

The U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision two years ago making same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states has fueled the festivities during the last few parades, but past year's deadly nightclub shooting in Orlando and growing racial intolerance in the wake of last year's presidential election underscore the ongoing need for the extended gay and lesbian community to march and make itself heard.

Here's a look back at Portland's Pride Parade, from its early years, when taking to the streets took bravery, to recent years, when the parade has featured a wide range of the community and has become a family-friendly event.

- The early years

Portland's very first Pride celebration didn't feature a parade at all. In 1975, a group of about 200 people gathered in the South Park Blocks near Portland State University for Gay Pride Fair, which featured arts and crafts, food and dancing.

The following year, the fair moved to Waterfront Park, and featured 15 booths. That fair was sponsored by the Portland Town Council, a forerunner of the Right to Privacy PAC.

In 1977, Portland got its first Pride Parade, and controversy erupted when Portland Mayor Neil Goldschmidt proclaimed a "Gay Pride Day," prompting a number of churches to publish an open letter in The Oregonian offering to help gays and lesbians repent. The proclamation also launched a move to have Goldschmidt recalled, claiming he had "defamed Portland" by turning it into "a haven for homosexuals."

- 1982: Unity Through Diversity

By the early 1980s, Portland's Pride celebration had become an annual tradition, and this year it was renamed Lesbian and Gay Pride Week to be more inclusive and to de-emphasize the role of gay bars in the event's organization. Marching to a theme of "Unity Through Diversity," more than 2,000 men and women took to the streets of downtown Portland, followed by a gathering at Waterfront Park. According to The Oregonian, the messages on the signs carried in

that march echoed the theme: "Put the right wing back in the closet"; "End gay bashing"; and "Stop the raids on undocumented workers."

- 1983: The new shadow of AIDS

About 2,000 people marched through downtown Portland to kick off this year's Lesbian and Gay Pride Week, to a theme of "Come Out, Come Out, Whoever You Are," a riff on a song from "The Wizard of Oz." But the specter of AIDS cast a shadow over the celebration. The first cases of the disease had been diagnosed only two years earlier, and there was a lot of misinformation about

how it was contracted. "Make war on AIDS not El Salvador," one sign proclaimed. The parade also caused controversy when a marcher in black-face impersonated "Aunt Jemima."

- 1984: Larger crowds, and a conduct code

Portland's 10th annual Lesbian and Gay Pride Week was celebrated by an estimated 3,000 marchers — including a chapter of gay Catholic organization Dignity — which held a rally at Waterfront Park that featured music, speakers and information booths for community groups like the newly formed Cascade AIDS Project and Just Out newspaper.

That year, the parade's organizing committee adopted a dress and conduct code, in the wake of the black-face controversy from the year before. If marchers stepped over the line of good taste, organizers warned, they could be asked to leave the parade. But exactly how do you define "good taste" for a parade that features drag queens, shirtless men and people wearing acres of leather?

- 1985: "We Are Everywhere!"

This year, a smaller crowd of about 500 people participated in the Lesbian and Gay Pride March, according to Oregonian reports. The grand marshal of the parade, which had the theme "We Are Everywhere!," was San Francisco author Armistead Maupin, who wrote the acclaimed "Tales of the City" novels. As he rode through the parade route, he noticed the look of horror on some bystanders' faces. "It brought something home to me," he told The Oregonian. "Some people are not ready to accept all-encompassing gay love."

- 1989: Remembering Stonewall

To mark the 20th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York City, which launched the gay rights movement, nearly 670,000 people turned out for pride parades across the country, including massive gatherings in San Francisco and New York. In Portland, the theme of the parade was "Stonewall 20 — A Generation of Pride," and featured the Portland Gay Men's Chorus among the marchers.

The 1989 march also came at a time of political urgency, coming after the passage the previous fall of Measure 8, a ballot initiative that repealed then-Gov. Neil Goldschmidt's executive order banning discrimination based on sexual orientation in state government, and prohibited job protection for gay and lesbian state workers.

- 1990: "Look to the Future"

As a new decade dawned, Portland's gay and lesbian community looked ahead when they marched down Southwest Broadway. The march included several thousand people.

- 1991: A father's love

While Portland's Lesbian and Gay Pride parade had featured local and state politicians over the years, 1991 brought something new. Police Chief **Tom Potter** rode in the parade to show solidarity with his daughter **Katie**, a Portland police officer who had recently come out. **Potter** also

wanted to show that the gay community that they could count on fair treatment from police, after a long history of being targeted.

The 1991 parade was the largest in history at that point, with more than 6,000 marchers, including supporters from small Oregon towns, as well as a contingent from the timber community of Roseburg. The route of the Pride parade has changed numerous times over the years. In 1991, it stretched along Broadway downtown in a straight line from Northwest Davis Street all the way down to Portland State University.

- 1992: A call to action

The city officially upgraded the march to “parade status,” increasing the amount of police and city support for the event. The number of participants continued to grow, with more than 8,000 joining in the march. Part of the reason for the spike in attendance was growing concern over a new proposed ballot measure from the Oregon Citizens Alliance, which would amend the Oregon Constitution to call homosexuality a perversion. State Rep. Gail Shibley, the first openly lesbian politician elected to state office, urged supporters to get active: “We must show the people who would despise us, the respect and love for diversity that we demand of them.”

- 1993: “Don’t assume your freedoms are assured”

The Pride Parade now stretched out over a two-mile route through downtown, and featured a theme of “A Family of Pride.” “We’re here. We’re queer. So sue us!” chanted members of the Oregon Gay and Lesbian Law Association, according to Oregonian reports. Police estimated that more than 10,000 people participated in or watched the parade. Even though a statewide ballot measure by the Oregon Citizens Alliance had been voted down the previous fall, many parade participants said they were still concerned about the group’s ongoing efforts to restrict the rights of gays and lesbians. Many marchers carried anti-OCA signs. One sign seemed to sum up the sentiment: “Don’t assume your freedoms are assured.”