

William H. Lorentz



From 1979 until his retirement in 2002, Bill Lorentz served as a deputy attorney general in New Jersey. For much of his tenure, he worked in the Civil Rights Division.

At Rutgers undergraduate school, Bill was President of the Student Council, founding President of a chapter of Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity, made Phi Beta Kappa and also found his way into Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities. At law school, he was Vice President of the Student Bar Association at Rutgers and also served as the National Vice President of the American Bar Association Law Student Division. Bill was admitted to the bar in 1965.

Bill spent some 25 years as an activist in the Lesbian and Gay (LGBT) Rights movement. In 1984, he authored the "affectional or sexual orientation" amendment to the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination.

Bill recalled his involvement in a battle to stop the recriminalization of consenting homosexual sex in New Jersey, several years after the law had been declared unconstitutional by the New Jersey Supreme Court:

As then President of Dignity, a gay Catholic group, I recall a particularly hilarious meeting with the Executive Director of the New Jersey Catholic Conference who explained to me that the Church had instigated the proposed law because it had been "caught with its pants down," surely a most unfortunate usage considering the source and the subject matter. Hence, it deservedly died after the state senator who was doing the bidding of the Church withdrew the bill following a campaign by a budding gay rights movement which convinced him gay and lesbian people were "as good citizens as any" and did not deserve to be made criminals for just being who they were. That was the energizing for New Jersey's gay rights struggle and my own lifetime involvement in it.

Bill's activism continued after he retired from the Attorney General's Office. For example, he was mentioned in a [newspaper article](#) reporting on a rally in support of same-sex marriage in 2009:

Bill Lorentz, a retired deputy attorney general for the state of New Jersey, was at the event with his partner of more than 37 years, Michael Francaviglia, both of whom are long-time St. George's parishioners. Lorentz said he was struck by "the differences in attitude between the pro people and the anti." He made repeated efforts to engage the other side in conversation, with little success. "They were caught up in their anger--I really don't feel that toward them," he said.