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The Pursuit
50 years in the fight for LGBT rights

Airs Thursday, June 23, 2016 at 9 p.m. on WHYY-TV

PHILADELPHIA, May, 12, 2016 – ***The Pursuit 50 years in the Fight for LGBT Rights* will air on Thursday, June 23, 2016 at 9 p.m. on WHYY-TV.** Produced by WHYY, *The Pursuit* reflects on 50 years of change since protesters gathered in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia on July 4, 1965 and publicly called for an end to discrimination against “homosexuals.”

The Pursuit presents a complex and vibrant picture, contrasting LGBT experiences past and present and demonstrating both how far the community has come and how far there is left to go. “Few of us grasp the great distance traveled by the LGBT community in the last 50 years. And despite our current ‘open’ environment, few of us understand the complexities of life for LGBT people today,” said Director and Producer Ilana Trachtman. “In making this film I wanted to open up the conversation by offering intimate portraits of individuals and the challenges they face.”

LGBT elders, four surviving protestors and 11 activist peers recall life in the 1960s, when “gays” were “hidden in plain sight,” vulnerable to arrest, subjected to psychiatric treatment, fired from jobs and publicly shamed. “One can’t fight for one’s rights in a closet. We came out and found each other,” said Rita Addressa, retired executive director of the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force.

“What was it like being gay 50 years ago?” asks Lillian Faderman in *The Pursuit*. “As far as the law was concerned, they were criminals. As far as the government was concerned, they were subversives. As far as the church was concerned, they were sinners. As far as the psychiatric profession was concerned they were crazies,” said Faderman, well known feminist scholar and LGBT historian.

These poignant recollections introduce four complex portraits of contemporary LGBT life.

- ***Kids Today*** profiles four resilient young LGBT adults who have experienced homelessness.
- ***Out at Work*** introduces viewers to LGBT cops who are changing the face of the Philadelphia Police Department.
- ***In a Family Way*** presents two families who couldn’t have existed 50 years ago: a transgender mother, her wife and sons; and two fathers raising their biological children.
- ***No Place like Home*** features residents of the John C. Anderson apartments, the nation’s first federally-funded housing project for low-income LGBT seniors.

“We are teachers and students, artists and legislators, military and clergy. We are your children, your brothers and sisters. We are everywhere, woven into the very fabric that makes up our great nation. By participating in *The Pursuit*, my hope is that I, in some small way, may have the opportunity to help build some bridges leading to respect, understanding and equality, rather than burn them. We’ve already had enough of that,” said Elizabeth Coffey-Williams, Artist/Performer.

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The Pursuit was filmed in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Selinsgrove, PA, and Provincetown, MA.

A thoughtful look back and an intimate look at the present, *The Pursuit* reminds viewers that while the past half-century has seen momentous changes, the fight for LGBT rights continues today.

“*The Pursuit* continues the story told in the 2001 WHYY film *Gay Pioneers* which documented the first organized annual ‘homosexual’ civil rights demonstrations held in Philadelphia,” notes WHYY President and CEO Bill Marrazzo. “We plan to arrange national distribution for this new film so that people across the country can better appreciate Philadelphia’s role as the birthplace of equality for all.”

This project, which includes community screenings and an education guide in addition to the film, is a collaboration among WHYY, Independence Visitor Center Corporation and Equality Forum. Major support for this project has been provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, with additional support from The Philadelphia Foundation.

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