized organizations under self-defined banners.<sup>7</sup> During the last half century there also have been many examples of transgendered and transsexual people being shunned by gay and lesbian political organizations or having their histories expropriated. Despite this, many transgendered and transsexual people tried to persuade these organizations to embrace and endorse the fight for the rights of transgendered and transsexual people among and around them.<sup>8</sup> In this essay, after briefly expanding on this point, we tell the story of how one transsexual man was instrumental in the founding of one of the oldest and longest-running gay and lesbian groups in the United States. In doing so, we attempt to recoup a lost bit of the confluent histories of the transgendered and of the gay and lesbian social movements and to encourage the reexamination of how these two groups might work together more productively.

### **Gay/Lesbian and Transgender Politics**

The modern gay and lesbian rights movement in the United States reached a milestone in the summer of 1969, when rioting broke out in New York City's Greenwich Village. The rioting, which lasted for several nights, began when female and male transgendered people resisted arrest at a gay bar, the Stonewall Inn.<sup>9</sup> Over the next few years, while gay and lesbian rights organizing expanded rapidly, the distinctive gifts and needs of transgendered people were often marginalized by the leadership of early gay and lesbian organizations. Bull daggers and drag queens, transgendered and transsexual people, were largely treated as embarrassments in the "legitimate" fight for tolerance, acceptance, and equal rights. Several incidents in the 1970s and 1990s were flash points for the smoldering tensions between homosexual people trying to attain social and political weight for themselves and others who hoped to achieve equal rights for all. These incidents illustrated the perception of some in the homosexual population that transgendered and transsexed people presented too great a challenge to mainstream society and thus discredited the endeavors of more "acceptable" gays and lesbians.

Lesbians and feminists have been more at the forefront of these struggles than gay men. In particular, some of the most hotly contested battles recently have been over the question of whether or not male-to-female (MTF) transsexuals are women for the purposes of inclusion in women-only organizations. Transgendered and transsexed people have posed the greatest challenges to gender definitions at a historical moment when women in general, and lesbians in particular, have begun only recently to feel that they exist as political players in their own right. Yet as lesbians and feminists have tentatively gained ground, transgendered and transsexual activists have argued that the identity categories of "lesbian" and "woman" do not exclude those with histories as men and that these categories are in fact a matter of subjective self-identification.<sup>10</sup> Many lesbian-feminist organizations and individuals nevertheless insist on a definition of womanhood that leaves no room for women who were born male.

Just such an interpretive clash occurred at Olivia Records in the 1970s. A women-only, lesbian-dominated recording company, Olivia was a source of pride to many feminists. Among the many challenges it faced in its early days was a paucity of women with well-honed recording skills who wished to work long hours, for little or no pay, in a women-only company with a questionable financial future. One such woman, Sandy Stone, who had been a recording engineer for A&M Records, was an MTF transsexual, a fact she never concealed from the other women at Olivia.<sup>11</sup> When it became more widely known that Stone was an MTF transsexual, some lesbian feminists were outraged, because they thought of her as a man who had infiltrated a women-only organization. The other women at Olivia initially resisted the pressure to request Stone's resignation, but in 1977 they succumbed when they believed that the company's very existence was at stake.<sup>12</sup>

Two years later, in *The Transsexual Empire*, lesbian-feminist Janice Raymond further publicized the story of Stone's tenure at Olivia and used it to support her case against transsexualism. Raymond vilified transsexualism as a "social tranquilizer" that was "undercutting the movement to eradicate sex-role stereotyping and oppression."<sup>13</sup> The persistence of Raymond's theories about transsexualism became evident once again in a very public way in the early 1990s at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, a five-day women-only event run every year since 1976 on 650 acres of private land.<sup>14</sup> It is unclear when transsexual women began to attend it, but at least one, Nancy Jean Burkholder, had been to it once before 1991; in that year she was expelled for being transsexual. Over the next several years controversy raged over who should be allowed into the festival. Lesbian, gay, and feminist newspapers and magazines were barraged with letters to the editor. In 1994, 1995, and every year from 1999 to 2003 transgendered and transsexual

activists set up an informational and protest "Camp Trans" outside the gates of the festival. Eventually, the organizers of the event, bowing to pressure from this coalition, said that anyone self-defined as a "womyn-born womyn" would be allowed into the festival.<sup>15</sup>

The combined gay and lesbian movement has also proved resistant to aligning itself with transgendered and transsexual people. Prior to the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Rights, for example, transgendered and transsexual people worked to have the word transgendered added to the name of the march. Ultimately, the organizing committee decided to exclude the word from the title. Furthermore, when the decision was announced at an organizational meeting, cheers went up from some of those present.<sup>16</sup>

By 1997 more consistent progress toward unity had been made, with various gay and lesbian organizations expanding their mandate to include transgender perspectives. In September 1997 the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force amended its mission statement to include transgendered people.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, in September 1998 Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays voted to include transgendered people in their mission statement.<sup>18</sup> In April 2000 three transgendered activists were featured speakers at the Millennium March for Equality in Washington, DC, which drew hundreds of thousands of participants.<sup>19</sup> In March 2001 the Human Rights Campaign, which calls itself "America's largest gay and lesbian organization," amended its mission statement to include transgendered people.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, there remains much work to be done to redress the longstanding rejection of transgendered and transsexual people by gays and lesbians. Part of this work is to make gays and lesbians aware of the important contributions of transgendered and transsexual people to the queer movement. This article seeks to share the story of one transsexual man who quietly ensured the survival of one of the first homosexual advocacy organizations, and now the oldest, in the United States. The article first looks at early gay activism in California in the 1950s; then it describes the context in which ONE Inc. and the Erickson Educational Foundation (EEF) began to work together to educate society about and to provide support to homosexual, transgendered, and transsexual people. It looks at the circumstances in which the two organizations developed, became partners, and eventually ended their relationship. Finally, it discusses the history of ONE after it lost the EEF's support and explains the importance of the organizations' partnership to contemporary queer activists and historians.

## Early Gay Activism in California

Early efforts to represent and better the social position of sexual and gender minorities in the United States were initiated by people with firsthand knowledge of the pain of trans- and homophobia. They created organizations aimed at undoing the social stigma faced by LGBT people. So when the EEF and ONE began to work together in 1964, their goals and methods were similar in many ways. Nevertheless, the realities of the social stigmas faced by gays and lesbians, on the one hand, and by transgendered and transsexual people, on the other, could be quite different. Thus organizations whose purpose was to eradicate these stigmas also needed to be different in some respects. ONE's main focus was the experience of gay men, whereas the EEF's was that of gender-variant (particularly transsexual) people. Nevertheless, Reed Erickson, the foundation's founder, was keen to have the EEF work with gay and lesbian groups toward common goals. Therefore a brief introduction to the two organizations prior to their partnership is in order.

The early 1950s saw the creation of several groups whose aim was to improve social conditions for sexual minorities. The Knights of the Clock, one of the first homophile groups in the United States, was formed in Los Angeles in 1950 by Merton Bird and W. Dorr Legg. It continued to meet until the mid-1960s, and its function was to provide support for gay people in interracial couples.<sup>21</sup> The better-known, longer-lasting Mattachine Society, originally conceived as a political and civil rights discussion group for homosexual people, was also formed in Los Angeles in 1950, by Harry Hay. Other groups soon emerged in southern California, largely in response to the 1952 arrest of Dale Jennings, a member of the Mattachine Society, for soliciting an undercover police officer.<sup>22</sup> "A veritable flood of social protest" ensued after Jennings, who later accused the arresting officer of entrapment, admitted in court that he was homosexual but denied that this made him guilty of "lewd conduct."<sup>23</sup>

It was in this social climate that ONE, whose founders included Legg, Bird, Jennings, and Martin Block, another former member of the Mattachine Society, was incorporated in Los Angeles in October 1952. Taking its name from a famous quote by Thomas Carlyle, "A mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one," the organization set about "to aid in the social integration and rehabilitation of the sexual variant."<sup>24</sup> To achieve its goals, which were primarily educational, ONE would produce publications, provide programs, and stimulate and support research.<sup>25</sup> The progress it made toward accomplishing these goals was impressive and swift.

For example, by January 1953 ONE had started to disseminate information about homosexuality by publishing ONE Magazine, the first publicly available prohomosexuality

periodical in the United States. The magazine sold for twenty-five cents and was bravely hawked on the streets of Los Angeles, as well as distributed through the U.S. postal system.<sup>26</sup> By October 1954 the magazine had thousands of subscribers, but in that month the U.S. Post Office declared it obscene and unmailable and confiscated the issue. ONE promptly sued the U.S. Post Office for infringement of the constitutional right to freedom of the press. The case was not decided until 1958, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that gay and lesbian publications were not a priori obscene and could therefore be mailed legally through the postal system.<sup>27</sup> ONE Magazine continued to be published until 1967.<sup>28</sup> In 1958 ONE Institute also began to publish the first scholarly journal devoted to homophile studies, ONE Institute Quarterly, which today continues as the Journal of Homosexuality and as the online International Gay and Lesbian Review.<sup>29</sup> ONE Institute Quarterly was intended to stimulate further educational publications and research in "homophile studies," a field that ONE itself was pioneering.

While ONE Magazine and ONE Institute Quarterly both served as forums for gay-positive material and research, ONE Inc. also developed more traditional educational resources primarily through ONE Institute and its "extension division," which prepared short courses and events. For example, in January 1955 it began to offer a "Mid-Winter Institutes" series, the first of which was held at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. The one-day event consisted of meetings, discussions, a luncheon, and a dinner banquet and featured the psychiatrist Blanche M. Baker and the psychologist Evelyn Hooker. The second Mid-Winter Institute took place in January 1956.<sup>30</sup> The Mid-Winter Institutes, which continued into the 1980s, expanded to include scholarly talks, roundtable discussions, and theatrical presentations. Several hundred people attended these college-level, nondegree courses each year.

Through the extension division, ONE Institute also helped establish homophile studies and ONE Inc. chapters outside Los Angeles. Doing so often involved cooperating with other, local groups. For example, in 1957 ONE Institute offered a short course in conjunction with the Daughters of Bilitis at the home of Dr. Harry Benjamin in San Francisco. It also offered lectures in conjunction with local hosts in Denver (1959), San Francisco (1957, 1960), Chicago (1963, 1971), New York (1968), and Milwaukee (1973).<sup>31</sup> This Sunday-afternoon lecture series, which began in Los Angeles in 1958, has continued virtually uninterrupted ever since.<sup>32</sup> Through the lecture series and the Mid-Winter Institutes, ONE Institute offered a nondegree component comparable to what was done by extension divisions at community colleges and universities.

ONE Institute sought to provide still other formal educational opportunities. In October 1956 the ONE Institute of Homophile Studies was launched and held its first classes. The word

homophile was chosen over the word homosexual because the founders of ONE Institute felt that homosexual implied medicalization and pathologization, whereas the more etymologically correct homophile was less encumbered by such negative connotations. The institute's goal was to become a degree-granting research institution in homophile studies.<sup>33</sup> The first course, in which fourteen students met for two hours per week for nine weeks to study homosexuality in biology and medicine, history, psychology, sociology and anthropology, law, religion, literature and the arts, and philosophy was simply called "An Introduction to Homophile Studies." By the 1957-58 term the institute had expanded its schedule to two nine-week semesters, and over the next thirty years it developed a plethora of more specific courses, including "Homosexuality in History," "Sociology of Homosexuality," "The Gay Novel," "The Theory and Practice of Homophile Education," "Homophile Ethics," "Psychological Theories of Homosexuality," "Counseling the Homosexual," "Law and Law Reform," and "Near Eastern Foundations of Biblical Morality" (31-47).

These early courses represent the beginnings of the multitude of college and university courses and programs now devoted to the study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer people. When ONE Institute began its pioneering work, however, the support network at colleges and universities for this area of study simply did not exist. The financial support for this work had to come entirely from private sources, and the social stigma associated with offering such support made trying to entice donors extremely difficult. Although ONE had clear goals and methods for accomplishing them, the organization was greatly hindered by its severe shortage of resources. In 1964, badly in need of an injection of funding, ONE Inc. met Reed Erickson.

### **Reed Erickson and the EEF**

Erickson had launched the EEF in June 1964 as a nonprofit philanthropic organization funded and controlled, despite having a board of directors, almost entirely by himself. The foundation's goals were "to provide assistance and support in areas where human potential was limited by adverse physical, mental or social conditions, or where the scope of research was too new, controversial or imaginative to receive traditionally oriented support."<sup>34</sup> A substantial part of the foundation's work, therefore, was funding what Erickson considered to be progressive projects. During the twenty years of its existence, the EEF made available millions of dollars from Erickson's personal wealth for the advancement of causes in which he believed. These fell into three main types, all of them related to social movements that remain important and relevant today. The three main social movements in which Erickson invested were those advocating on behalf of homosexuals, those advocating on behalf of transgendered (specifically, transsexual) people, and

those developing what might now be called the "New Age" movement. He also funded a wide range of philanthropic projects outside of these major categories, such as the Interplast (International Plastic Surgery) project, which provided corrective plastic surgeries at no charge to impoverished children in Latin America and Africa.<sup>35</sup>

Because the EEF was run almost exclusively by Erickson, his personality was decisive both in the projects that the EEF supported and in the relationship between the EEF and ONE. Considering that his personal wealth sustained so many progressive projects, it is surprising that his vast contributions have not been more widely recognized. His fascinating life story bears on his interaction with ONE Inc. in important ways. Thus a biographical sketch is in order.

Reed Erickson was born as Rita Mae Erickson in El Paso, Texas, on October 13, 1917. Erickson's early years were spent in Philadelphia with his mother, father, and younger sister. After graduating from the Philadelphia High School for Girls, Erickson enrolled in a secretarial course at Temple University. Soon after, the family moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where Erickson's father, Robert B. Erickson, had transferred his lead smelting business. In Baton Rouge, Erickson attended Louisiana State University and became the first woman graduate from its School of Mechanical Engineering. Erickson then returned briefly to Philadelphia to work as an engineer and lived as a lesbian in an intimate relationship for several years. There Erickson and a romantic partner took part in Henry Agar Wallace's 1948 campaign for presidency on behalf of the Progressive Party and were part of a liberal social group that included many gays and lesbians, as well as civil rights activists and theater people. Their political involvement led to harassment by the FBI, and Erickson is rumored to have been blacklisted from several jobs as a result. By the early 1950s Erickson had returned once again to Baton Rouge to work in the family companies. At that time Erickson also started an independent company, Southern Seating, which produced and distributed stadium bleachers.

After Erickson's father's death in 1962, Erickson inherited the family businesses, Schuylkill Products Company Inc. and Schuylkill Lead Corporation, and ran them successfully for several years before selling them to Arrow Electronics in 1969 for around five million dollars. Erickson eventually amassed a personal fortune of over forty million dollars.

In 1963, as a patient of Harry Benjamin, Erickson began the process of masculinizing his body and living as Reed Erickson. That year he also married for the first time. Over the next thirty years he would marry three more times and become father to two children. In 1972 he moved with his wife and children and his pet leopard, Henry, to Mazatlan, Mexico, where he had built an opulent home, which he dubbed the "Love Joy Palace." Later he moved to southern California. By

the time of his death in 1992 at the age of seventy-four, he had returned to Mexico, addicted to illegal drugs and a fugitive from U.S. drug indictments.

Before his tragic death Erickson had funded countless researchers and organizations in the fields of homosexuality, transsexualism, and "New Age" spirituality. While this article's focus is his contribution to the field of homosexuality, the EEF was also responsible for many projects in other fields. For example, it funded Harry Benjamin, John Money, Richard Green, and other pioneers of treatment and research connected with transsexualism. The EEF also provided its own services, acting as a referral agency, publicizing news about transgender issues, and giving support to isolated individuals throughout the United States and around the world. The EEF worked with local and national news agencies to make information about transgenderism available to the public. In addition, it provided information for college classes and sent speakers to lecture about their personal experiences of gender. As a clearinghouse for transgendered and transsexual information, the EEF was an essential community resource for transgendered people and their supporters, all of whom lived and worked in isolation during those years. The EEF's work was so valuable to those it benefited that many people have kept copies of the informational pamphlets produced by the EEF for decades after its demise. Working in still other fields, Erickson sponsored workshops and research in spirituality and funded the first printing of *A Course in Miracles*, a three-volume set of channeled spiritual guidance that has been translated into nine languages and has sold over one and a half million copies worldwide.<sup>36</sup> He also encouraged and funded John Lily's work in dolphin communication.

One of Erickson's initial interests was to have the EEF work with those in the field of homosexuality, presumably because of his experience as a lesbian and because in those early days of trans activism, Erickson would no doubt have seen the fights for gay and trans rights as naturally allied. The partnership with ONE was the first one undertaken by the EEF. Eventually, Erickson's long-standing support of ONE enabled it to embark on much more elaborate projects than it otherwise would have been able to do. Further, the patterns of his philanthropy evidence an uncanny ability to pinpoint individuals and organizations who, although still near the beginnings of their long careers, would later become highly successful at their endeavors. His relationship with ONE was no exception.

## **ONE and the EEF: Building a Relationship**

By the time ONE Inc. and the EEF came together in 1964, the former had already established itself as an educational center, whereas Erickson was just starting his own organization and looking for substantial projects to fund. ONE could help Erickson do both, and Erickson could help ONE with much-needed financial resources. Further, both Reed Erickson, the man behind the EEF, and Dorr Legg, the driving force of ONE, had strong personalities that challenged and stimulated each other. As such, their partnership had the potential to be highly productive.

ONE Inc. had taken the unprecedented step of opening a business office in downtown Los Angeles in 1953, and the place had soon become a de facto gay community center and hotline. The staff answered thousands of calls from people all over the United States asking for help with problems ranging from housing to arrests to psychological distress. Such requests came from gay men; lesbian women; bisexual, transgendered, and transsexual people; parents; and teachers. Thus ONE, moving toward the fulfillment of its stated goals, had taken steps to obtain property and to promote the integration of homosexuals into society, but when its landlord put the building that housed the organization's offices up for sale shortly after ONE had moved in, all that ONE had achieved seemed at risk.<sup>37</sup>

It was through the financial appeal that went out to ONE's mailing list that Erickson saw his first potential major funding project. Having spent a frantic year finding the space at 2256 Venice Boulevard after an earthquake had rendered the organization's original offices on Hill Street in downtown Los Angeles unsafe, the staff at ONE had panicked. Not wanting to be out on the street again so soon, they decided that they needed to buy the building themselves and sent a request for donations to their entire mailing list. Few responded, partly because ONE, having sold ONE Magazine, had lost its nonprofit status and could no longer offer charitable tax receipts to donors, and partly because many potential donors feared being identified with ONE's high-profile homosexuality.<sup>38</sup> Erickson was one of those few, and his offer of assistance with ONE's larger mission stood out as both generous and eccentric.<sup>39</sup>

According to Legg, "[The] first response was from someone named Reed Erickson. He made numerous phone calls for extended conversation with me. This was in 1963 but went no further at the time "<sup>40</sup> Then in July 1964, only days after the EEF had been incorporated, Erickson asked Legg to see him in Baton Rouge. Legg remembered that "the people here had said, in regard to going down there, 'this is just a Southern queen who wants a date for the weekend and was willing to send an airplane ticket.' "<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, Legg bought a new suit to wear in the

stifling heat and humidity of Baton Rouge in July and boarded an airplane headed east. Legg recalled:

I was to change in New Orleans and I got on this ancient flapping plane which just barely cleared the tree tops, flapping on to Baton Rouge from New Orleans. I got to the airport which was no kind of an airport at all, it was just a little shanty really with a wire fence. Eight or ten people got off. Here on the other side of the wire fence was what looked to me like a blonde high school kid. I said, "Are you Reed Erickson?" and he said, "Yes." I just said, "I was expecting somebody older." And I thought, "Uh-oh, maybe they were right." And so we went out and got into this very large car with a built-in telephone. Well, those weren't all that common in 1964. So I thought, "Well there's money here."<sup>42</sup> . . .

During the drive into town I learned I would be put up at a motel. The room turned out to be a veritable presidential suite. Once seated there he said, "Tell me about ONE." After hours of talk with only an occasional question from him he said we would now go over to his house to meet his lover. Entering an old fashioned frame house by the kitchen we went through rooms with bare floors, Southern summer style. Here was what might be a Brancusi, there what might be a Matisse. Now we would meet Henry, his lover. Turning on the lights of a large glassed in porch revealed what looked to me like a ten foot leopard. My host went in and the two proceeded to tumble and roll around with great gusto. I was invited to pat the leopard's head which I most gingerly did. Back to the motel for a few more questions, then a laconic, "I'm very glad you have come." He would return in the morning for more talk. Still no inkling as to why I was there.

Around noon the next day he said, "We have a small foundation and have been observing your ONE Institute Quarterly with interest. Do you have any projects you would like funded?" Did we have projects? However, I knew that "consulting engineer" on the letterhead meant that he was not interested in projects as a category but a project capable of being presented in detail right then. Fortunately the best talked over [project] had been our long desired bibliography of homosexuality. If this was to be funded by him, I was told, I must go back to my board and set up a foundation for which he would pay. When I reported back to ONE's board their skepticism may well be imagined. A blonde high school student who wrestled with leopards? Clearly the heat in the South had got the best of me. After some weeks of their amused dismissal of my wild story reluctant approval was given to go ahead with the foundation. I flew to New York to complete the details in his beautiful apartment hard by the United Nations building. Thus the "Bibliography Project" was then

put in motion, and eventually completed as a two-volume opus of more than 12,700 entries, by far the largest of its kind even yet [in 1993].<sup>43</sup> For the next twenty years other projects were funded. One day without any special reason the scales fell from my eyes and I realized that our benefactor, the small blonde boy, was a female to male transsexual, ONE's first large contributor.<sup>44</sup>

A savvy businessperson, Erickson suggested a solution to ONE Inc's tax problem. Under his direction and at his expense, the Institute for the Study of Human Resources (ISHR), a nonprofit corporation, was founded in August 1964, a short six weeks after his first meeting with Legg, for the purpose of accepting charitable donations. It could then donate the money to ONE Inc. or the ONE Institute as it saw fit. Legg chose ISHR's name in recognition of the human resources lost when repressive social attitudes toward homosexuality stifled the human spirit.<sup>45</sup> The title also reflected what the EEF described in an early brochure as the EEF's aim: "to assist where human potential [was] limited by physical, mental, or social conditions, or where the scope of research [was] too new, controversial, or imaginative to receive traditionally oriented support."<sup>46</sup> ISHR's mission greatly resembled the EEF's, reading in part: "to promote, assist, encourage and foster scientific research, study and investigation of male and female homosexuality and various other types of human behavior; to advance education."<sup>47</sup> ONE Inc.'s research, social service, and educational work now shifted to ISHR, which allowed ONE Inc. the freedom to work unabashedly for homosexual law reforms.<sup>48</sup> ISHR's acting directors were Legg (who was also the secretary), Tony Reyes, and Don Slater, all of whom had been among ONE Inc.'s founders. Erickson was named president, and his soon-to-be wife, Aileen Ashton, was made a founding director, a position she held until 1975.

While Erickson was interested in promoting homosexual law reform and ONE's specific goals, he had his own ideas about the programs that should be offered and the ways that EEF projects and ONE projects could function together. Since he controlled the lion's share of the funding, he greatly influenced ONE's direction during these crucial developmental years. His first \$2,000 donation went toward the cost of incorporating ISHR, and by October 1964, even before its bylaws had been drawn up, he had sent another \$1,000.<sup>49</sup> In December 1964 a check for \$10,000 arrived at ISHR as a first installment on a "Research Study Project in the Bibliography of Homosexuality."<sup>50</sup> By January 1965 ISHR was receiving \$1,000 a month from the EEF.<sup>51</sup> From 1964 to 1976, and again from 1980 to 1983, Erickson's foundation provided 70-80 percent of ISHR's operating budget.<sup>52</sup> In total, ISHR recorded having received over \$200,000 in direct

grants.<sup>53</sup> These monies were channeled through ISHR to ONE Institute's educational programs, to the development of the Blanche M. Baker Memorial Library, and to various other educational and research projects.

Thus the establishment of ISHR allowed Erickson a vehicle through which to make tax-exempt charitable donations to support the activities of ONE. There were other donors to ISHR and to ONE, but without Erickson's extensive, committed, and regular support, many of ONE's activities, and perhaps even ONE itself, would not have been possible to the extent that it was with EEF money.

The projects undertaken by ONE after its partnership with the EEF make it clear that Erickson had a significant influence over the direction of ONE. While he may not have been involved in its day-to-day operations as was Dorr Legg, his financial support encouraged the direction those activities would take. For example, one of the first ONE Institute projects, and the lengthiest, that the EEF funded was the bibliography that Legg had mentioned to Erickson at their first meeting. Almost from its inception ONE had had plans to address the dearth of positive information on homosexuality by compiling an annotated bibliography on it, but the project could not get off the ground until Erickson came on the scene. He agreed to fund it for three years, and work began in late 1964 under Slater, later succeeded by Julian Underwood. By 1966 ONE had published the first version of *An Annotated Bibliography of Homosexuality*.

In 1970, after Underwood's untimely death, Vern L. Bullough, professor of history at California State University, Northridge, and vice president of ISHR, assumed responsibility for the bibliography.<sup>54</sup> Bullough had already gathered over a thousand entries on his own, and he also brought with him an additional several thousand entries that he had received from Gershon Legman. As an editor, he was joined by Legg and Barrett Wayne Elcano and by James Kepner Jr., who assisted in the editing process. A two-volume *Annotated Bibliography of Homosexuality* was published in 1976 by Garland Press. The completed work contained 12,794 entries and constituted an unprecedented contribution to the study of homosexuality.<sup>55</sup>

While the bibliography project came to Erickson for funding preconceived, several other projects involved Erickson's own particular interests. For example, in June 1974 a widely publicized three-day "Forum on Variant Sex Behavior," organized by Vern L. and Bonnie Bullough, took place in Los Angeles under the auspices of ISHR.<sup>56</sup> The goal of the meeting was to "give physicians, social workers, psychologists, counselors, clergy, teachers and other professionals a concentrated overview of up-to-date information and recent developments concerning some of the less well known types of behavior."<sup>57</sup> Research findings, workshops, and field trips covered issues

concerning transsexualism, incest, transvestism, sadomasochism, and male and female homosexuality. The speakers included Vern L. Bullough; Zelda Suplee, director of the EEF; Virginia Prince, editor of *Transvestia* and widely recognized pioneer of transgender activism; Laud Humphreys, author of *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*; Christopher Isherwood, widely acclaimed author; and Evelyn Hooker, author of the revolutionary 1957 study "The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual."<sup>58</sup> Attendees remembered fondly how they were moved by Isherwood's warm and deeply emotional introduction of banquet speaker Evelyn Hooker.<sup>59</sup>

In March 1975 a second event, "Sex, Role, and Gender," took place, with similar goals and format. This event was particularly innovative in that one could receive one credit-hour from California State University, Northridge, in return for attending, making a field trip to a homosexual or transvestite establishment, and writing a report. The speakers at this event included a panel of people identified as transvestites and transsexuals. Perhaps the highlight of the event, which drew several hundred people, was the keynote speech, in which Christine Jorgensen spoke of her own experiences in changing her sex and gender.<sup>60</sup>

Clearly, the two events encompassed both the interests of ONE and the EEF, but the increased presence of transgender and other sexual minority topics on the agenda was undoubtedly related to Erickson's influence. The organizations' other collaborative projects focused on strictly homosexual topics while also representing an overlap of the goals and methods of social reform that both organizations outlined. For example, the social scientific study of homosexuals by homosexuals was unprecedented at the time. Through an ISHR grant from the EEF, ONE Institute developed a questionnaire that it distributed to its five-thousand person mailing list and analyzed during several semesters of ONE Institute Sociology courses (1965-69). A first report of the results was presented by Underwood at the February 1969 Mid-Winter Institute, and commentary was provided by a sociology professor, a psychiatrist in private practice, and Richard Green, director of UCLA's Gender Identity Clinic. Oddly, although one thousand questionnaires had been returned, they were winnowed down, for Underwood's presentation, to four hundred completed by gay men.<sup>61</sup>

In another significant, although more oblique, contribution to homosexuality research that was funded by the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Hooker tested expert clinicians to see if they could distinguish between the psychological projective test results of a nonclinical sample of homosexual men and those of a nonclinical sample of heterosexual men. Hooker's results, which showed that the clinicians could not distinguish between the two groups, laid the

groundwork for a profound change in professional and public opinion about homosexuality.<sup>62</sup> It was the first empirical evidence that homosexual men were just as psychologically healthy as heterosexual men. In 1967 Hooker accepted a request to chair the NIMH's Task Force on Homosexuality. But the NIMH did not immediately publish the results of the task force's study. Hooker had delivered many lectures for ONE Institute over the years, and the organization was anxious to see her groundbreaking work made public. With Erickson's funding, ONE Institute published the "Final Report of the NIMH Task Force on Homosexuality" before it was officially published by the U.S. government.<sup>63</sup>

Although Erickson's interest and participation in projects such as the professional forums on sexual variance and the publications of prohomosexuality research varied, ONE's and the EEF's goals and methods overlapped significantly, which indicates the importance of their relationship to the development of both organizations. For example, both were interested in creating social change by addressing legal inequities. Erickson fully funded a one-month speaking tour of the United States by the British homosexual legal activist Antony Grey in 1967. Grey had been a key figure in the campaign to legalize homosexuality in Britain through the Albany Trust and the Homosexual Law Reform Society, of which he was secretary (1962-70). When these organizations were formed, male homosexuality was illegal in Britain; male homosexuals were liable for up to two years' hard labor for engaging in any act of "gross indecency," whether public or private, consensual or not. The report of the Wolfenden Committee, released in 1957 (having been commissioned in 1954 in response to a series of scandalous court cases concerning homosexuality), had recommended the legalization of homosexual acts between consenting adults in private. The Homosexual Law Reform Society had been set up in the spring of 1958 to pressure the government to act on the recommendation. The Albany Trust, a nonpolitical charitable arm of the society, had been established "to promote psychological health through research, education, and appropriate social action." Grey was widely acknowledged as a key player in spearheading the campaign that culminated, almost ten years after the Wolfenden report, in the passage of the 1967 Sexual Offences Act, which legalized homosexuality.<sup>64</sup>

Legg met Grey in England in 1966, shortly before the Sexual Offences Act was passed.<sup>65</sup> A visit from Erickson and his wife soon followed. Then, shortly after the act had passed, Legg invited Grey to visit the United States. Erickson had agreed to sponsor a one-month coast-to-coast speaking tour so that the U.S. homophile movement might benefit from Grey's knowledge of effective law reform tactics.<sup>66</sup> Grey arrived in New York City in late October 1967 and was immediately set to work by Zelda Suplee, an unforgettably dynamic woman who had become

Erickson's indispensable adviser as well as the public face of the EEF and who acted as Grey's press secretary during his visit. During the next four weeks Grey spoke at more than twenty-five lecture, television, and radio events during what he later described as "the most hectic four weeks of my life."<sup>67</sup> He also met with editors, lawyers, psychologists, clergy, police, and homophile groups in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington, DC, and with various professional groups, including researchers at the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction in Bloomington, Indiana; the psychologist Wardell Pomeroy (who worked closely with Alfred Kinsey); the endocrinologist Harry Benjamin (who had brought transsexualism to the attention of the medical community); and the lawyer Morris Ernst (who had defended the work of both Havelock Ellis and James Joyce against censorship charges). Grey was accompanied on this exhausting but comfortably appointed tour by Dorr Legg, and the entire mission was funded by Erickson's EEF through ISHR.<sup>68</sup>

Both ONE and the EEF were interested in providing educational materials for social change. For ONE, this interest had led to a sharp focus on formal educational opportunities in homophile studies, which the EEF eagerly and generously supported. Perhaps ONE's proudest accomplishment came in August 1981, when it received authorization from the state of California to be the first U.S. institution of higher learning to offer master's and doctoral degrees in homophile studies. Courses began in October, and the first degrees were awarded on January 30, 1982, at the thirtieth-anniversary celebration of the founding of ONE Inc. On this auspicious occasion, over six hundred people gathered in the Wilshire Room of the Los Angeles Hilton Hotel saw Erickson and Isherwood awarded honorary doctorates.<sup>69</sup> Remarkably, although Erickson was already a degree holder, this was the first and only college degree that Isherwood had at that time yet received.

Soon after the creation of the ONE Institute graduate school, Erickson suggested that a campus should be found to house the school, its libraries, ONE's business and "community center" offices, and the EEF's offices. The foundation's offices in Baton Rouge and New York City, like ONE's business offices, played a key role as a place to which transgendered and transsexual people could go for education and support. The EEF also had mailing addresses in El Paso, Texas; Los Angeles and Ojai, California; Phoenix, Arizona; and Panama City. Thus the idea of having one centralized location from which to run all these operations (including ONE and its projects) seemed timely. The idea was attractive to ONE because, among other reasons, the owner of 2256 Venice Boulevard had neglected the building, and its maintenance problems were becoming desperate.<sup>70</sup> Late in 1982 Legg met with real estate agent James Dunham, who then

helped Erickson negotiate the purchase of an impressive property called "the Milbank Estate," which Erickson had seen only in photographs.<sup>71</sup> Dunham recalled Erickson telling him, "I am buying this property for ONE; we will show the straight world what we can do."<sup>72</sup> Elizabeth Clare Prophet's Church Universal and Triumphant, which occupied the estate at that time, was planning to move its headquarters to Montana. After some wrangling, a sale price of \$1.9 million was agreed upon. However, as the completion of the deal neared, there was some concern that the church would not go through with the sale if it knew that the property would be used by a homosexual organization. For this reason, and also because of tax considerations, the ownership of the property was made out to the EEF.<sup>73</sup> A down payment of \$95,000 was made, with \$1.4 million due at the closing on February 17, 1983, and another \$400,000 to be paid out by Erickson over the next four years.<sup>74</sup>

A few days before the closing, the EEF's secretary informed the Church Universal and Triumphant that the \$1.4 million would not be available until February 26, nine days later than agreed. The church threatened legal action if the payment was late.<sup>75</sup> So Erickson retrieved \$1.4 million in South African krugerrands he had stashed in a bank vault. On February 17 representatives from the church came to his home in Ojai in two cars and a recreational vehicle, accompanied by security guards and a large dog, to collect the krugerrands. For more than three hours, two of the men counted the gold coins and brought them to other men waiting outside in a camper, who weighed them and put them into plastic coin holders. When everyone was satisfied that the amount was correct, the people from the church, the security guards, and dog all went to a Wilshire Boulevard coin dealership, where the coins were delivered and commemorative photographs were taken.<sup>76</sup> At this point the deal between Erickson and the church was complete, and the coins were the property of the church. However, the coin dealership would accept only a limited amount of gold per day, so a week passed before all of it had changed hands. At the beginning of that week gold was selling at \$508 an ounce, but by the end of the week the price had dropped to \$368. The church lost a considerable sum of money as a result, and Erickson, who took some pleasure in his business acumen, claimed to have personally driven the price of gold down through this one transaction.<sup>77</sup>

Over the next six weeks, a crew of people from ONE unearthed and moved its library, archives, and other possessions out of the building on Venice Boulevard, where the organization had been located for twenty-two years. ONE proudly proclaimed: "A landmark event will be celebrated here May 1 [1983] when ONE Institute announces its occupancy of the historic Milbank Estate as its permanent campus for Homophile studies, the first such campus of its kind in the

world."<sup>78</sup> Eight months later, on January 29, 1984, ONE Institute held an open house and convocation ceremony at the Milbank mansion during which they awarded one master's and two doctoral degrees in homophile studies, the world's first in that discipline.<sup>79</sup>

### **ONE and Erickson: The Unraveling of a Relation**

Unfortunately, it seemed that no sooner had the ink dried on the contract for the Milbank purchase than the first signs of trouble in the relationship between Erickson and ONE began to surface. The deed to the property was supposed to have been turned over to ONE at a gala event on May 1, 1983, but the transfer was postponed until June 1, and then Erickson apparently abandoned the idea altogether.<sup>80</sup> The problems between ONE and Erickson resulted partly from the intrusion of Erickson's personal problems into the business partnership, partly from longstanding concerns about the relationship between trans and gay politics in the collaborative efforts of ONE and the EEF, and partly from Erickson's desire to use ONE to support projects unrelated to homosexuality.

Like many others, Erickson had experimented with illegal drugs during the previous decade. In the beginning, his use was purely recreational and did not interfere with his ability to conduct his business interests effectively. However, by the early 1980s he had developed a serious drug dependency. Erickson became a regular user of ketamine, a veterinary anesthetic that produced hallucinations in humans, and of cocaine.<sup>81</sup> In addition, he used other recreational drugs, although less extensively. By the time of the Milbank Estate purchase, the cumulative effects of Erickson's drug use were profound. He was frequently difficult to deal with and was often highly distrustful and suspicious of others, particularly those closest to him. He had become uncharacteristically inattentive to his business interests, forgetful, and increasingly unreliable.<sup>82</sup> This trend culminated in a series of arrests for drug offenses during the 1980s. Erickson's subsequent failures to appear in court eventually resulted in the forfeiture of several pieces of real estate, and of large sums of money.<sup>83</sup> He was also suffering from bladder cancer, which left him unable to walk and semiconscious for days at a time.<sup>84</sup>

At the same time, tensions were increasing among ONE's leadership concerning the direction in which Erickson's funding was taking them. Jim Kepner later placed more of the blame for the break between Erickson and ONE on Legg than on Erickson. He recalled that Legg "went a little ways off of his rocker" when Erickson refused to turn over the deed to the Milbank estate. But the trouble had started even earlier:

When ONE got the degree-granting privileges . . . Reed immediately wanted several of his metaphysical and other of his acquaintances, and probably some people involved with dope, to be given degrees. And Dorr flatly refused. Well, under the circumstances, since Reed was paying the bill, I would say Dorr made a serious blunder. Or he should have at least tried to keep negotiations open in some way. . . . It [also] reached the point where I began to get kind of nervous: is ONE primarily a homophile organization, or is it a transsexual organization? I felt it got kind of out of balance. I felt that we support these people on our borders. If transsexuals define themselves as gay, well then, they're part of our community; if they define themselves as straight, well, we'll counsel them or help them or so on, but they're not really part of our community, by their own definition.<sup>85</sup>

Clearly, Erickson's ideas about who was "on the borders" were markedly different from Legg's and Kepner's. Additionally, Erickson's drug use and increasingly controlling support of ONE led to a growing confusion among ONE's leaders about ONE's role in relation to other EEF projects.

Less than two weeks before ONE was to hold the convocation and open house at Milbank, and three weeks after Erickson's first arrest for possession of illegal drugs, ONE received a letter from Erickson in which his growing mental instability was evident. In that letter he stated: "I find I can no longer support one of my long-time favorite projects. If you do not find funding within two weeks from today (I already discussed this with you about a week ago), I must sell the property."<sup>86</sup> Attempts to negotiate a tenancy for ONE quickly failed. By May 1984 Erickson was trying to evict ONE from the premises and had filed suit against ONE in state court.

In light of Erickson's aggressive actions (and of those whom he hired) and after having moved from a low-rent location on Venice Boulevard to the expensive Milbank property, ONE faced possible ruin. Losing Erickson's support was devastating to the organization. To protect its interests, ONE obtained a series of restraining orders and injunctions against Erickson and the EEF. The effort of defending their hold on the Milbank estate effectively paralyzed much of ONE's public operations.<sup>87</sup> By 1986 ONE Institute had ceased to be an authorized degree-granting institution under California State law.<sup>88</sup> It did, however, continue to publish the ONE Newsletter, keep the library open for researchers, and offer the ONE lecture series.<sup>89</sup>

The battle for Milbank raged from 1983 to 1993. At times, Erickson called in armed guards to restrict access to the grounds. He admitted other tenants to the upper two floors of one of the houses that ONE was not occupying. Members of his family also became resident. ONE's files were rifled, and items went missing. ONE's leaders presumed that it was Erickson's doing. Legg

and Erickson filed suit against each other. Seventy years old and increasingly disabled by his medical conditions and drug problem, Erickson then fled to Mexico to escape arrest on drug charges. Legg, himself eighty years old, still proved an able fighter. He later recalled with great enthusiasm the various altercations between Erickson and himself in the battle for control over Milbank, claiming that on one occasion he had been trapped inside the estate when the gates were welded shut and that on another Erickson had directed contractors to weld Legg's hands to the gates if he refused to move them.<sup>90</sup>

Late in 1988, Erickson's daughter Monica, then twenty years old, was appointed conservator of his affairs due to Erickson's ill health. In conjunction with her mother, Erickson's ex-wife Aileen, she continued the fight for possession and ownership of the Milbank estate. But on April 4, 1990, the title to Milbank was conveyed by court order to ONE and ISHR. That order was overturned by an appellate court and a new trial was ordered.<sup>91</sup> Appeals launched on behalf of the EEF and Erickson, who died early in 1992, continued until October of that year, when Monica Erickson, now his executor, agreed to a settlement. The property was to be divided between Erickson's heirs and ISHR. Monica Erickson took possession of the Milbank house, the tennis courts, and the surrounding lands, whereas ISHR received the McFie house, also known as the Arlington house; the chauffeur's quarters; a meditation sanctuary; and a few smaller service buildings. ISHR agreed to but never mounted a plaque on the Arlington house that was to acknowledge it as a gift from Reed Erickson and rename it Erickson House.<sup>92</sup> In 1992 the assessed value of the property received by ONE was over one million dollars.<sup>93</sup> By August 1, 1993, ONE had vacated the portion of the estate awarded to Monica Erickson and had turned the keys over to her.<sup>94</sup>

### **ONE Inc. after Erickson**

As the relationship between Erickson and ONE deteriorated, so too had the ability of ONE to function at full capacity. For a decade most of ONE's human and financial resources had been engaged in the fight for the Milbank property. Moreover, the organization's primary source of income, the EEF's grants to ISHR, had ceased. For the first few years, Dorr Legg, Professor Walter L. Williams of the University of Southern California, and a few others had continued to provide courses to a handful of graduate students, but by the late 1980s only Legg still taught at the ONE Institute graduate school. Although he continued to do so until his death in 1994,<sup>95</sup> the institute granted no more degrees.

ONE's monthly lecture series continued at the Milbank property during the dispute. At first, the lectures were presented on the main floor of the Milbank house. When that building passed out of ONE's possession, the series moved to the Arlington house. In March 1995 ONE sold the Arlington house both to repay debts incurred after Erickson's funding had stopped and to pay back taxes on the portion of the Milbank property that ONE had received in the settlement.<sup>96</sup> The lecture series then moved to the chauffeur's quarters. After that too was sold in early 1997, the University of Southern California agreed to sponsor the lecture series, but the response on campus was sporadic. In 1998 the series was incorporated as "Community and Conversation Groups" into the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center. Meanwhile, ONE's library also moved from the Milbank house to the Arlington house to the chauffeur's quarters and finally to the University of Southern California.<sup>97</sup>

In January 1995 ONE regained prominence by merging with the International Gay and Lesbian Archives (IGLA) under the name ONE Institute.<sup>98</sup> ISHR, which still functions as a separate entity, supported the move with a donation of thirty-five thousand dollars and has continued to provide grants to ONE Institute.<sup>99</sup> The process of amalgamation was initiated and shepherded to completion by Walter L. Williams, who worked with ONE, IGLA, ISHR, and the University of Southern California to broker a deal that would strengthen all parties concerned. The newly reconstituted ONE Institute dedicated itself to several projects: the lecture series, educational outreach, ONE Institute Press, the new Center for Advanced Studies, and the maintenance of the combined ONE library and the IGLA collection.<sup>100</sup>

Currently, the main work of ONE Institute Press is the production of an online journal, the International Gay and Lesbian Review, which has published hundreds of book reviews of special interest to gay and lesbian readers.<sup>101</sup> ONE Institute Press also established the ONE Institute Web site, which provides valuable research resources. Finally, it publishes some of the work of the scholars supported by the ONE Institute Center for Advanced Studies, and other related items.

The Center for Advanced Studies supports scholars of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered studies from around the world while they use ONE Institute's library collections. For example, between 1994 and 1998, under Williams's direction, the institute provided research grants and housing to visiting scholars in a nineteen-unit residence at the University of Southern California. Similar grants, provided through ISHR twice a year, are funded with the interest on monies gleaned from the sale of ONE's portion of the Milbank property and from generous bequests made to ISHR or ONE by Hall Call, David G. Cameron, and others.<sup>102</sup>

ONE Institute's extensive library and archival collection is the largest collection of gay and lesbian resource material in the world.<sup>103</sup> It is itself the result of the merging of two collections. The first, the International Gay and Lesbian Archives, was built on a collection that Kepner started in 1942 and worked on until his death in 1997. In 1971 Kepner first opened the collection to the public as the Western Gay Archives. Over the years it was also known as the National Gay Archives and as the Natalie Barney/Edward Carpenter Library of the International Gay and Lesbian Archives.<sup>104</sup> The second component of the present library originated with ONE's collection. The combined collections house over twenty thousand books, pamphlets, and scripts; over three thousand videos of films and television programs; over six thousand periodicals; clippings files with over one million items; hundreds of audio recordings; and a small museum of ephemera.<sup>105</sup> After extensive negotiations spearheaded by Williams, a building at 909 West Adams Boulevard on the University of Southern California campus was extensively renovated, largely with the university's financial support, to house the library. In May 2001 a gala opening took place.<sup>106</sup>

Thus, although ONE had encountered both great support and great difficulty in its uneasy collaboration with Reed Erickson and the Erickson Educational Foundation, it has regrouped and joined forces with other organizations that share its vision. Further, it has found a new benefactor in the University of Southern California. However, while ONE Institute continues to accrue public recognition, the work of Erickson and the EEF has gone virtually unnoticed. The proceeds from Erickson's philanthropy quietly continue to fund gay and lesbian research almost forty years after he saw the need for this support and offered his wealth and his expertise to provide it. The custodians of his donations, ISHR's board of directors, have conservatively invested the profits from the sale of the Milbank property and use the income to make small grants in support of gay and lesbian research connected to ONE Institute.<sup>107</sup> In this way Erickson's contributions continue to provide support quietly behind the scenes. ONE Institute thrives once again because of the hard work of dedicated individuals and the financial contributions of many. Yet without the generosity of one crucial benefactor, ONE's success would most likely now be only a chapter in the history of gay and lesbian activism.

### **Looking Back, Moving On**

The relationship between ONE and Reed Erickson and the EEF ultimately ended in dissolution. A combination of factors was responsible, but several important points should be remembered. Both ONE and the EEF had common goals. They both sought to create social

change through education, publicity, and the support of marginalized people. Both fostered research that contributed to the social acceptability of marginalized people and that was grounded in fact rather than in prejudice. Both recognized the need for substantial financial support of organizations working on such issues. Leaders of both organizations, mindful of their own experiences, strove to make the world a better place for others. Perhaps most significantly, both organizations recognized the need to work together as communities of marginalized people to effect significant and lasting change.

The story of the organizations' relationship is thus an important one not only for historians but also for activists and community members. The partnership, its problems, and its lessons provide us with valuable insights into the factors that can contribute to effective (or dysfunctional) relationships between transgender and homosexual groups. Since ONE has continued as an institution after the collapse of the EEF, the evidence we are left with and the versions of the story that remain in circulation are mainly from the perspective of ONE and its members. Erickson's personal and professional papers are much more difficult to trace than those of ONE, and many of his closest friends either are guarded in their comments or have died. It is thus unfortunate, both for Erickson and for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender history, that a significant portion of the story remains as yet untold, and it is imperative that the contributions of transgendered and transsexual activists of the past do not go unnoticed.

Although ONE was a relatively unusual organization in the 1950s and 1960s, by the 1970s gay and lesbian social activism had proliferated rapidly. Other individuals and organizations had taken up the work of education and research about homosexuality; courses and programs of gay and lesbian studies had sprung up at many colleges and universities in Europe and North America. As of this writing, however, there are still no other U.S. institutions that offer graduate degrees in an area comparable to ONE's homophile studies.<sup>108</sup>

Much of the recent growth of gay and lesbian pride was built on an ethnic like gay identity that necessarily defined inclusion by the exclusion of others. Gay and lesbian pride has been created at least partly to counteract a society that taught gays and lesbians to be ashamed of who they are.<sup>109</sup> As gays and lesbians have found their pride, many have retreated in shame from the transgendered and transsexual people who had always been among them. This shunning of transgendered and transsexual people remains a dark corner in the struggle for gay and lesbian rights. Transgendered and transsexual people have understood the need for alliances and have made many important contributions to the fight for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered

rights.<sup>110</sup> Reed Erickson was only one of the untold numbers of unsung transgendered and transsexual people who have given generously to a movement that has not always appreciated their gifts. By making more people aware of this one transsexual man's tremendous contributions to the growth and development of a vital arm of the gay and lesbian movement, we hope to have contributed to a reappraisal of the value of a united lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender movement. The story of the relationship between ONE and the EEF reminds us of the challenges of creating and maintaining a unified movement. It is important that we recognize the need to work together toward common goals and that as we do so we remember that, as Erickson (and Carlyle) so rightly recognized, we are all one.

## Notes

1. Joshua Gamson, "Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma;" in *Queer Theory/Sociology*, ed. Steven Seidman (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 395-420; Steven Seidman, "Introduction," in *Seidman Queer Theory/Sociology*, 1-29.
2. Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics, and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800* (London: Longman, 1981), 96-121.
3. Ray Blanshard, "The Case for Publicly Funded Transsexual Surgery," *Psychiatry Rounds* 4, no. 2 (2000): 4-6; Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: With Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct*, trans. Franklin S. Klaf (New York: Stein and Day, 1965), 186-307.
4. Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest, "J. Allen Gilbert Papers," [home.telport.com/~glapn/ar03OI2.html](http://home.telport.com/~glapn/ar03OI2.html) (accessed November 5, 2003).
5. Esther Newton, "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman," *Signs* 9 (1984): 557-75; Jay Prosser, *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 135-69.
6. Donna Minkowitz, "Love Hurts," *Village Voice*, April 19, 1994, 24-30; Kathleen Chapman and Michael Du Plessis, "'Don't Call Me Girl': Lesbian Theory, Feminist Theory, and Transsexual Identities," in *Cross Purposes: Lesbians, Feminists, and the Limits of Alliance*, ed. Dana Heller (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 169-85; Brigitte Eriksson, "A Lesbian Execution in Germany, 1721: The Trial Records," *Journal of Homosexuality* 6,

- nos. 1-2 (1981): 27-40; Nan Alamilla Boyd, "The Materiality of Gender: Looking for Lesbian Bodies in Transgender History," in *Lesbian Sex Scandals: Sexual Practices, Identities, and Politics*, ed. Dawn Atkins (New York: Haworth, 1999), 73-81. The Lesbian Herstory Archives listed transman Brandon Teena as among "lesbians" who had recently died in "in Memory of the Voices We Have Lost," *Lesbian Herstory Archives Newsletter*, January 1995, 7.
7. The Erickson Educational Foundation (EEF) provided a panoply of support services for transgendered and transsexual people but did not frame itself as a political organization. Rather, it was constituted, as its name suggests, as an educational organization. Transgendered people were organizing as early as 1967 in San Francisco. See Members of the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California, "MTF Transgender Activism in the Tenderloin and Beyond, 1966-1975: Commentary and Interview with Elliot Blackstone;" *GLQ* 4 (1998): 349-72. By 1971 the EEF was funding some of the work of San Francisco's National Transsexual Counseling Unit, which had grown out of earlier activism. For current organizing of female-to-male transgendered people see FTM International, [www.ftmi.org](http://www.ftmi.org). For general transgender information see Gender Education and Advocacy, [www.gender.org](http://www.gender.org); and the International Foundation for Gender Education, [www.ifge.org](http://www.ifge.org).
  8. Dallas Denny, "You're Strange and We're Wonderful: The Relationship between the Gay/Lesbian and Transgendered Communities," *TransSisters*, Autumn 1994, 21-23; Chrissy Cada, "Issue of Transgender Rights Divides Many Gay Activists," *Boston Sunday Globe*, April 23, 2000, posted on Gender Advocacy Network News, "News Remail" April 26, 2000, [www.tgender.net/news/gain.html](http://www.tgender.net/news/gain.html).
  9. Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1993).
  10. Gamson, "Self-Destruct" 408-11.
  11. "One of the first things I told them [Olivia Records] when we had our initial meeting and got to like each other very much;" Stone says, "was that I was a transie. What I didn't tell them was that I was still in transition ... simply because I felt it was personal information and I wasn't ready to share it. So at the time I started working at Olivia, I was actually preoperative. They didn't know that, and I didn't know it was volatile. I figured I would tell them at some point when we got to know each other better" (Davina Anne Gabriel,

- "Interview with the Transsexual Vampire: Sandy Stone's Dark Gift," *TransSisters*, Spring 1995, 17).
12. "To the best of my knowledge," Stone recalls, "there was never a faction within Olivia that wanted to oust me.... When the boycott began to be threatened, we had to sit down and do some serious thinking. And there was a point where the collective said, 'Sandy, the reality of the situation is that if you don't leave, there's real danger.' And so I left" (Gabriel, "Interview," 18).
  13. Janice Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* (Boston: Beacon, 1979), 129, 5.
  14. *The Transsexual Empire* was reissued in 1994 by Teachers College Press with no changes other than the addition of a new introduction on transgenderism. See also Ann Cvetkovich and Selena Wahng, "Don't Stop the Music: Roundtable Discussion with Workers from the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival," *GLQ* 7 (2001): 131-51.
  15. Nancy Jean Burkholder, "A Kinder, Gentler Festival?" *TransSisters*, November/December 1993, 4-5; Davina Anne Gabriel, "Mission to Michigan II: Exiles at Mecca," *TransSisters*, November-December 1993, 19-24, 27; Gabriel, "Mission to Michigan III: Barbarians at the Gates," *TransSisters*, Winter 1995, 14-23; Gabriel, "Mission to Michigan IV: No Room at the Information Table," *TransSisters*, Autumn 1995, 20-29; "InYourFace News Interview with Riki Anne Wilchins," August 25, 1999, [www.camptrans.com/stories/interview.html](http://www.camptrans.com/stories/interview.html).
  16. Candice Elliot Brown, "The Gay, Lesbian, and Feminist Backlash," <http://www.transhistory.org/history/index.html> (accessed March 13, 2000).
  17. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, "NGLTF Adopts New Mission Statements; New Board Co-Chairs and Members Named," September 23, 1997, [www.nglftf.org/news/release.cfm?releaseID=105](http://www.nglftf.org/news/release.cfm?releaseID=105).
  18. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, "PFLAG Votes 'Yes' Overwhelmingly to Include Transgender in Mission," September 23, 1998, [www.pflag.org/press/releases/923b.html](http://www.pflag.org/press/releases/923b.html).
  19. The involvement of transgendered people in the Millennium March for Equality did not occur without difficulties. Much of the planning took place without their inclusion, and the transgendered speakers, Jamison Green, Dana Rivers, and Riki Anne Wilchins, were not allowed to speak for the agreed-on length of time (Penni Ashe Matz, editorial, posted on

- Gender Advocacy Network, "News Remail," listserv, May 10, 2000, [www.gender.org/news/gain.html](http://www.gender.org/news/gain.html)).
20. Human Rights Campaign, "HRC and Gender Identity," March 2001, [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org).
  21. W. Dorr Legg, introduction to *Homophile Studies in Theory and Practice*, ed. W. Dorr Legg et al. (Los Angeles: ONE Institute Press; San Francisco: GLB, 1994), 1-6.
  22. C. Todd White, "Dale Jennings (1917-2000): ONE's Outspoken Advocate," in *Before Stonewall: Activists for Gay and Lesbian Rights in Historical Context*, ed. Vern L. Bullough (New York: Harrington Park, 2002), 85.
  23. Legg, introduction to *Homophile*, 2.
  24. *Ibid.*, 3; ONE Inc., "Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, 1953;" in Legg, *Homophile*, 339.
  25. The articles of incorporation state that ONE's purposes were "1. To publish and disseminate magazines, brochures, leaflets, books and papers concerned with medical, social, pathological, psychological and therapeutic research of every kind and description pertaining to sociosexual behavior. 2. To sponsor, supervise and conduct educational programs, lectures and concerts for the aid and benefit of all social and emotional variants and to promote among the general public an interest, knowledge and understanding of the problems of such persons. 3. To stimulate, sponsor, aid, supervise and conduct research of every kind and description pertaining to sociosexual behavior. 4. To promote the integration into society of such persons whose behavior varies from current moral and social standards and to aid the development of social and moral responsibility in all such persons. 5. To lease, purchase, hold, have, use and take possession of and enjoy any personal or real property necessary for the uses and purposes of the corporation:'
  26. The first out-of-state subscription check came from Alfred C. Kinsey (W. Dorr Legg, "Exploring Frontiers: An American Tradition," *New York Folklore* 19 [1993]: 228).
  27. "40-Year Dedicated Activist Dorr Legg Dies at 89;" ONE-IGLA Bulletin, Spring 1995, [www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/bulletin/articles/LeggBio.html](http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/bulletin/articles/LeggBio.html); Legg, *Homophile*, 17.
  28. David G. Cameron, "ONE Institute" and "Architecture Notes" (flyer prepared for the Da Camera Society of Mount St. Mary's College on the occasion of the Chamber of Music in Historic Sites concert, March 25, 1984), International Gay and Lesbian Archives (IGLA) collection. At its height ONE Magazine had a circulation of eleven thousand (ONE, "ONE 1952-1982: Thirty Year Celebration; Program of Events," 1982, collection of Aaron H. Devor).

29. Legg, *Homophile*, 52-53; Walter L. Williams, interview by Aaron H. Devor, tape recorded via telephone to Palm Springs, CA, May 12, 2000.
30. Legg, *Homophile*, 18.
31. *Ibid.*, 32-50; ONE, "Program:" According to Legg, the lectures in New York were given in 1968 (*Homophile*, 50); according to the "Program," they were given in 1966.
32. Reid Rasmussen, interview by Aaron H. Devor, tape recorded via telephone to Los Angeles, April 20, 2000; Walter L. Williams, interview by Aaron H. Devor, tape recorded via telephone to Palm Springs, CA, April 23, 2000. According to Legg, the lecture series began in 1958 (*Homophile*, 50); according to the ONE "Program," it began in 1956.
33. Legg, *Homophile*, 21-22.
34. Erickson Educational Foundation, brochure, collection of Aaron H. Devor.
35. Erickson Educational Foundation Newsletter, Spring 1983, 5.
36. "Introduction to a Course in Miracles,"  
[http://www.acim.org/about\\_acim\\_section/into\\_to\\_acim.html](http://www.acim.org/about_acim_section/into_to_acim.html) (accessed November 7, 2003).
37. Legg, *Homophile*, 16.
38. W. Dorr Legg to Evelyn Hooker, February 8, 1968, IGLA collection.
39. W. Dorr Legg, interview by Vern L. Bullough, Los Angeles, December 15, 20, and 29, 1993.
40. W. Dorr Legg to Thomas Hunter Russell, January 24, 1989, IGLA collection.
41. Legg interview.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Vern L. Bullough et al., eds., *An Annotated Bibliography of Homosexuality*, 2 vols. (New York: Garland, 1976).
44. Legg, "Frontiers," 233.
45. *Ibid.*, 232.
46. Erickson Educational Foundation Newsletter, Spring 1972, 1.
47. ISHR, "Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws;" n.d., IGLA collection.
48. W. Dorr Legg to "Mort" February 14, 1968, IGLA collection.
49. William Kraker to Reed Erickson, October 15, 1964, IGLA collection.

50. W. Dorr Legg to William Kraker, December 23, 1964, IGLA collection.
51. Taylor, Porter, Brooks, Fuller & Phillips to Chester A. Usry of the Internal Revenue Service, in response to Usry's letter of March 31, 1965, n.d., IGLA collection.
52. David G. Cameron, interview by Aaron H. Devor, tape recording, Los Angeles, May 14, 1996; James Kepner Jr., interview by Aaron H. Devor, tape recording, Los Angeles, May 13, 1996.
53. "A year by year listing of EEF funds received by ISHR and purpose for which they were spent;" enclosure, Legg to Russell, IGLA collection. Kepner (interview) recalled that Legg had received additional checks made out to him personally and that other individuals who worked for ONE had received money directly from Erickson or the EEF, in addition to the grants listed by Legg as having been issued to ISHR.
54. From 1964 to 1976 Bullough received sixty thousand dollars from Erickson for this project and for his other early work on (homo)sexuality (Vern L. Bullough, interview by Aaron H. Devor, tape recording, Los Angeles, May 30, 1996).
55. Legg, Homophile, 53-56.
56. Bullough interview.
57. Legg, Homophile, 384.
58. Laud Humphreys, *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* (Chicago: Aldine, 1970); Legg, Homophile, 384-85; Evelyn Hooker, "The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual;" *Journal of Projective Technique* 21 (1957): 18-31.
59. Legg, Homophile, 47.
60. *Ibid.*, 48, 386-87.
61. *Ibid.*, 128-30.
62. Hooker, "Adjustment;" 18-31.
63. Legg, Homophile, 159.
64. Antony Grey, interview by Aaron H. Devor, tape recording, London, August 23, 1999.
65. Legg, Homophile, 60.
66. Grey interview.

67. Erickson Educational Foundation Newsletter, Spring 1968, 2, collection of Aaron H. Devor; Antony Grey, *Quest for Justice: Towards Homosexual Emancipation* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992), 142.
68. Grey, *Quest*, 142-60.
69. Legg, *Homophile*, 74-77; Legg interview. According to the ONE "Program," presentations at the banquet were also made by Lisa Ben, Del Martin, and Phyllis Lyon. Ben was publisher of *Vice Versa*, "the earliest known American periodical especially for Lesbians. Nine typewritten issues were privately distributed, June 1947-Feb 1948." Martin and Lyon in 1955 had founded the Daughters of Bilitis, "the earliest lesbian emancipation organization in the U.S.... dedicated to understanding of, and by, the lesbian" (Legg, "Frontiers," 235).
70. Legg interview.
71. The 3.5-acre property known as the Milbank Estate was named after Isaac Milbank, who had commissioned its creation in 1913. In that year Milbank, who had been a vice president and the general manager of the company that later became Borden Milk, was president of the corporation that developed the Country Club Estates area of Los Angeles, so named for its previous use as the Los Angeles Country Club. The Mediterranean-style twenty-seven-room mansion, designed by G. Lawrence Stimson, cost the then huge sum of thirty-five thousand dollars. It was joined by a smaller, but still grand, Georgian-style residence for Milbank's daughter Phila and his son-in-law Lyman McFie and by several lesser buildings used for recreation and service purposes. The Milbanks and the McFies lived in these homes until their deaths in 1976.
72. *Erickson v. Legg*, C 499 120 (c/w C 520 792, C 541097, C 693 216) U.S. p. 4 (n.d.). Trial brief and related cross-actions and consolidated actions, IGLA collection.
73. Legg wrote to Erickson that "the idea of putting the Milbank property temporarily in the name of Erickson Educational Foundation seems to make good sense." W. Dorr Legg to Reed Erickson, January 14, 1983, IGLA collection; *Erickson v. Legg*, C 499 120 (c/w C 520 792, C 541097, C 693 216) U.S. p. 5 (n.d.). Trial brief and related cross-actions and consolidated actions, IGLA collection; Walter Williams recalled that Legg objected to this arrangement but that Erickson insisted that it was the best way to proceed (Williams interview, May 12, 2000). Monica Erickson recalled that it was never her father's intention to give title to ONE (e-mail message to Aaron H. Devor, October 21, 2003).
74. James Dunham, interview by Aaron H. Devor, tape recording, Los Angeles, June 12, 1996.

75. Edward L. Francis to Reed Erickson, February 14, 1983, IGLA collection.
76. Dunham interview; Helen Kleinstiver, interview by Aaron H. Devor, tape recording, Baton Rouge, LA, July 25, 1997.
77. Kleinstiver interview.
78. W. Dorr Legg, press release, April 20, 1983, IGLA collection.
79. Legg, Homophile, 413.
80. Zelda Suplee to W. Dorr Legg, August 17, 1987, IGLA collection; Zelda Suplee to Antony Grey, June 1984, quoted in Grey interview.
81. Ketamine has more recently become a popular street and "club" drug also known as K, Ket, Special K, Vitamin K, and Kit Kat. For more information see the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, [www.health.org/pubs/gdocs/ketamine/index.htm](http://www.health.org/pubs/gdocs/ketamine/index.htm).
82. Monica Erickson, interview by Aaron H. Devor, tape recording, Los Angeles, June 3, 1996; Suplee to Grey, June 1984, quoted in Grey interview.
83. Zelda Suplee to Antony Grey, September 26, 1985, quoted in Grey interview.
84. Monica Erickson, handwritten declaration, April 25, 1984, IGLA collection; California v. Erickson, FY15759 U.S. 1 (1984). Declaration of Michael S. Pratter, IGLA collection.
85. Kepner interview.
86. Reed Erickson to ONE Institute, January 3, 1983 [sic], stamped received January 9, 1984. In January 1983 the Milbank property still belonged to the Church Universal and Triumphant. The correct date of the letter therefore is probably January 3, 1984.
87. Erickson v. Legg, C 499 120 (c/w C 520 792, C 541097, C 693 216) U.S. p. 8 (n.d.). Trial brief and related cross-actions and consolidated actions, IGLA collection.
88. Jack L. Housden, of the State of California Council for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education, to W. Dorr Legg, March 18, 1992, IGLA collection.
89. Williams interview, May 12, 2000.
90. Legg interview.
91. Erickson v. Legg, BO 51473, CA LASC No. C 499 120, consolidated with C 502 792, C 541207, C 693 216, CA2/7 4 (1991). Respondents' brief, IGLA collection. That the court

order was overturned and a new trial ordered was confirmed by Monica Erickson, e-mail message to Devor.

92. Thomas Hunter Russell to Michael S. Pratter and Alfred R. Keep, October 21, 1992, IGLA collection; Monica Erickson, e-mail message to Devor.
93. County Assessor's Records, "Data Concerning the Milbank Estate," IGLA collection.
94. W. Dorr Legg to Monica Erickson, August 1, 1993, IGLA collection.
95. Williams interview, April 23, 2000.
96. Westland Escrow, amended escrow instructions, March 8, 1995, collection of ISHR.
97. Williams interview, April 23, 2000; Rasmussen interview.
98. "ONE and IGLA Merge," ONE-IGLA Bulletin, Spring 1995, [www.use.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/bulletin/articles/ONE\\_IGLA\\_Merge.html](http://www.use.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/bulletin/articles/ONE_IGLA_Merge.html).
99. "ISHR Awards \$35,000 to General Fund," ONE-IGLA Bulletin, Winter 1998, [www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/bulletin/articles/ISHR.html](http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/bulletin/articles/ISHR.html); Rasmussen interview; Walter L. Williams to Aaron H. Devor, May 12, 2000.
100. "ONE and IGLA Merge"; Ernie Potvin, "ONE Institute Organization and Activities," January 25, 1998, [www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/organization\\_and\\_activities.htm](http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/organization_and_activities.htm).
101. See International Gay and Lesbian Review, [www.use.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/onepress](http://www.use.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/onepress).
102. Williams interview, April 23, 2000; Rasmussen interview.
103. Williams interview, April 23, 2000.
104. Ernie Potvin, "A Brief History of ONE Institute and the International Gay and Lesbian Archives (IGLA)," January 25, 1998, [www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/background.html](http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/background.html). According to Williams, Kepner provided the archives with an alternative name, the Natalie Barney/Edward Carpenter Library, as early as 1979. By 1985 that name was rarely used, and it was formally abandoned in 1994 (Williams to Devor).
105. Potvin, "ONE Institute Organization"; [www.oneinstitute.org](http://www.oneinstitute.org).
106. ONE Institute and Archives, "ONE's Grand Opening, May 6, 2001;" [www.use.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/grandopening/pagel.html](http://www.use.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/grandopening/pagel.html) (accessed July 25, 2001); Williams interview, April 23, 2000.
107. Williams interview, April 23, 2000.

108. John G. Younger, "University LGBT Programs, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies in the USA and Canada plus Sibling Societies and Study-Abroad Programs," March 28, 2000, [www.duke.edu/web/jyounger/lgbprogs.html](http://www.duke.edu/web/jyounger/lgbprogs.html).
109. Sally R. Munt, "Introduction," in *Butch/Femme: Inside Lesbian Gender*, ed. Sally R. Munt (London: Cassell, 1998), 1-12.
110. Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to RuPaul* (Boston: Beacon, 1996), 90-99.