

Acknowledgments

This book was years in the making, and I've accrued many debts in the course of its production. It was both inspired and informed by the ongoing efforts of legal activists to secure basic civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people. My thanks go first to the good people at the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, who allowed me to set up camp in their New York office and plow through thirty years of their organizational records and case files. I am indebted in particular to Executive Director Kevin Cathcart, who gave me the initial permission to examine Lambda's records and whose generosity of spirit revealed itself in the many hours of conversation he spent with me. I am also indebted to Louanne Marchand, Fran Goldstein, Gillian Chi, and Marisol Velazquez, who moved mountains to accommodate both my practical needs (*Is there a desk I can use?*) and my scholarly interests (*Is there any way I can track down this decades-old case?*).

I benefited enormously from the insights of Lambda's litigators, both past and present, who provided me with a wealth of information about specific cases and patiently instructed me in the finer aspects of legal argument. Their voices are heard throughout this book, although in the interests of confidentiality they are rarely identified specifically.

Three women who served as Lambda's legal directors over the years must receive special mention because they each provided invaluable assistance to me. Abby Rubenfeld (director from 1983 to 1988) spent hours on the phone with me filling in the missing pieces of Lambda's legal and organizational history. Paula Ettelbrick (director from 1989 to 1993) did the same for later years. In addition, she planted the seed that germinated into a dissertation, and eventually this book, in the autumn of 1994 when she taught a seminar on sexual orientation and the law at the University of Michigan School of Law. My conversations with her and with my classmates convinced me that the progress of gay rights litigation offered an excellent lens through which to examine the subject of legal change. Beatrice Dohrn (director from 1993 to 2000), likewise filled in missing pieces for me. More than that, however, she pushed me to examine the

set of assumptions about the law and legal change I carried with me as a social scientist, which in some cases can be very different from the assumptions held by a practicing movement litigator. My conversations with her helped me to bridge the gap between the two worlds, or at least to recognize where such gaps existed.

Although my focus in this book is on Lambda and its litigation, I did not confine my inquiries to Lambda's litigators. I have benefited greatly from conversations held with others involved in litigation on behalf of gay rights. I am particularly grateful to Kathy Wilde, Michael Hardwick's lead counsel through much of the litigation over the constitutionality of Georgia's sodomy law. Her conversations with me helped me understand the early phase of the case. Beth Robinson was also a treasure. One of the three lead attorneys in the litigation over the constitutionality of Vermont's ban on same-sex marriage, Beth gave me great insight into the behind-the-scenes workings of activists trying to secure the right to same-sex marriage.

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Finally, Susanmarie Harrington has given me more than I could even begin to catalogue. I married her in 1995, just before I began the research for this project. How the world has changed since then. The concept of same-sex marriage was only beginning to seep into the public consciousness in 1995. As I write these acknowledgments, Vermont recognizes civil unions and Massachusetts issues marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Both of these changes occurred in large part thanks to the efforts of gay rights litigators. And, thanks again to gay rights litigators, Susan and I are both legally recognized as parents to our daughter. What this means is that my partner and I have acquired at least a few of the legal tools we need to protect and care for our family, tools that have long been denied to people in same-sex relationships. Lambda and other gay rights litigators are working hard to ensure that my family gets all the legal protection it needs, and for that I salute them.