Preface

This volume results from a collaboration between the American Bar Association Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (“SOGI”) and the National LGBT Bar Association (“LGBT Bar”). This joint publication is an anthology of first person narrative accounts – Out and About: the LGBT Experience in the Legal Profession.

SOGI and the LGBT Bar intend this work to be of interest both to LGBT and non-LGBT readers alike. These moving accounts introduce new insights and perspectives. As part of the editorial selection process, the SOGI-LGBT Bar joint working group responsible for producing Out and About went to great lengths to identify and encourage authors to share their stories. We sought diversity in all its forms – of course, differing sexual orientations and gender identities – as well as differing ages, races, geographic locations, practice settings, law schools, years of experiences, and more.

While we take pride in the finished result, we regret that every desired diversity characteristic that we sought to include in this book is not represented within these pages. We know, sometimes firsthand, that countless untold stories exist. We wish that everyone with a story would tell it. Times are better than ever, but for some the time still is not right. Therefore, we encourage you, the reader, to bear in mind that we only have scratched the surface in conveying the myriad experiences of our peers.

So for now, let this book serve as a primer and allow it to inspire new conversations and to shine light where it has not shined before. Listen to new stories as they are told; share stories that have been kept secret until now. In time, a sequel to this volume may help fill in the gaps.

Introduction

Henry David Thoreau said that “[i]f a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.”

Being an individual, doing your own thing no matter what everyone else is doing, is the heart of the essays that follow. Our writers share their experience of at once blending in and yet feeling different, vulnerable, and exposed. They speak of the ever-present potential to be treated differently simply because of
who they are, giving these essays deeper meaning. Some authors endured secret
pain, suffering in private, hiding personal lives from colleagues. Others barely
soldiered through, endeavoring just to make the lives of their clients, better.
And some openly achieved great success, personally, professionally, or both.
Each and every one merits attention.

We hope each chapter of this book informs and inspires our readers to
broaden horizons, opening minds to the vast diversity of LGBT individuals. We
also hope to improve the legal profession and the justice system itself.

We believe these essays demonstrate the vast potential within all of us.
There always have been people who “dance to the beat of a different drummer.”
We hope you dance to whatever music suits you!

Acknowledgments

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