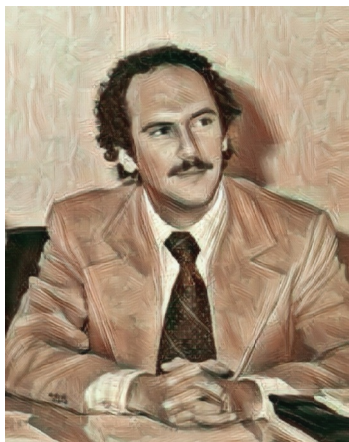


Rand Schrader



Rand Schrader was attending UCLA Law School when he became a founding member of the first gay law students association in the nation in 1972. Members of the group included students from USC, Loyola, and Southwestern as well. Rand graduated in 1973 – the same year that Burt Pines became the city attorney of Los Angeles.

Years later, Rand told a reporter how coming out in law school was an unnerving event. “I went to the dean of the law school at UCLA and asked him: ‘Will I be admitted to the bar if I’m openly gay?’ That’s how frightened we were.”

Right after he passed the bar exam, Rand appeared on a public affairs television program in Los Angeles titled “It Takes All Kinds.” An announcement for the show said that Rand “expects to be admitted to the bar as an openly gay person.”

Burt Pines ushered in a new era for Los Angeles in terms of equal opportunities for gays and lesbians in city employment. The previous city attorney who had been in office for two decades was homophobic. Burt was just the opposite. He was progressive, inclusive, and fair-minded. Burt hired Rand as a deputy city attorney. He knew there would be repercussions for hiring an openly gay attorney at a time that consenting adult homosexual conduct in private was a felony. But he hired him anyway. Some would have considered this a bold move considering that in addition to being openly gay, Rand’s brand of politics was to the left of Burt Pines. Rand had been one of the founders of the city’s radical Gay Liberation Front in the late 1960s.

In an interview with the Advocate newspaper in 1978, Burt discussed Rand’s position in the City Attorney’s office. “We have 240 attorneys. Rand Schrader was the first to openly acknowledge he was gay. I remember the first time he came into the office there was real concern on the part of some of our staff as to what this would mean. But they were quickly surprised and impressed by Rand’s performance more so than by any articles or rhetoric they might have read about gays. Of course, there was also concern in the LAPD and other quarters. But I didn’t see why that should stand in their way. The gay attorneys in this office have made substantial contributions.”

Rand served as a deputy city attorney until 1980, the year that Governor Jerry Brown appointed him to the Municipal Court. Rand gained the distinction of being the second openly gay judge in the nation, right after Stephen Lachs who was appointed to the Superior Court in 1979. Rand and Steve were friends. They both had served during the

1970s on the board of directors of the Gay Community Services Center in Los Angeles. Rand was also friends with attorney Sheldon Andelson, another board member of the center who happened to be a wealthy lawyer and donor to progressive politicians.

After he had been serving on the bench for a while, Rand and his lover hosted a party at their home for other judges and their spouses or dates. The party was well-attended and well-received. He would host other parties for gay law students. He wanted to show them there were open and successful gay attorneys and judges in Los Angeles.

In 1991, Rand announced that he had AIDS. At the time he was not only a judge but was also the chair of the Los Angeles County AIDS Commission. Part of his reasoning for going public with his condition was to show men and women who contract AIDS that they can continue to work and be productive. In a feature story about Rand and his illness, the Los Angeles Times quoted him as saying “It changes your life to feel as if you are standing at the edge of an abyss.”



A month before he died, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors named the AIDS clinic at the Los Angeles County USC Medical Center in his honor. Following his death, the street on which the LGBT Center is located was renamed Rand Schrader Boulevard. In 2021, UCLA Law School devoted a [webpage](#) on its website to honor UCLA Law Graduate Rand Schrader.

Rand died of complications from AIDS in 1993 at the age of 48. He was survived by his life mate David Bohnett. The David Bohnett Foundation is a major donor to the *Birds of a Feather* commemoration in honor of Rand Schrader.

In 2022, UCLA Law School [launched](#) the Judge Rand Schrader Pro Bono Program. A [video](#) of the launch is available online.

In 1999, the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center held an awards banquet at which one award was given to David Bohnett. Speaking of the Rand Schrader Distinguished Achievement Award, David told the audience: “Eight years ago, I sat at the back of a ballroom as Rand accepted this award. . . When he died, I did not know how I would go on. But I did.”

News Stories – [Link](#)