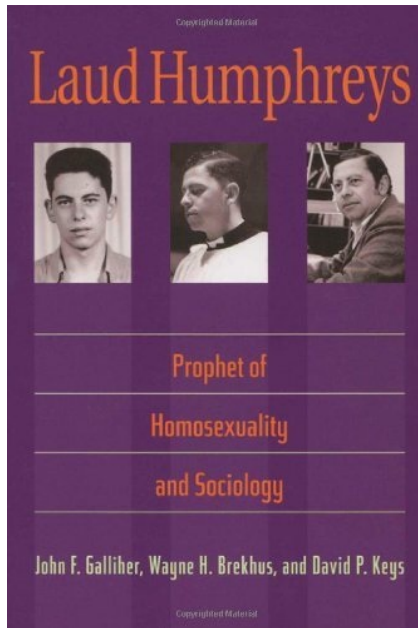


R.A. Laud Humphreys



Robert Allan Humphreys was born on October 16, 1930 in Chickasha, Oklahoma. "Laud" was chosen as his first name when he was baptized again upon entering the Episcopal Church.

Laud attended Colorado College, graduating with his BA in 1952. He attended Seabury-Western Theological Seminary (in Evanston, Illinois), graduating with the MDiv degree in 1955. In 1965, he entered graduate school at Washington University to pursue a doctorate degree in sociology. He completed his dissertation and graduated with his Ph.D. in 1968.

Laud's dissertation formed the basis for a book titled *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* which was published in 1970. His book won the C. Wright Mills Award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems in 1969. By 2004, *Tearoom Trade* had sold more than 300,000 copies, making it one of the best selling books ever written by a sociologist.

Laud was an associate professor of sociology at Pitzer College, in Claremont, California, from 1972 to 1975; he earned full professorship there in 1975, where he worked until about 1980. He retired from Pitzer in 1986, two years before his death.

Laud married a woman in 1960. The couple had two children. Although he [published a book](#) in 1972 titled *Out of the Closets: The Sociology of Homosexual Liberation*, it was not until 1974 that he came out as a gay man. This was during a discussion at a conference session at the American Sociological Association. Laud was a co-founder of the Sociologists' Gay Caucus (now the Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer People in Sociology).

Laud separated from his wife in 1980 and began living with Brian Miller, a graduate student at the University of Alberta. He and Brian co-authored articles about gay subcultures and victims of violent homophobia. Laud [met the acquaintance](#) of Arthur Warner in 1970 after which he was invited to join the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties.

His biography, written by John F. Galliher, Wayne H. Brekhus, and David P. Keys, was published in 2004, under the title *Laud Humphreys: Prophet of Homosexuality and Sociology*. The authors assert that Laud was an extremely complex person and that he was professionally marginalized in the discipline of sociology. The book documents Laud's contributions to the discipline of sociology, as well as his advocacy for African-American civil rights, gay rights, and against war.

Laud's research materials are housed in the collections at [ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives](#).