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Original Rainbow Flag Co-Creator Lynn Segerblom to Unveil Permanent “Rainbow Steps” Installation in Los Angeles

Rev. Troy Perry to Join Ceremony Marking IDAHOBIT 2026 and Launch of Global Flag50 Initiative

LOS ANGELES, CA (March 26, 2026) On May 17 / 12:00-1:00pm, the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT 2026), community members and allies will gather at Founders Metropolitan Community Church in Los Angeles to unveil **Steps to Liberation**, a permanent public art installation transforming the church’s entry staircase into a vibrant set of Rainbow Steps. The event is presented by the California LGBT Arts Alliance. Details: ourpride.org

Hosted at Founders MCC — a historic congregation rooted in LGBTQ+ equality and known for its commitment to radical welcome — the event affirms that this is a space where all people are embraced, affirmed, and invited to belong, regardless of identity, background, or belief.

Created by **Lynn Segerblom**, co-creator of the original rainbow flag in 1978, the installation stands as both a work of public art and a declaration that LGBTQ+ dignity, visibility, and equality remain essential to the health of democratic societies.

“When we created the rainbow flag in 1978, we hoped it would give people a symbol of pride and belonging. Seeing the Rainbow Steps now reminds me that every generation must find its own way to keep that promise alive.” “These steps feel like the flag coming to life — something people can walk on, move through, and carry forward.”

— **Lynn Segerblom**, co-creator of the original rainbow flag

The event will take place under this year’s global IDAHOBIT theme, **“The Heart of Democracy,”** and will also mark the **official launch of Flag50**, a global arts, education, and advocacy initiative leading toward the **50th anniversary of the rainbow flag in 2028.**

Founded by **Rev. Troy Perry**, who helped organize the world’s first permitted Pride parade in 1970 and co-founded Christopher Street West Association, the nonprofit better known as LA Pride, Founders MCC holds a unique place in LGBTQ+ history and has long served as a spiritual home grounded in inclusion, dignity, and belonging for people from all walks of life. Rev. Perry will attend the ceremony and offer remarks reflecting on the movement’s origins and the ongoing struggle for equality.

Visibility is courage. Community is power. The steps begin here.



“When we took the first steps to march in 1968, then organized the first Pride march in 1970, it was an act of courage simply to be visible. Today the Rainbow Steps remind us that visibility is still essential and powerful, and that freedom is something we must keep building together.”

— **Rev. Troy Perry**, founder of Metropolitan Community Churches denomination and organizer of the first Pride parade in Los Angeles, Co-Founder of Christopher Street West / LA PRIDE

“For nearly 60 years, Founders MCC has been a Community of Faith where all are welcome. The Rainbow Steps represent our continued commitment to celebrate the entire Rainbow Community. They are a bold sign to the world of our radical love and inclusion, and they invite all who seek spiritual direction, community, and justice to gather in a safe space.”

— **Rev. Keith Mozingo**, Senior Pastor, Founders MCC

At a moment when LGBTQ+ rights, democratic norms, and basic human dignity are under increasing pressure across the United States and around the world, the Rainbow Steps are intended as a visible reminder that freedom requires both courage and collective action.

“The Rainbow Steps are a reminder that freedom isn’t something we arrive at — it’s something we move toward, step by step, together.”

— **John Boswell**, Rainbow Advocacy Foundation

Program Highlights

The program will feature reflections from **Lynn Segerblom** on the creation of the original rainbow flag — what it took, what it meant, and what it set in motion.

The event will also include a rare public exhibition of photographs by **James McNamara**, co-creator of the original rainbow flags and the master seamster who led their construction in 1978. McNamara died of AIDS in the 1990s. His photographs remain among the few surviving visual records of the creation of the first flags and connect the ceremony to the generation that first carried the symbol into public life.

Additional speakers will include civic, faith, youth, and cultural leaders, alongside musical guests and participating artists. **The 11th Annual Troy Perry Legacy Awards** will be presented together with Christopher Street West / LA PRIDE to recipients nominated by ONE Institute and Christopher Street West.

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About Steps to Liberation

Steps to Liberation is both a permanent public arts installation funded through the **Troy Perry Legacy Grants** and a companion book published by **Rainbow Advocacy Press**.

Organized around the colors of the rainbow flag as a journey of liberation, the book connects the creation of the rainbow flag in 1978 with the enduring principles of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ communities worldwide.

The book will be released on **May 17, 2026**, the day of the installation unveiling. Proceeds support the **Rainbow Advocacy Foundation's Troy Perry Legacy Fund**, which provides grants and direct support to LGBTQ+ communities and artists working under conditions of vulnerability and risk around the world.

Why Now

As the world approaches the **50th anniversary of the rainbow flag in 2028** and the **80th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, *Steps to Liberation* invites communities to reflect on the questions this moment demands:

- *If democracy has a heart — who protects it?*
- *If freedom requires courage — who will step forward?*
- *If visibility saves lives — who will remain visible?*

Event Details

What: Steps to Liberation — IDAHOBIT 2026: *The Heart of Democracy*

When: Sunday, May 17, 2026 | 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Where: Founders MCC, 4607 Prospect Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Website: <http://ourpride.org>

Livestream: Founders MCC YouTube and Facebook (global participation)

Tickets: Free and open to the public

Register:

<https://eventbrite.com/e/steps-to-liberation-idahobit-2026-tickets-1984156455370>

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Companion Book

“Steps to Liberation: The Rainbow Flag, Human Rights and Freedom” is a reflective guide about freedom — how it is claimed, practiced, and carried forward in uneven, human ways, often without certainty about where the next step will lead. This is a collective project bringing together voices from different communities, countries, and lived experiences.

Written at a time when democracy, human rights, and personal freedom are increasingly under strain worldwide, this book invites readers to slow down and consider what freedom requires in practice, not just in principle. As the world approaches a series of converging milestones — including the 80th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), the 50th anniversary of the rainbow flag, and the approaching 60th anniversary of the first Pride marches — Steps to Liberation asks how collective acts of visibility, gathering, and care continue to shape freedom across borders.

Release Date: May 17, 2026

Book Pre-Order Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0GFT4JC76>

About Rainbow Advocacy

Rainbow Advocacy is a Los Angeles–based nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing LGBTQ+ dignity, human rights, and global solidarity through arts, education, and advocacy. Founded in 1996, the organization supports creative and cultural initiatives that strengthen visibility, protect human dignity, and connect communities across borders.

Rainbow Advocacy serves as the Secretariat for **Flag50** (flag50.org), a global arts, education, and advocacy movement leading toward the **50th anniversary of the rainbow flag in 2028**. Through initiatives including **Rainbow Advocacy Press**, public arts projects, and international partnerships, the organization works to preserve LGBTQ+ history while supporting new voices and creative expression around the world. <http://rainbowadvocacy.org>

About California LGBT Arts Alliance

The California LGBT Arts Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization which promotes social justice, advocates for cultural equity, increases public understanding of diversity and presents artists whose work reflects the LGBT community’s lives and experiences.

The Alliance works closely with the California Arts Council and with other statewide infrastructure networks to disseminate information about funding issues, artistic opportunities and meetings to LGBT artists and organizations throughout the state. Programs promote artistic collaborations, financial partnerships and public policies that enhance the development of LGBT artists and arts organizations in Southern California. <http://calgbtartsalliance.org>

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