

William F. Reynard



William Reynard was a Colorado attorney who was a vocal and longstanding advocate for the American Civil Liberties Union. In 1959, while representing the ACLU he criticized legislators for refusing to recognize their “inability to change the orientation of [gay and lesbian people].” In 1968, Reynard received the Whitehead Memorial Award for his civil rights work within the ACLU. For many years he was a member of the organization’s national board of directors.

A search of his name on Casetext lists more than 50 federal and state cases in which he was involved, either as an attorney for a party or filing an amicus curiae brief for an organization. In many of these cases he appeared as an attorney for the ACLU. A search on Newspapers.com revealed that in 1952 he was a delegate from Colorado to the Socialist Party national convention. In 1974, he was mentioned in a newspaper as a national board member of the Unitarian Universalist Humanitarian Committee. He lobbied on behalf of the ACLU for decriminalization of the use and possession of mariuana.

Reynard won an appellate case in 1972 in which a three-judge panel in Denver declared unconstitutional the city’s ordinance making it a misdemeanor to "be in or near any place frequented by the public, or public place, for the purpose of inducing, enticing, or procuring another to commit a lewd act or an act of prostitution." Although Reynard downplayed the significance of the ruling at the time, the co-chairs of the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties viewed it as a major victory since it was that ordinance that was the primary tool used by vice officers to arrest gay men who sought out others for consenting sex.

In 1974, Reynard succeeded in overturning a Colorado loitering statute in the case of *People v. Gibson* (1974). The Colorado Supreme Court held as void for vagueness a statute which criminalized “loitering for the purpose of engaging in or soliciting another” to engage in “deviate sexual intercourse.”

Reynard was the lead attorney in *Rich v. Sec’y of the Army* – a case that started in 1978 and dragged on for six years. The plaintiff alleged that the government deprived him of a

property interest in his position as a military serviceman by discharging him from the Army because of his sexual orientation. The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a ruling in 1984 that the discharge proceedings and the ultimate separations from the military did not deprive the plaintiff of his property interests; thus, the court refused to afford procedural due process protection.

Reynard's involvement with gay rights was not limited to the ACLU. He was an active member of one of the first "homophile" organizations in the nation – the Mattachine Society. Reynard is mentioned in the September 1960 issue of the organization's newsletter as having been a speaker at its Sixth Annual Convention in 1959.

Reynard was a member of the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties in the 1970s and 1980s. He died in Wheat Ridge, Colorado in 2018 at the age of 90.

"Bill Reynard was a kind, intelligent, and articulate man," said attorney Thomas F. Coleman as he recalled his association with Bill Reynard during the 1970s. Coleman was co-chair of the committee from 1975 to 1981. "Bill was committed to the protection of civil liberties, not just for gays and lesbians, but to ensure that the protections in the Bill of Rights were preserved and available to everyone."

References

Ziegler, Mary (2018) "What is Sexual Orientation?," Kentucky Law Journal: Vol. 106 : Iss. 1 , Article 6. - [Link](#)

People v. Gibson (1974) 184 Colo. 444 - [Link](#)

Rich v. Secretary of the Army (10th Cir. 1984) 735 F.2d 1220 - [Link](#)