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July 2, 1973

WARNER, ARTHUR C. (1918- ).

*educated*  
American legal reformer and scholar. ~~Trained~~ at Princeton, Harvard, and the London School of Economics, Warner renounced his successful academic career in the 1960s to pursue the work of social reform full time.

In 1952 he was a founding member of the New York branch of the Mattachine Society, serving for many years as chair of its legal committee. In 1971 he founded the National Committee <sup>for</sup> Sexual Civil Liberties, later renamed the American Association <sup>for</sup> of Personal Privacy (which he serves as Director). Contemporaneously he has been a key member of the Scholarship Committee of the Gay Academic Union of New York.

He early recognized that sodomy law reform in the United States would be a long battle to be fought on many fronts. To this end he undertook <sup>legal/legislative</sup> strategic intervention in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and especially in his home state of New Jersey.

He has emphasized the relationship of historical knowledge to social change. This knowledge is important in the reform of the sodomy laws, as they bear many marks of the English and Christian origins. He has <sup>always</sup> ~~also~~ stressed the importance of language. Warner was the first gay leader to argue that the <sup>e</sup> ~~movement's~~ legal objectives must be described as "sodomy law reform" and not "sodomy law repeal" in order to make clear that sodomy laws will continue to exist after these legal aims have been attained--this for the purpose of punishing conduct involving persons below the sexual age

of consent and conduct which involves force. To speak of "sodomy law repeal" implies that the gay movement stands for the removal of criminal sanctions under these two circumstances. Moreover, he was the first gay leader to advocate the term "sexual orientation" rather than "sexual preference," because the latter expression plays into the hands of those who contend that homosexuality is a matter of deliberate choice, which may be altered through behavior modification.

Warner has always insisted on the link between homosexual progress and enlightened citizenship; to this end he has participated in many "non-gay" organizations advocating civic welfare.

Wayne R. Dynes

[348 words]