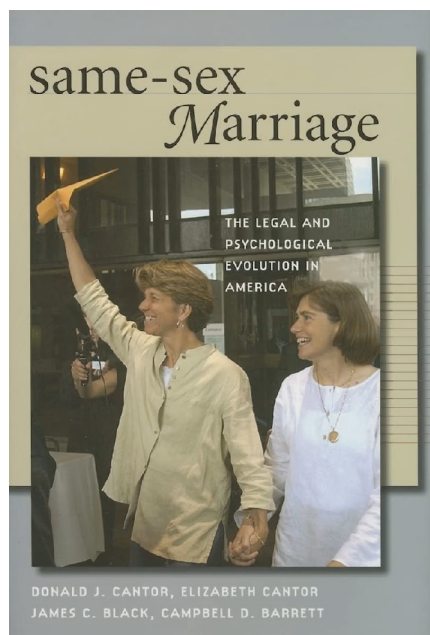


Donald J. Cantor



Born on May 11, 1931, in Stamford, Connecticut, Donald J. Cantor grew up in Hartford and West Hartford. He earned his undergraduate degree from Harvard College (1953) before serving in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War.

After his military service, he continued his education at Harvard Law School, where he earned his J.D. in 1959. He moved back to Connecticut and began his distinguished law career, eventually practicing law with Eddie Hyman at Hyman & Cantor, P.C., for 36 years.

Don was a prolific author and advocate for legal reform. In the 1960s he was a contributing author for *American Jurisprudence* and wrote bold articles on the need for criminal law reform related to divorce, abortion, narcotics, and homosexuality and sodomy law for *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Humanist*, and *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science*.

Don was an early champion of gay rights. In December 1961, he published an article titled "The Connecticut Sodomy Statute: A Case for Repeal" in the *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*. The article provided an comprehensive legal framework on why state regulation of private, consensual sexual behavior between adults was archaic, counterproductive, and an infringement on personal freedom. Three years later, he published an article in the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* titled "Deviation and the Criminal Law" which questioned the use of the criminal law to prohibit the private sexual conduct of consenting adults. These articles came to the attention of Arthur C. Warner who founded the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties in 1970. Arthur [decided to invite](#) Don to join the committee.

Don's home state of Connecticut decriminalized consensual sodomy on October 1, 1971, when a comprehensive new criminal code passed in 1969 officially took effect. He and Arthur worked behind the scenes to quietly lobby for this reform. As a result, Connecticut became second state in the nation to decriminalize private consenting adult sex, following Illinois in 1962.

Don went on to publish three books that argued for various types of legal reform—*Escape from Marriage* (1971), *Child Custody* (1989), and, co-authored with his daughter Elizabeth Cantor, *Same-Sex Marriage* (2006).

He passed away in 2025 at the age of 93. Much of this biography is taken from an obituary published in the *Hartford Courant*.