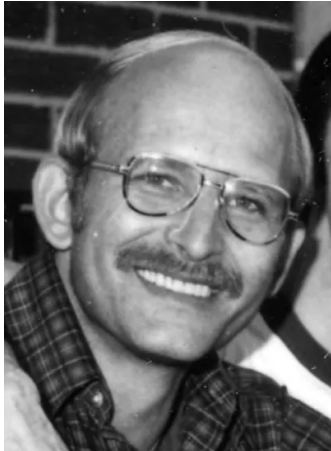


Daniel R. Sivil



Daniel R. Sivil (1940-1993) was a gay rights activist in Troy, Michigan, an Oakland County suburb of Detroit.

In 1976, Dan was one of the founders of the [Association for Single People](#) (ASP). ASP was a pioneering social and political organization for gay men and lesbians in the metropolitan Detroit area. Members used suburban homes, yards, hotels, and banquet rooms to host potlucks and social gatherings, creating visible and supportive networks outside of urban commercial gay scenes. It also acted as a vital local agent for LGBTQ+ support, political lobbying, and community organizing.

Dan was one of the most prominent leaders of the Association of Suburban People (ASP), serving as the organization's president from 1979 to 1982. He was instrumental in guiding ASP through a critical era of growth, balancing social solidarity with deliberate political activism.

Dan took the helm during a transformative period for ASP. Under his leadership, the group managed its dual identity as both a vital social outlet for suburban gays and a burgeoning vehicle for civil rights.

Dan strongly believed in mainstream engagement to break down prejudices in conservative areas. In a notable 1983 letter, he justified ASP's participation in a fundraiser for a non-gay cause, arguing that it established a "positive gay presence out in conservative Sterling Heights" and that "gay rights is going to have to be accomplished on many fronts."

Dan utilized his leadership position to build bridges with legal and educational advocates. In 1980, he coordinated a high-profile speaking engagement on Detroit's WDET-FM radio talk show to openly discuss the legal status of the LGBTQ+ community.

Beyond ASP, Dan was a foundational figure in the broader Michigan LGBTQ+ movement, serving as a founding member of the Michigan Organization for Human Rights (MOHR). Founded in Detroit in 1977, MOHR served as Michigan's primary political advocacy and anti-discrimination organization for the LGBTQ+ community until the mid-1990s. Dan's involvement bridged the gap between grassroots community groups and high-level political and legal strategizing.

Thomas F. Coleman learned about Dan and the ASP during one of his visits to Detroit in the 1970s while he was visiting his family in Oakland County. Tom managed to squeeze in some gay rights activism during those visits. Tom introduced Dan to Arthur Warner who then invited Dan to join the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties.

Dan leveraged his connection to the National Committee to fuel his local work. In 1979, while

serving as the president of ASP, Dan coordinated and arranged for leadership from the National Committee to travel to Michigan to speak at a major Michigan Organization for Human Rights (MOHR) conference in Southfield. This brought national legal strategies regarding sodomy law repeals directly to the Southeast Michigan activist community.

Dan directly entered the legislative arena by working with the Michigan House Civil Rights Committee's Task Force on Family & Sexuality in the early 1980s. Through this platform, Dan and his colleagues pressured state legislators from the inside, presenting data and testimonies on how the state's archaic statutes actively harmed citizens and disrupted families. They routinely lobbied to have the language stripped from the state's penal code.

ASP also had an educational dimension. In the early '80s, ASP hosted a symposium, "Developing a Positive Gay-Lesbian Identity," in cooperation with the Los Angeles-based Whitman-Brooks Clinic. Held initially at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, the gathering, which would become an annual event, included workshops on gay self-help, political skills, and community solidarity. Later symposia featured keynotes by author Edmund White — whose novel *A Boy's Own Story* appeared in 1982 — and pioneering lesbian activists Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin.

In 1981, while Tom was serving as the Executive Director of the California Commission on Personal Privacy — a blue ribbon panel convened by California Gov. Jerry Brown — Dan testified at a hearing of the commission in San Francisco. His topic was titled "Sexual Orientation Discrimination: Aging and Nursing Home Protections."

Dan's testimony focused on recently enacted legislation in Michigan titled the "1978 Omnibus Nursing Home Licensing Act." He explained that this act was the first and the only statewide legislation dealing with sexual orientation, and more profoundly, personal privacy. It affects owners, operators, employees, residents, contractors and perhaps anyone else having anything to do with nursing homes.

Following his passing on August 26, 1993, a memorial feature and [obituary notice](#) was published on September 22, 1993, in *Cruise*—a prominent weekly LGBTQ+ magazine and newspaper serving Detroit and Southeast Michigan during that era.

The published tribute highlighted details of his life and activism. It noted his roots as a native Detroiter, his graduation from Cooley High School, his B.A. in English from Wayne State University, and his 18-year career as a computer analyst for General Motors. The piece formally commemorated his vital leadership roles as the former president of the Association of Suburban People (1979–1982), as well as his dedicated work with the Michigan Organization for Human Rights (MOHR), the Motor City Business Forum, and the Detroit Area Gay/Lesbian Council.