

JACK NICHOLS

b. March 16, 1938

d. May 2, 2005

GAY PIONEER

*“Every person I work with knows something better than me.
My job is to listen long enough to find it and use it.”*

**In 1967 he became one of
the first Americans to speak
openly about being gay
in the documentary “CBS
Reports: The Homosexuals.”**

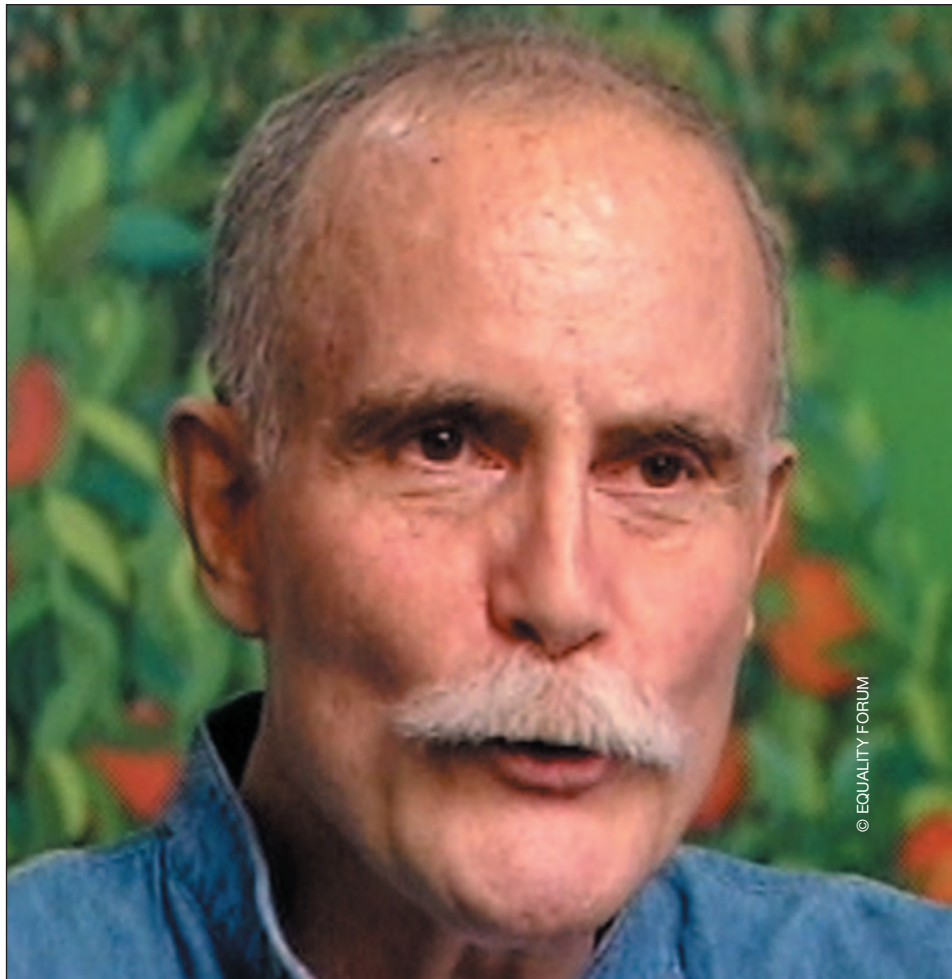
In 1961, along with Frank Kameny, Jack Nichols cofounded the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., the first gay civil rights organization in the nation’s capital. Four years later, Nichols and other members of the organization conducted the first gay rights protest at the White House.

Nichols also participated in the Annual Reminders—pickets held in front of Independence Hall each Fourth of July from 1965 to 1969. The Annual Reminders helped galvanize the organized LGBT civil rights movement, paving the way for the Stonewall Riots in 1969.

Nichols joined Frank Kameny, Barbara Gittings and other activists in a multi-year battle with the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to remove homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. The APA eventually conceded, after failing to produce scientific evidence to support the classification.

In 1967 Nichols became one of the first Americans to speak openly about being gay in the documentary “CBS Reports: The Homosexuals.” Though he appeared on screen, he said he was forced to use a pseudonym after his father, an FBI agent, threatened him, fearing the U.S. government might discover his son was gay.

Nichols, along with his partner Lige Clarke, wrote the first LGBT interest column, “The Homosexual Citizen,” in a mainstream publication in 1969. The famous couple would later launch GAY, the first weekly gay newspaper in New York City. The publication flourished until Clarke was murdered in Mexico in 1975. Nichols later became an editor for the San Francisco Sentinel and GayToday.com.



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