

Peter Maloney



Peter Maloney is a Canadian lawyer, businessman, activist and former politician, most noted as one of the first Canadian political figures ever to come out as gay and as a prominent builder of Toronto's LGBT community in the 1970s and 1980s. [Wikipedia]

At a party policy conference in February 1972, Peter formally came out as gay while criticizing federal Justice Minister Otto Lang over anti-gay discrimination in federal laws. While homosexuality had already been decriminalized, many laws, including immigration and human rights policies around LGBT issues, remained discriminatory. Later in 1972, he ran as a candidate for school trustee for Ward 6 for the Toronto Board of Education in the 1972 municipal election, becoming Canada's first known openly gay candidate for political office; he was not elected, but came a close third behind the two winning candidates and ahead of six others.

Peter later became an investor in several gay-oriented businesses in Toronto, including the gay magazine *Esprit* and the Club Baths. It was his ownership of the Club Baths that brought Peter to the attention of Arthur Warner, resulting in Peter being invited to join the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties. The Club Bath Chain (CBC) was a trade association of Club Bath owners in several states in the United States and Canada. CBC often called on the expertise of lawyers with the National Committee to coach and consult with local attorneys when their establishments were sometimes raided by the police.

In 1980, Peter and four other gay rights activists met with the Ontario Attorney General to discuss concerns of the gay community. The conversation focused on police entrapment, street violence against gays, police surveillance of the gay community, and the issue of civilian review of complaints against police.

Toronto Gay and Lesbian Liberals (GALL) was formed in 1980, with Peter Maloney as one of the primary organizers. GALL made a splash by sending out letters to all 700 pre-registered delegates to the annual meeting of the Ontario Liberal Party.

Maloney was among the organizers of a Right to Privacy Committee in 1981. One of the most impressive successes of the RTPC was their response to the bathhouse raids. In coordinated attacks on February 5th, 1981, four Toronto bath houses were raided by the Toronto Police. The police arrested 286 people and charged them as 'found-ins' in a 'common bawdy house' with 306 people arrested in total, the remaining charged as 'keepers of a common bawdy house.' The RTPC helped organize the 3000 person march on the Toronto Police 52 Division protesting the police harassment. This action resulted in dismissals of 87% of the cases.