

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Robert Coggin House

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 4509 Bennion Road

City or town: Silver Spring State: MD County: Montgomery

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
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Name of Property

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	_____
Signature of commenting official:	Date
_____	_____
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
-

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Name of Property

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

2

buildings

sites

structures

objects

2

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Cape Cod

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, Vinyl (Windows), Aluminum (Siding), Asphalt (Roof)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Robert Coggin House is located at 4509 Benning Road in Silver Spring, Maryland. The house is a one-and-a-half-story, wood-frame, Cape Cod dwelling constructed in 1949. The house is sited on an 8,819 square-foot lot located on Block G, Lot 5, of the Viers Mill Village Subdivision. The Viers Mill subdivision was platted in 1947 and was intended to provide affordable homes for veterans in the Washington, DC suburbs. The house is located on a level site, with hedges lining the south (front) portion of the property along Benning Road with an ample rear yard with trees along the rear lot line. A gabled-roof shed is located behind the house along the eastern edge of the property line. A concrete walkway bisects the hedge row leading to the house's main entrance.

22014

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Narrative Description¹

The house at 4509 Bennion Road was likely built in 1949, when William and Martha Tamblyn purchased the property.² The house is located on a level, 0.20 acre rectangular lot located in the Viers Mill Village subdivision in Silver Spring, Maryland. Hedges line the south end of the lot along Bennion Road. A concrete walkway bisects the hedges and extends to the main entrance. The property north, or behind the house is clear of trees with the exception of a line of trees along the western property boundary. A one-story frame shed is located in the back yard north of the house.

4509 Bennion Road

The house at 4509 Bennion Road is a standard example of the Cape Cod property types that were constructed in the Viers Mill Village subdivision in the late 1940s. The house is constructed in a simple rectangular plan with an interior living space of 648 feet.³ The one-and-a-half story house is set on a concrete foundation, clad with aluminum siding, and is capped by an asphalt-shingle-clad, side-gabled roof. An interior brick chimney extends from the center of north (rear) facing slope of the roof.

The three-bay front (south) elevation consists of a centrally located single-leaf, paneled, wood door with a glazed aluminum storm door. The entrance is sheltered by a shed-roof hood and is accessible from a concrete stoop lined with wrought-iron hand railings. The western bay consists of a one-over-one double-hung, vinyl window with louvered wood shutters. The eastern bay features an oriel window with three one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl windows covered by an asphalt-shingle roof.

The east elevation consists of three symmetrical bays. In the center of the elevation is a single-leaf, wood-paneled door. Flanking this entrance are one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl windows. The north (rear) elevation. The north (rear) and south elevations both have two bays with one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl windows.

A frame shed is located approximately twenty feet north of the house. The shed is a one-story building capped with an asphalt-shingle-clad, front-gabled roof. The south elevation of the shed contains a single-leaf, wood door.

¹ The rear of the dwelling and the lot, west elevation and interior of the dwelling were not accessible.

² Montgomery County Deed Book 1234, page 80, Recorded February 25, 1949. Acquired at md.landrec.com.

³ SDAT Real Property Record for 4509 Benning Road. Acquired at <https://sdatt.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx>

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Integrity:

The house at 4509 Benning Road retains integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association. The house is situated at its original location within a mid-twentieth century subdivision that has not changed since the dwelling was constructed in 1949. The Cape Cod design of the house has not been altered. The dwelling retains its simple rectangular massing with central entrance. No additions have been constructed that alter the original design and massing. The house has had several material changes that have diminished the integrity of workmanship and materials. The Cape Cod Houses part of the Viers Mill Village Subdivision were originally clad with wide-board weatherboard siding and had six-over-six, double-hung, wood-sash windows.⁴ Notable material changes have included the sheathing of the house in aluminum siding and the replacement of the original windows with double-hung, one-over-one, vinyl windows. However, many, if not all, of these changes were done during the period of significance, when Robert Coggin owned the property (1988-2014). Therefore, the house, even with notable material changes, retains sufficient integrity to convey its association with Robert Coggin.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

⁴ Jerry Clouse, Viers Mills Village Subdivision (M:31-23), Prepared by McCormick Taylor, Inc., 2015, page 2. Accessed May 12, 2022 at <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/>

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Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

Period of Significance

1988 -2014

Significant Dates

1988 (House Purchased by Robert Coggin)

2014 (Death of Robert Coggin)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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Cultural Affiliation

LGBTQ

Architect/Builder

Haris Construction Company _____

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Robert Coggin House at 4509 Bennion Road in Silver Spring, Maryland, was the principal permanent residence of Robert Coggin when he lived in Montgomery County, Maryland. Coggin played an exceptionally important role in advancing LGBTQ rights throughout the State but particularly in Montgomery County. He is considered the founder of the LGBTQ rights movement in Montgomery County, and many of his contemporaries' including former Montgomery County Council President and County Executive Ike Leggett credit Coggin with being the person most responsible for securing LGBTQ rights under local law. Coggin formed the Suburban Maryland Gay Alliance (SMGA) in 1982, which later became the Suburban Maryland Lesbian/Gay Alliance (SMLGA) following a name change in 1984. Under Coggin's leadership, SMGA became the first group to successfully organize and advocate on behalf of the gay and lesbian community in a manner that made significant contributions to the lives of LGBTQ people at the local level in Montgomery County, Maryland. SMGA played a critical role in securing the passage of local legislation in Montgomery County, Maryland aimed at protecting the rights of gays and lesbians from discrimination.

After Howard County in 1975, Montgomery County was the second county in Maryland to extend discrimination protection to the gay and lesbian community with the inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected class in the county's anti-discrimination code in 1984. This action occurred sixteen years prior to the State of Maryland passing statewide discrimination protections for sexual orientation in 2001. Former Council President Ike Leggett and members of SMLGA credit Coggin's leadership and involvement as the linchpin to the passage of the 1984 legislation that added sexual orientation as a protective class to Montgomery County's anti-discrimination code, better known as Chapter 27 (Human Rights and Civil Liberties) of the

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Montgomery County Code. Coggin's advocacy came at a critical period in history when the gay and lesbian community throughout most of the country remained unprotected from discrimination. The lack of legal protections forced many gay men and lesbians to hide their sexual orientation by remaining "in the closet," thus denying them liberty and the pursuit of their own happiness. In the face of strong and vehement opposition from conservative religious organizations who had the support of public officials, Coggin's leadership was critical in securing passage of this landmark legislation that provided legal protections under local law. This event ultimately allowed the LGBTQ community to grow and flourish and encouraged acceptance of LGBTQ people within the broader community. It also set the groundwork for the enactment of future legislation that included marriage equality in the state of Maryland in 2013. Because Robert Coggin played an exceptionally important role in this watershed moment in local history, his house on 4509 Benning Road meets Criterion B for local significance under Criterion Consideration G for properties that have not matured to fifty years of age. The period of significance extends from 1988 to 2014 covering the years Robert Coggin lived in the house.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Robert Coggin was exceptionally important in the area of **social history** through his advocacy for the rights of the LGBTQ community in Montgomery County and Maryland. Coggin's leadership resulted in the establishment of the first organization in suburban Montgomery County, Maryland, to effectively advocate for LGBTQ rights. With his thoughtful leadership and focused direction, Coggin emerged as the most significant person involved in the passage of landmark anti-discrimination legislation against gay and lesbian people in Montgomery County in 1984. Montgomery County was only the second county in Maryland to enact such legislation, which was sixteen years prior to the State of Maryland passing statewide discrimination protections against LGBTQ people in 2001.

Viers Mill Village

The Robert Coggin House was among the houses constructed in the late 1940s part of the Viers Mill Village subdivision. Containing approximately 960 houses, Viers Mill Village was one of the largest subdivisions constructed in Montgomery County following World War II. The Viers Mill Village Company filed its first plat in 1947 and nineteen more by 1949. Houses constructed between 1947 and 1949 represented examples of Split Level and Cape Cod Houses constructed for their affordability which was attractive to settling veterans after the war.⁵ Viers Mill Village did have racially restrictive covenants between 1947 and 1949.⁶

⁵ Jerry Clouse, Viers Mills Village Subdivision (M:31-23), Prepared by McCormick Taylor, Inc., 2015, page 1. Accessed May 12, 2022 at <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/>

⁶Pamela Dunn, Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan Resolution Memorandum, April 19, 2019.

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By the end of World War II, housing had become one of the most pressing problems in the United States. The Washington, DC area, as with other metropolitan cities, experienced unprecedented population growth from jobs created to support the New Deal programs and men and women supporting the wartime effort. Despite the pressing need for housing, through the Great Depression and into World War II, the residential construction industry remained dormant. The Federal Government did construct wartime housing throughout the Washington, DC area during the war years to house those who had migrated to the city; however these accommodations were not meant to provide long-term housing and did not provide enough housing to adequately meet the demand.

The federal government responded to the immediate need for new housing first through the creation of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in 1934, which sought to stimulate the housing market by encouraging better housing standards, facilitating stable and sound home financing, and, most importantly, by creating jobs to alleviate unemployment.⁷ The FHA effort was later supplemented by the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (more familiarly known as the G.I. Bill), which created the Veterans Administration (VA) program that offered veterans subsidized housing loans. Throughout the country, but especially in the Washington, DC area, FHA assistance was concentrated in suburban areas.

As the housing market picked up, larger construction firms that had spent the early 1940s building military bases or government-funded projects turned their efforts to developing new neighborhoods on unimproved farmland that would cater to young veterans and their growing families. Others, such as the Haris Construction Company, established in 1943 and headquartered in Brooklyn, New York, were created with the intention of only working on government housing contracts.⁸

In 1947, a 328-acre tract of unimproved farmland (a portion of the former Selfridge Farm) along the commuter route of Viers Mill Road between Rockville and Wheaton, Maryland was purchased by the Viers Mill Village Company, a subsidiary of the Haris Construction Company, with the intention of building a suburban enclave for veterans. The subdivision, called "Viers Mill Village", was planned to accommodate 1,400 one-story, single-family houses consisting of a living room, kitchen, bath, two bedrooms, and a basement on lots of approximately 7,000 square feet in size.⁹ Various parts of the houses were prefabricated in an effort to reduce

⁷ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 202.

⁸ US House of Representatives, *Investigation of the Viers Mill Village Veterans' Housing Project, Montgomery County, MD: Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments*, 80th Cong., 2d sess., April 6, 8, 9, 12 and May 4, 1948, 262, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112111602543&view=1up&seq=270&q1=haris%20construction> (accessed May 13, 2022).

⁹ Richard K. MacMaster, *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland* (Rockville, MD: Montgomery County Historical Society, 2013), 333.

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construction costs and build time. A statement provided by the Haris Company in 1948 described the houses as follows:

Four room bungalow, 24 feet 2 inches by 27 feet; full basement; frame construction with poured concrete foundations; Johns-Manville exterior shingle side walls; asphalt shingle roof; wooden double hung window frames; masonry chimney; brick stoop; double flooring, No. 1 oak finished floor; United States Gypsum dry wall, taped and spackled; all standard sanitary plumbing fixtures; copper water pipes, copper flashing and leaders, 16 gage; General Electric refrigerator, 6-cubic-foot capacity; oven control insulated gas range; full aluminum screens, screen doors; fully automatic gas warm air furnace with ducts in each room and full return systems; laundry trays in cellar; special electric outlet for washing machine; insulated ceilings; automatic gas hot water heater; shades for all windows; fully landscaped plot average 7,000 square feet; fully improved streets, combination curb and gutter; storm drainage per FHA requirements; all utilities.¹⁰

The statement continued to describe the plan of subdivision at large:

The principal highway through the site will be 100 feet wide, with set-backs of 50 feet. All other streets are from 50 feet to 60 feet wide with a minimum set-back of 25 feet. The set back from side lots lines ranges up from a minimum of 14 feet. The smallest lot is about 6,000 square feet with a front of at least 55 feet.¹¹

The Viers Mill Village Company listed the properties in Viers Mill Village for \$8,700.

While the builders insisted that they were filling a need for affordable housing for low-income families, the Montgomery County commissioners and other Montgomery County residents began to call attention to the small residences that were of “cheap construction.” Compounding concern, while the builders set the price for each of the properties at \$8,700, the FHA had appraised the properties at \$7,700 while the VA’s appraiser found that the houses “could not possibly have a value in excess of \$5,600.”¹² Thus, in 1948, Brook Johns, president of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners, wrote a letter to Congressman J. Glenn Beall (R-MD) requesting that Congress conduct an investigation into the development project, which he charged as being of “substandard design, and overprice.”¹³ The House Committee on Expenditures took up the case, and by the time that the hearing had commenced in April 1948, 200 houses in Viers Mill Village had already been constructed.

¹⁰ US House of Representatives, *Investigation of the Viers Mill Village Veterans’ Housing Project*, 272.

¹¹ US House of Representatives, *Investigation of the Viers Mill Village Veterans’ Housing Project*, 273.

¹² “Probe Sought on Viers Mill Village Homes,” *The Washington Post*, March 2, 1948, B2.

¹³ “Viers Mill Homes Held Overpriced After Probe,” *The Washington Post*, June 19, 1948, B1.

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A verdict was reached by June 1948. The committee determined that the houses were in fact overpriced and called for Congress “to make certain that our veterans are not victimized under the protective seal of a Government-guaranteed mortgage approved by FHA and the Veterans Administration.”¹⁴ That said, due to the housing crisis, the committee was also careful to withhold recommendations that would cause further delay to the project, stating that “even inferior housing is preferable to no housing.”¹⁵ When completed, Viers Mill Village was considered to be one of the largest post-War developments in Maryland and the largest in Montgomery County.¹⁶

Robert Coggin Early Life, College, and Return to Danville

Robert Coggin was born on January 31, 1951, in Danville, Virginia where he lived with his parents Belva Mitchell Coggin and Henry Ernest Coggin, and his brother William.¹⁷ During Robert’s youth in conservative Danville, racial segregation remained intact, and LGBTQ concerns and rights were not recognized. Tommy Bennett, a former radio broadcaster who served on President Barack Obama’s LGBT Leadership Council, grew up as a gay African American man in Danville in the 1960s. Bennett commented that both racism and homophobia were widespread in Danville during this time.¹⁸ Coggin did not experience the racism Bennett endured, but experienced the bigotry directed towards homosexuals during this time. Coggin was a homosexual man early in life, having a boyfriend when he was in high school. He grew up going to the Baptist Church, whose conservatism spanned the spectrum of social issues. In addition to his sexual orientation, Coggin was more liberal in his views than many of his neighbors. It is very likely for these reasons that he never established a close and good relationship with his father, whom Robert himself described as very conservative. He likewise also did not have a good relationship with his brother, whom Robert described as homophobic. Robert did maintain a very close relationship with his mother throughout his life. It was during his teen years that Robert was diagnosed with Myotonic Muscular Dystrophy, a disease that would later claim his life.¹⁹ Both his father and brother also died of the same disease.²⁰

¹⁴ Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, *Investigation of the Viers Mill Village Veterans’ Housing Project, Montgomery County, MD*, report prepared by Melvin C. Snyder and Ralph Harvey, 80th Cong., 2d sess., 1948, Report no. 2373, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112102288299&view=1up&seq=1602&skin=2021&q1=Viers%20mill> (accessed May 12, 2022).

¹⁵ Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments.

¹⁶ George H. Callcott, *Maryland & America, 1940 to 1980* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 61.

¹⁷ Robert Coggin Obituary, *The Washington Post*, January 26, 2014, C11.

¹⁸ Tommy Bennett, *Growing up Black and Gay in Danville, VA*, 2012. Bennett discussed walking to his segregated African American school and being harassed by white children who shouted both racial and homophobic slurs.

¹⁹ Tanner Wray and Karl Debus-Lopez, Interviewed by Eric Griffitts, February 17, 2022.

²⁰ Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffitts, March 16, 2022.

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Coggin left Danville to attend the University of Virginia (UVA) in 1972. His need to connect with other LGBTQ individuals led him to be an early organizer and activist, something he would carry forward later in life. Coggin co-founded the Gay Student Union in 1972.²¹ During his time at UVA, Robert earned the nickname “Judge” because he routinely dressed for classes in a shirt and tie, and other students jokingly called out, “here comes the judge,” when they saw him.²²

Coggin graduated from UVA in 1976 with a Bachelor’s degree from the College of Arts and Sciences in Religious Studies. He returned to Danville where during the late 1970s he obtained employment in the local weatherization program for the City of Danville that catered to low-income housing.²³ While living in Danville, Coggin remained active in local gay and lesbian organizations. He attended the Southeastern Conference of Lesbians and Gay Men which was held in Atlanta, Georgia, in the spring of 1978 and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, in the spring of 1979.

During this time, Coggin was also considering joining a commune that accepted gay members. In September of 1978, he corresponded with the ALOE community in Cedar Grove, North Carolina. ALOE was a commune that supported equality of all groups and included living units for gay men. The ALOE Community at this time was providing a series of seminars and conferences open to interested parties who wanted to join the commune. While Coggin did inquire about these seminars, it is not known whether he ever attended any of these educational symposiums.²⁴

Move to Montgomery County

Coggin’s motivations for joining the ALOE Community remain conjectural, but it seems likely that his life as a gay man in Danville had its share of difficulties because of the community’s conservatism. By 1980, Coggin eventually decided to leave Danville and resettle in the Washington D.C. metro area.²⁵ Shortly after his relocation Coggin met his partner of thirteen years, Don Crisostomo, at a gay bar in Washington D.C. known as the Eagle Bar. Don would be Robert’s companion in the local Gay Rights Movement during the 1980s. When Don and Robert met, Coggin was living with a friend in Arlington, Virginia, and was unemployed. The two quickly became a couple. Because of limited employment prospects at the time, Coggin was planning to move back to Danville when Don asked him to move into his apartment at the Battery Garden Apartments in Bethesda. Robert accepted and moved to Montgomery County later in 1980. The couple initially lived in a one-bedroom apartment, but later moved to a larger

²¹ Lou Chibbaro, Jr. “Gay Activist Robert Coggin Dies at 62,” *Washington Blade*, January 29, 2014. Obtained February 8, 2022 at <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2014/01/29/gay-activist-robert-coggin-dies-62>

²² Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, March 16, 2022.

²³ Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, March 16, 2022.

²⁴ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, ALOE Conference 1978

²⁵ Why Coggin picked the DC area is not known.

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two-bedroom apartment located at 4920 Battery Lane #5. Shortly after moving in with Don, Robert obtained a job with the National Institute of Health (NIH). NIH headquarters was in Bethesda near the Battery Lane Apartments.²⁶

Early Political Activism

With his living and employment situation settled, Coggin became more involved in local activism on behalf of the gay community. Robert attended meetings of the Gay Activities Alliance (GAA) of Washington D.C. and became involved with the organization's political efforts ahead of the 1980 election. He helped this organization in its efforts to find local candidates supportive of gay and lesbian rights. At its February 1980 meeting, the GAA discussed its plans for the upcoming elections. Their goal was to be active and visible to make gay rights a key political issue of 1980. In March 1980, the GAA drafted a list of questions for presidential candidates.²⁷

Because suburban Maryland did not have any political organizations dedicated to gay rights, much of the organizing of the gay community in Maryland was done at this time through the efforts of GAA. On March 13, the GAA held a forum to discuss how the organization could advance gay and lesbian rights issues ahead of the Maryland primaries. The primary speaker at the event was Craig Howard, GAA's Government Projects Coordinator who was very knowledgeable about Maryland politics and wanted to share his thoughts on the subject. Several notices were circulated about the meeting, including bio sheets on the candidates and their agendas regarding gay and lesbian rights.²⁸

Coggin's participation with the political organization undertaken by GAA in 1980 made him aware of the lack of any similar organization in the suburban Maryland communities, especially Montgomery County. Without an advocacy organization, the LGBTQ community in the county had no resources to organize and make their voices heard. Robert also became more aware of the situation in Montgomery County regarding the lack of protection for the gay and lesbian community. At this time Howard County was the only local jurisdiction in Maryland that extended legal protections to the gay and lesbian community through its anti-discrimination legislation passed in 1975.

Montgomery County Anti-Discrimination Code

Chapter 27 of the Montgomery County Code details local policy protections under Human Rights and Civil Liberties. Today this code forbids discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, disabilities, age, and sexual orientation, among other categories. Montgomery County's first anti-discrimination ordinances protecting the legal rights of minority groups was born out of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. The Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) was a

²⁶ Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, March 16, 2022.

²⁷ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 1 1980 Elections

²⁸ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 1 1980 Elections

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nationwide civil rights activist organization that played a key role in the fight to open public accommodations in Maryland. CORE established an interracial branch in Baltimore in 1953 and became very active in Montgomery County organizing peaceful protests in the form of picketing and boycotts aimed at companies and organizations with discriminatory practices. The activism of CORE and other civil rights organizations led to several pieces of key local legislation that advocated to eliminate racial segregation. In January of 1962, the Montgomery County Council adopted Ordinance No. 4-120, entitled “Re: Elimination of Discrimination in Places of Public Accommodation.” Still other anti-discriminatory legislation followed. In 1967, Montgomery County Council passed the first open housing law, that outlawed any race-based discrimination in the sale and rental of all housing except owner occupied domiciles. Montgomery County’s first open housing law preceded the U.S. Fair Housing Act of 1968.²⁹

Overseeing administration of the anti-discrimination ordinances was the county’s Human Relations Commission (HRC). The county established the HRC in 1960 as an advisory arm of local government that would help the council to issue policy to assist with interracial issues. In an advisory role, the HRC did not initially have a broad mandate and could only communicate with privately owned businesses accused of discriminatory practices. The HRC consisted of fifteen (15) members chosen by the county council. With the passage of Ordinance No. 4-120, the powers of the HRC expanded, as the legislation authorized the HRC to investigate possible violators and provide recommendations for prosecution. The HRC began hearings to address housing discrimination in 1966. A year later they began drafting of the open housing law.³⁰

By the 1970s, Montgomery County’s anti-discrimination code applied to racial, gender, and age discrimination, but did not extend to sexual orientation. The lack of protection for the gay and lesbian community became evident in 1972, when Joe Acanfora, a gay man, was hired as an earth sciences teacher at Parkland Middle School in Rockville, MD.³¹ In September of 1972, only months after his hiring, Acanfora was removed from the classroom and reassigned to a non-teaching position when his homosexuality became public knowledge. Although no real reason was provided to him, Acanfora knew the reassignment was due to his sexual orientation. On November 7, 1972, he filed a lawsuit against the Board of Education. The suit alleged Acanfora’s transfer was unconstitutional, as it violated his due process rights under the Equal Protections Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The case was brought to trial at the Federal District Court in Baltimore, Maryland. Before the trial, Acanfora conducted several interviews for print media, local radio programs, and even appeared on an episode of *60 Minutes*. In 1973, the District Court rendered a judgement in favor of the Montgomery County Board of Education.

²⁹ Clare Lise Kelly, *Montgomery Modern: Modern Architecture in Montgomery County, Maryland, 1930-1979* (Silver Spring, MD: M-NCPPC, 2015), 253; David S. Rotenstein, “Protesting Invisibility in Silver Spring, Maryland,” *The Activist History Review* (June 23, 2017).

³⁰David Brack, A History of the Human Relations Commission of Montgomery County, Maryland, ND Obtained online April 20m 2022 at https://montgomerycountymd.gov/humanrights/Resources/Files/civil_right_progress.pdf

³¹Susan Ferentinos, Maryland LGBTQ Historic Context Study. Prepared for Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust, 2020, Appendix A.

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In its decision, the Court acknowledged that Acanfora was removed because of his sexual orientation which had no factor in his qualifications as a teacher and he was denied due process. However, the court also affirmed that Acanfora was entitled to no relief from Montgomery County because his appearances on radio and television programs disqualified him from consideration of any relief. The Court stated these appearances were not needed for any self-defense and only sparked what they believed was unnecessary controversy that placed undo fear within the gay and lesbian community. Furthermore, the Court contended that the media appearances stripped Acanfora of his rights under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.³² Because circumstances outlined in the judgement did not result in any legal culpability, the Board of Education in the end did not offer Acanfora any further contracts to teach in Montgomery County, essentially firing him without cause.³³ Acanfora's attorneys appealed the decision to the appellate court, which reaffirmed the decision of the District Court. Acanfora's attorneys appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, which declined to hear the case.

The Acanfora decision did not alleviate any fear in the gay and lesbian community concerning discrimination and the lack of legal protection under the law.³⁴ In the aftermath of the Acanfora decision, the HRC did not take up any measures to address the issue of legal protections for gay men and lesbians. By the early 1980s, the HRC remained primarily focused on incidents of harassment directed against racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. James Mihalik, Chairperson of the HRC in 1980, was aware that Chapter 27 did not afford the gay and lesbian community protection from discriminatory practices in Montgomery County. Mihalik began lobbying County Council members for a proposal to add sexual orientation to categories in the anti-discrimination law. In 1980, most of the County Council were not inclined to support such legislation because politics surrounding this action remained untested in the local, state, and national arenas. The Council did not have a good understanding of public opinion on the matter of gay rights to make sufficient political risks in supporting the gay and lesbian community.³⁵

Founding of the Maryland Suburban Gay Alliance (SMGA) and Early Activities in 1982

It was not long after his move to Montgomery County that Robert Coggin became increasingly interested in establishing an advocacy group that supported gay rights. Don Crisostomo recalls that the two initially established a social organization for local gay men, but Robert wanted to bring a political focus to the group.³⁶ Coggin no doubt understood the lack of political voice the gay and lesbian community had at that time. Coggin was an ideal leader for this cause because

³² Acanfora v. Board of Education of Montgomery County, 359F. Supp. 843 (D. Md. 1973), Justia US Law. Obtained online April 20, 2022 at <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/359/843/1471183/>

³³ Susan Ferentinos, Maryland LGBTQ Historic Context Study. Prepared for Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust, 2020, Appendix A.

³⁴ Several of Robert Coggins' letters in the early 1980s during the campaign to get sexual orientation added to Montgomery County's anti-discrimination code noted there being a significant part of the local gay and lesbian community as still hiding their sexual orientation out of fear of reprisals from employers and others.

³⁵ R.H. Melton, "Gay Rights Quietly Gaining in Montgomery," *Washington Post*, December 1, 1983, MD1

³⁶ Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, March 16, 2022.

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of his experience in participating in advocacy organization going back to his college days at UVA.

The new organization began to take form in early 1982 and was named the Suburban Maryland Gay Alliance (SMGA). The first meeting of the SMGA was held on April 20, 1982, at Robert and Don's apartment at 4920 Battery Lane Apartment #5, Bethesda, MD 20205. Nine people attended the meeting. Besides Robert and Don, other attendees including two members of the Northern Virginia Gay Alliance (NOVAGA) and two members of the GAA. It is likely that the NOVAGA and GAA representatives were there to provide organizational assistance to the newly formed organization and to coordinate with event activities. Discussions included the preparation of an organizational constitution. Robert and Don together took a leadership role in drafting the founding document. Tom Ainora, one of the NOVAGA representatives, provided a copy of NOVAGA's constitution as a guide. The group also discussed hosting a booth at Gay Pride Day activities that year where they would circulate a petition against the Family Protection Act and pass out literature about the Act at gay bars and other gay-friendly locations. Provisions in the Family Protections Act of 1981 amended the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ensure that any action taken by an employer against homosexuals would not be constituted as unlawful practice. It also prohibited the expenditure of federal funds for organizations which presents male or female homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle.³⁷

Several long-range goals were discussed as well. The group came to an agreement that its most important long-term goal would be to persuade the county to enact non-discriminatory statutes that incorporated sexual orientation protections. Other long-range goals included the repeal of sodomy laws in Maryland, supporting election candidates sympathetic to gay and lesbian issues, and organizing fund raising activities.³⁸

For the remainder of 1982, SMGA continued to hold monthly meetings at Robert and Don's apartment. In 1983, Don and Robert moved to a condominium complex at 8 Academy Way in Rockville, Maryland, where SMGA meetings would also be held along with residences of various other members. SMGA meetings involved primarily the organization's leadership. Membership was open to all and SMGA leadership submitted monthly newsletters to all members discussing membership activities and goals.³⁹ During 1982, several goals were accomplished included the approval of an organizational constitution, the selection of organization officers, and the development of a rating system for candidates in the November elections. Robert and Don presented a draft of the constitution at the second SMGA meeting held on May 4, 1982. After discussion and revisions, SMGA members eventually approved a constitution at the June meeting. The constitution's preamble pledged that SMGA would actively work through peaceful participation in the political process to abolish oppressive and discriminatory laws against lesbian and gay people. Membership was open to all people. The constitution outlined the organization's hierarchy, which included two executive co-

³⁷ H.R. 311 – 97th Congress. Obtained online May 12, 2022 at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/97th-congress/house-bill/311?s=1&r=6>

³⁸ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 63, April 20, 1982. Minutes of SMGA.

³⁹ Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffitts, March 16, 2022.

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Chairpersons, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Elections for positions would be held at annual meetings. Robert Coggin was elected as one of the Chairpersons and Peri Jude Radecic of Rockville was elected as the other co-Chairperson. Don Crisostomo became SMGA's Secretary.⁴⁰ Other notable early members include Wayne Lerch of Landover Hills, Maryland, and Susan Silber of Takoma Park, Maryland. Both played significant roles in the early organization and the fight to add sexual orientation to the Montgomery County's anti-discrimination code. Lerch became SMGA's legislative liaison and would work with individuals in similar roles in other organizations in lobbying efforts. Silber was an attorney who was very involved in SMGA's legal matters.

One of SMGA's early objectives was self-advertisement. It was important to get the word out about the organization's goals and objectives to increase membership to the local gay and lesbian community and their supporters. Fliers distributed at local gay and lesbian events in 1982 identified the following major goals:⁴¹

1. Persuade the state of MD and local governments in MD to enact non-discrimination statuses based on sexual orientation in public and private sectors;
2. Encourage the support of US Congressional legislation to protect lesbian and gay rights and oppose legislation that continues to seek gay oppression;
3. Rate political candidates based on their views on lesbian/gay issues and publish the results of the ratings;
4. Seek repeal of Maryland's sodomy law;
5. Counter the moral majority, the family protection lobby, and other ultra-right groups falsely portraying and oppressing lesbians and gay men;
6. Help lesbians and gay men create a positive self-image and achieve their personal potential; and,
7. Achieve acceptance and support from the public of the needs and rights of the gay and lesbian community and make people aware of notable acts of oppression against the community.

Membership grew steadily over the course of 1982. At the June meeting Don Crisostomo noted that the organization's mailing list was growing by a rate of two persons per week.⁴² Crisostomo still believes that the greater interest in SMGA resulted from the fact that there was not any similar gay and lesbian advocacy organization or social groups in the county during the early 1980s.⁴³

The election of 1982 became the focus of SMGA's activities in the summer and fall of 1982. At the July 6 meeting, the group discussed its efforts to rate political candidates. A questionnaire committee was formed to prepare a questionnaire to distribute to candidates in the local

⁴⁰ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 55, Articles of Incorporation.

⁴¹ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 57, SMGA Fliers

⁴² Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 63, Minutes from the SMGA 1 June 1982 meeting.

⁴³ Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, March 16, 2022.

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primaries. SMGA leadership developed a rating system based on answers provided that would grade the candidates based on gay and lesbian issues.⁴⁴ SMGA published the results of the survey in the August 20 edition of the Washington Blade.⁴⁵ A second questionnaire was submitted for the general election candidates ahead of the November election.⁴⁶

Non-Discrimination Code and the HRC (January – March 1983)

After the completion of the November election, SMGA focused its efforts on expanding Montgomery County's non-discrimination code to include sexual orientation. During the last two months of 1982, SMGA took the first steps forward in fulfillment of this, the organization's foremost goal. Coggin led SMGA members in a letter writing campaign to local representatives. SMGA members wrote letters to Council members who rated favorably in the candidates' surveys and representatives on the HRC asking for support for this initiative. Coggin set a goal to have these letters mailed by January 3, 1983.⁴⁷

Beginning in January 1983, SMGA focused lobbying activities on the HRC, who oversaw enforcement of the non-discrimination codes and who advised the County Council on the subject. The HRC would be the gateway to the Council on any civil rights issue, so their support was critical. In the early 1980s, the Commission included fifteen members appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. These members were:⁴⁸

James Mihalik, Chairperson
Dr. James Cronin, Vice Chairperson
Fernando Bren
Helga Butler
Dr. Freda Cheung
O.D. Field
Charles Hudson
Lillie Johnson
Sandra King-Shaw
Dr. Isiah Leggett
Gus Morrison
Robert Rogers
Dr. Ciria Sanchez-Baca
Harold Schwartz
Susan Soenberg

⁴⁴ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 63, Minutes from the SMGA, July 6, 1982 meeting

⁴⁵ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 63, Minutes of SMGA, August 3, 1982 meeting.

⁴⁶ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 63, Minutes of SMGA September 9, 1982 meeting.

⁴⁷ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 78, November 1982 Newsletter.

⁴⁸ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 78, November 1982 Newsletter.

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On January 31, 1983, Robert Coggin wrote a letter to James Mihalik, Chairperson of the Montgomery County HRC, indicating SMGA's request for support for an amendment to Chapter 27 of the County Code to afford lesbians and gay men protection from anti-discriminatory practices in employment, housing, and public accommodations.⁴⁹ Mihalik replied on February 8 accepting Coggin's invitation to meet to discuss the matter.⁵⁰ The quick exchange of letters and the plans for a meeting indicated that Mihalik was very interested in addressing the matter with Coggin. Mihalik favored adding sexual orientation to the discrimination code, something he had discussed a few years earlier with Council members. It is not known if Mihalik and Coggin met privately in February, but in March 1983, SMGA organized formal meetings with the Human Relations Commission. The first formal meeting, on March 16, SMGA representatives led by Coggin, and other collaborative groups and individuals met with Chairperson Mihalik and other HRC members and staff to foster HRC support for amending Chapter 27. The meeting likely reinforced to Mihalik that there was support for such an effort in the community.⁵¹

Mihalik invited SMGA and its supporters to the March 22 HRC meeting to discuss the matter with the entire HRC. Under Coggin's leadership, SMGA carefully planned for this meeting, understanding the opportunity it presented. SMGA held its own meeting prior to the March 22 HRC meeting to discuss strategies.⁵²

SMGA organized a slate of speakers which include its members and members of other lesbian and gay groups to support the initiative to address these concerns before the HRC at its March 22, 1983 meeting. Coggin, Don Crisostomo, and Wayne Lerch spoke at the meeting stressing the need for protection since the gay and lesbian community were not protected against discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations. Dave Berube of Gay Fathers and Gay Married Men also spoke of the need for such protections as did members of the Montgomery County Rap Group. Charlotte K. Hoffman President of the Montgomery County Chapter of Parents and Friends of Gays spoke in support. Finally, Sherre Boothman of the Metropolitan Community Church in Rockville advocated support and talked about the fear and anxiety lesbians and gay men experienced. Boothman stated that most anti-homosexual discrimination that she knew of occurred in rural areas north of Rockville.⁵³

⁴⁹ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Box 5, Letter from Robert Coggin to James Mihalik, January 31, 1983.

⁵⁰ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Box 5, Letter from James Mihalik to Robert Coggin, February 8, 1983.

⁵¹ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, SMGA Newsletter 7 March 1983.

⁵² Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, SMGA Newsletter 7 March 1983.

⁵³ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, April 1983 SMGA Newsletter.

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The HRC voted unanimously to sponsor legislation that would add sexual orientation to the list of protected classes against discrimination under Article 27 of the Human Relations Code. SMGA newsletters do not indicate that such a vote was imminent in discussions leading up to the meeting. The HRC was obviously very much persuaded by Coggin and other speakers who voiced their support at the meeting and the letter writing campaign during the previous months. At the meeting, Coggin and the other activists spoke that there was no way to determine to what extent gay and lesbian people are discriminated against in the county because there were no codes of any nature that protected their rights. It was a view of many, even several members of the HRC, that most people did not reveal their sexual orientation because they feared their livelihood and housing would be in jeopardy if such knowledge became public.⁵⁴

Don Crisostomo firmly believes to this day that Coggin's leadership was critical to achieving this milestone and would repeat his efforts again with future interaction with the County Council. Coggin did all the behind the scenes planning for these meetings in recruiting the right people to speak on behalf of SMGA in a manner that would ultimately prove persuasive in moving the anti-discrimination agenda forward. Coggin also understood the importance of having leaders of the local faith community speak in support of sexual orientation inclusion. From his background growing up in conservative Danville, Coggin understood the power of organized religion and the likelihood that conservative churches would not support the initiative.⁵⁵ In the months to come, Coggin worked closely with Mihalik and Ike Leggett who succeeded Mihalik as Chairperson in 1983. Leggett also credits Coggin as being the most critical individual in the process and notes Coggin's organizational skills and persistence as important factors leading to the successful inclusion of sexual orientation under the anti-discrimination code. Leggett stated that prior to the March 1983 meeting, several HRC members were not sympathetic to adding sexual orientation to the list of protective categories under Chapter 27. It's clear that the speakers at the March 22 meeting changed several minds on this subject. But Leggett credits Coggin's own charisma as being a key factor. Working with him one-on-one, Leggett recalls Coggin as having a special ability to relate to people, to explain to them in terms they would understand why something like adding sexual orientation to the anti-discrimination code was important. From Leggett's view, Coggin's persuasiveness helped change several minds on the HRC and later the County Council.⁵⁶ As Leggett recounts:

The genius of it...he was not a dynamo. He was quiet spoken person with the ability and advocacy to personally look you in the face and humbly explain to you why this makes a difference...the passion that he brought, the sincerity he brought to the issue and how he could explain it to you in such a way, made you want to say, "yes you are right about that."⁵⁷

⁵⁴Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, April 1983 SMGA Newsletter.

⁵⁵Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, March 16, 2022.

⁵⁶Ike Leggett, Interview by Eric Griffiths and Rebeccah Ballo, February 25, 2022.

⁵⁷Ike Leggett, Interview by Eric Griffiths and Rebeccah Ballo, February 25, 2022.

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Montgomery County Council Lobbying Efforts (April – September 1983)

Coggin led SMGA in their work to gain support within the Montgomery County Council for crafting the needed legislation that would add sexual orientation as a protective class in Chapter 27. As they did the previous fall, Coggin, other SMGA members, and their allies continued to write letters to their Council representatives urging support for the measure, relaying their own experiences when it held merit. In May 1983, Coggin began arranging meetings with Montgomery County Council members. In June, Coggin and several SMGA members met with several members of the Montgomery County Council, including Chairperson David Schull and Mike Gudis. Coggin also continued to seek out support from the local religious community, understanding its importance in persuading public opinion, as well as the Council's. Coggin personally talked with many faith leaders, and he did find allies to the cause. In addition to the Rev. Sherre Boothman of MCC/Rockville, Coggin gained the support of the Rev. Sydney Wildenugent of the Unitarian Church, Rev. Duane Alvord of the Episcopalian Church, and Rev. Lincoln S. Dring of the Presbyterian Church. Coggin also understood that community support alone could not guarantee passage. He therefore led SMGA to identify individuals who had been discriminated against because of sexual orientation, who might have the courage to testify before the Council. Through their network, they gathered a list of people who had such experience and were willing to talk with the Council about their experience.⁵⁸

SMGA's advocacy efforts also began extending to other counties as well. Coggin was not directly involved with outreach efforts to other counties, as he focused his efforts on Montgomery County. Because Wayne Lerch lived in Prince George's County, SMGA chose him to lead its efforts there. In the summer of 1983, Wayne Lerch was nominated to the Prince George's County HRC, which provided SMGA a broader voice in efforts in that county.⁵⁹

In August, the Montgomery County Chapter of the ACLU sent a letter of support for adding sexual orientation as a protective class to Chapter 27.⁶⁰ On August 29, 1983, the Health and Human Services Committee of the County Council held a public meeting to consider sponsoring the bill and passed a measure supporting the bill. It was at this meeting that William Hanna, a Council member who represented a district that comprised portions of the Rockville area, objected to the consideration, arguing that many people considered homosexuality deviant and immoral behavior. He believed discrimination in employment should be permitted. Hannah introduced an amendment that stated, "it shall be unlawful for an employer to deny employment on the basis of homosexual orientation in those cases when the scope of employment requires the employee to spend unsupervised time with a minor of the same gender." SMGA found the

⁵⁸ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, May 1983 SMGA Newsletter.

⁵⁹Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, July 1983 SMGA Newsletter. Passage of a similar anti-discrimination legislation for sexual orientation in Prince George's County occurred several years after Montgomery County.

⁶⁰Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, August 1983 SMGA Newsletter.

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amendment unacceptable because it singled out gays and lesbians as targets of discrimination and reinforced old myths of homosexuals as child molesters. Coggin and other SMGA members met with Hannah on September 6 to discuss the matter, but did little to change his opinions. Sensing a fight over the issue would be eminent, Coggin continued to call on its members to write Council members to express support for the any bill extending protections against discrimination and non-support for amendments that made exclusionary provisions.⁶¹

Montgomery County Bill 65-83

In October, Montgomery County Bill 65-83 was introduced to the Montgomery County Council that added sexual orientation as a protective class to the anti-discrimination code. Hannah introduced his amendment as well. The Council scheduled a November 28 public hearing for consideration of the bill and amendments. As it had done prior to the March meeting with the HRC, SMGA held a special meeting on November 15 to strategize and discuss how the organization would respond to the bill and proposed amendments. Speakers were organized to address the Council that represented SMGA members and allied organizations, leaders of religious institutions, and members of the gay and lesbian community who could speak on the topic of discrimination from personal experience.⁶²

At the November 28 meeting, sixteen people spoke in favor of protecting the rights of gay and lesbians under the law, while four people voiced their opposition. Coggin was among those who spoke at the meeting. He spoke about the misconceptions and misrepresentations of gay and lesbian people and the need for the law. He stated adding sexual orientation to the list of prohibited non-discriminatory practices broadens the anti-discriminatory code to include a group of people whose civil rights have been largely neglected. Robert stated the bill did not advocate, promote, or endorse in anyway homosexual lifestyles. He stated homosexuals were not a threat to minors; there was no affirmative action agenda behind the legislation; and the law did not legalize any activity that was previously illegal. He also spoke of the broad support the bill received from the religious community including several local congregations. Coggin ended his discussion noting that a similar law was enacted in Howard County nine years ago and it has had no drastic effects upon society feared by opponents of the bill. He ended his speech stating that “when we jeopardize anyone’s civil rights, we put the rights of all persons in danger.”⁶³

Others who supported the measure and spoke at the meeting included Isaiah (Ike) Leggett, Chairperson for the HRC, who spoke about several cases of discrimination against gays and lesbians in Montgomery County. Reverend Lincoln Dring, Chair of the Montgomery County Community Ministries also spoke in support of the bill. Attorney Susan Silber discussed real

⁶¹Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, September 1983 SMGA Newsletter.

⁶²Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, November 1983 SMGA Newsletter.

⁶³ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, December 1983 SMGA Newsletter.

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cases involving discrimination and how the bill would help bring justice in similar cases. Other speakers in favor of the measure included Carol Jennings of the Montgomery County Lesbians Rap Group, Wayne Lerch, Dr. Arnold Kahn representing the American Psychological Association, Rabbi Richard S. Sternberger the Mid-Atlantic Director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Rev. Sydney Wilde-Nugent of the Cedar Lane Unitarian Church, Duane Alvor of St. John's Episcopal Church, and Dr. John Harvey of the Montgomery County Chapter of the NAACP.⁶⁴ Don Crisostomo remembers one of the most influential speakers of the night was Paulett Goodman, the head of the local DC area chapter of Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLG).⁶⁵

William Hannah voiced his opposition arguing that next the Council would be extending rights to bigamy, incest, and euthanasia. Also speaking in opposition was James Miller of the State Federation of Catholic Laity, who stated the bill would force church schools to employ homosexual teachers in the Catholic church which views homosexuality as immoral and sinful.⁶⁶

Passage of the Montgomery County Bill #65-83

After the November 28 meeting, Bill #65-83 was sent back to committee for revisions. Newspapers throughout the DC area regularly reported on the measure, which they dubbed, "the gay rights bill." Favorable press coverage angered several local conservative congregations who opposed the bill. Throughout December of 1983 and January of 1984, the conservative churches continued to mount opposition to the bill through their own letter writing campaigns. These churches and their members voiced proposals for having amendments added to the bill allowing persons with moral conviction against homosexuality to discriminate based on their own moral or religious code. Some, like Thurlow Switzer of the Northgate Community Church in Gaithersburg, saw a bill without such an amendment as reverse discrimination against churches and organizations who view homosexuality as immoral and sinful. The HRC rejected this measure as a loophole that would continue to support the kind of discrimination the bill was trying to prevent.⁶⁷

On December 11, 1983, the Wharton Baptist Church and the Montrose Baptist Church instructed their congregations to write letters to their Council representatives urging them to vote down the legislation. The County Council received three to five letters per day in opposition to the bill. Many of the letters decried homosexuality as a choice that was sinful and any measure addressing their concerns was also immoral.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 79, December 1983 SMGA Newsletter.

⁶⁵ Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, March 16, 2022.

⁶⁶ Ken McIntyre, "Discrimination Bill Debated," *Montgomery Journal*, November 30, 1983. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁶⁷ Ken McIntyre, "Gay Rights Bill Nurtures Sin, Ministers Say," *Montgomery Journal*, January 20, 1984. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁶⁸ Marc Adams, "Drive Opens to Kill Bill on Gay Rights," *Washington Times*, January 6, 1984. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

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The committee heard the final draft of the bill in early February of 1984, which did not include Hannah's amendment. A public hearing was scheduled to discuss the final bill for February 6, 1984. At the public meeting, Jerry Steininger, an opponent of the bill made a noticeable effort to greet Robert Coggin, who the conservative church recognized as their opposition's leader. Shaking his hand Steininger told Robert, "I want you to respect your opponents." He went on to add, "We differ on this issue, but we believe people can differ without being rude."⁶⁹ But the atmosphere was less than cordial. The opposition churches organized over 200 people to attend the meeting to voice their opposition to the bill. The *Montgomery Journal* reported the people acted as an angry mob. Many were heard saying that allowing passage of the bill was a threat to the moral fiber of America. Some yelled at the Council, "Put them in Jail."⁷⁰

During the meeting Councilmember Hannah addressed the chamber saying he had received countless numbers of phone calls against the bill and addressed the subject as "repugnant." Robert Crowley, Pastor of the Montrose Baptist Church read from many bible verses that condemned homosexuality, stating that, "God's Word tells us...this is indecent, this is degrading," adding that homosexuals "deserve death." Robert Coggin was allotted time to speak as SMGA leader. He rose to speak stating he didn't expect such opposition in this late stage, adding that he never expected to hear such hate and bigotry, ending that what people heard in this session proves that there needs to be a law protecting the rights of gay and lesbian people in the County.⁷¹

At the end of the ninety-minute session, a measure to send the final bill to the Council was passed with three yes votes. Chairperson Rose Crenca voiced her support for the law prior to the vote. William Hannah tried again to reintroduce his amendment but was voted down. He later called the legislation, "monstrous." Crowley, Steininger, and other religious fundamentalists voiced disapproval and vowed to fight on even stating their intent to put the bill up for a referendum vote in the fall if it passed the Council later in February. James Fister of the Wheaton Baptist Church voiced his opposition stating the committee had "totally ignored God's word."⁷²

On February 14, 1984, the Montgomery County Council passed Bill #65-83 by a vote of 5-0-2. Councilmembers Rose Crenca, Scott Fosler, Esther Gelman, Michael Gudis, and David Schull voted in favor of the bill. William Hanna and Neal Potter abstained from voting.⁷³ Rose Crenca and David Scull offered Amendments to the bill that specified Montgomery County was not

⁶⁹ R.H. Melton, "Gay Rights Bill Clears Committee," *The Washington Post*, February 7, 1984, B3.

⁷⁰ Ken McIntyre, "Angry Mob Fights Gay Rights," *Montgomery Journal*, February 4, 1984. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁷¹ Ken McIntyre, "Angry Mob Fights Gay Rights," *Montgomery Journal*, February 4, 1984. . Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁷² R.H. Melton, "Gay Rights Bill Clears Committee," *The Washington Post*, February 7, 1984, B3.

⁷³ Sandra Arnoult and Ken McIntyre, "Council Passes Gay Rights Bill," *Montgomery Journal*, February 15, 1984, A1. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

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endorsing or encouraging homosexual lifestyles.⁷⁴ The changes to the Chapter 27 also included providing the HRC the authority to arbitrate complaints and award damages.⁷⁵ The bill included an amendment that allowed employers to dismiss or refuse to hire anyone who advocated homosexuality or whose job required unsupervised exposure to minors of the same sex. A companion amendment to allow employers the right to refuse employment to an “avowed” homosexual or bisexual for jobs that involved unsupervised time with minors was defeated in a 4-3 vote. A crowd of 100 observers filled the Council’s chambers to witness the vote. Robert Coggin stated, “There was a little dilution of the bill, but I don’t think it was significant.” He went on to say that he was satisfied with the passage of the bill. Rev. Robert Crowley stated his intent to seek a veto from the County Executive Charles Gilchrist and if that failed, they would start a campaign for a referendum on the issue.⁷⁶

Referendum Effort

In March, Coggin wrote an op ed in the *Montgomery Journal* to better educate the public on the meaning of the amendment to the Chapter 27 that added sexual orientation among the list of protective classes. In the article, Coggin stated the law’s intent was to afford homosexuals the same protection under the law as other minorities when it comes to discriminatory activity. He went on to state that several church groups had backed the measure, including local congregations of the Presbyterian, Episcopal and the Unitarian-Universalist Association and supportive views of national organizations of the Council of Catholic Bishops and the United Methodist Church. Robert finished by saying the law does not endorse the homosexual lifestyle, and it doesn’t require any teaching of it in schools. He also reminded the readers that a similar law enacted in Howard County has not created any negative impacts.⁷⁷

From his youth growing up in Danville, Coggin no doubt understood his words would never sway the conservative forces aligned against the measure. Rev. Robert Crowley’s continued to defend his opposition to what he called, “the so-called gay right’s law” in the press. His views were that homosexuals are granted the same legal rights and protections under the law as everyone. He stated that the homosexual lifestyle was a choice, and that choice was immoral. He added the question of what was next, legalizing drugs, prostitution, and other illegal vices just because people want that freedom? Crowley went on to state that the Bible is the sole source for morality and judgement and should serve as a guide on determining what is just. He stated

⁷⁴ Ken McIntyre, “Council Appears Ready to Vote on Controversial Gay Rights Bill,” *Montgomery Journal*, February 13, 1984, A3. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁷⁵ Ken McIntyre, “Council Appears Ready to Vote on Controversial Gay Rights Bill,” *Montgomery Journal*, February 13, 1984, A3. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁷⁶ Dave Walter, “Montgomery Bill Passes,” *The Washington Blade*, Vol 15, No. 7, February 17, 1984, page 1. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁷⁷ Robert Coggin, “Mainstream Religious Groups Support protection of Gay Rights,” *Montgomery Journal*, March 7, 1984. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

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various biblical passages to support his position that homosexuality is morally wrong, including Romans 1:24-28, which calls homosexuality a “perversion.”⁷⁸

By early March, Gilchrist stated his intentions to sign the bill into law, which started the referendum drive.⁷⁹ Following the passage of the bill, Reverend Robert Crowley the pastor of the Montrose Baptist Church in Rockville, immediately led efforts to repeal the law. Crowley headed an opposition group which called itself Citizens for Decent Government. He and his backers saw an avenue for repeal through the referendum process. With 15,750 signatures, the issue could become a referendum put to the voters that November. The Montrose Baptist Church led signature drive efforts and were assisted by various local denominations of the Mormon Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.⁸⁰

By May, the Citizens for Decent Government coalition had collected over 7,000 more signatures than the required 15,750 needed to ensure a referendum on the issue of changing Chapter 27 of the County Code to afford legal protections to gays and lesbians. Rev. Robert Crowley stated his coalition was ready for the fight, adding that they were mapping out a strategy for victory and had started printing leaflets and pamphlets. Crowley signified the importance of their stance saying, “We’re fighting a battle [here] that is going to go across the United States.”⁸¹

Coggin countered Crowley’s messaging by stating that the fundamentalist concerns were rooted in stereotypical fears that did not represent the homosexual community and an antiquated code of morality. He stated that the law protects rights and did not endorse or condone the homosexual lifestyle. The law provided no special rights or privileges to homosexuals.⁸² By June, the *Montgomery Journal* published a result of its poll on the referendum that showed both support and opposition on the subject of including gay rights protection under Chapter 27 was split even at 44 percent of county voters.⁸³

During the course of the spring and early summer, Coggin and Susan Silber met with several attorneys who agreed to work on behalf of SMGA to challenge the referendum effort. In July, the Montgomery County elections supervisors declared the referendum challenge was invalid because the wording of the petition was legally insufficient. The elections panel ruled

⁷⁸ Robert Crowley, “A Minister’s View: Why the Gay Rights Law Should Be Repealed,” *Montgomery Journal*, April 4, 1984, A12. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁷⁹ Robert Coggin, “Mainstream Religious Groups Support protection of Gay Rights,” *Montgomery Journal*, March 7, 1984. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁸⁰ David Walter, “Mormons Work to Kill Montgomery Law,” *The Washington Blade*, Vol. 15 No. 14. April 6, 1984, page 1 and 11

⁸¹ Ken McIntyre, “Gay Rights Law on the Ballot; Rally Planned.” *The Montgomery Journal*, May 22, 1984, A1. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁸² Ken McIntyre, “Gays Say Bill Facts Distorted,” *The Montgomery Journal*, May 24, 1984. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁸³ Ken McIntyre, “Montgomery Voters Split on Gay Rights,” *The Montgomery Journal*, June 28, 1984, A1. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

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unanimously that the language in the petition was too vague to meet legal requirements for ballot questions. The Citizens for Decent Government vowed to challenge the ruling in court.⁸⁴ In September 1984, the County Circuit Court ruled in favor of the Citizens for Decent Government and ordered the referendum be placed on the ballot for November. Judge John Mitchell rejected arguments by the election board that the Citizen for Decent Government petition was legally vague. The judge ruled the plaintiff's position was clear. To remove the petition from referendum would, in the judge's opinion, constitute a reflection upon the intellect and sensitivity of the entire community of voters in the county. Susan Silber led efforts to appeal the ruling working with several law firms sympathetic to gay rights causes. Silber indicated they would file an appeal and ask for an expedited ruling. Coggin feared they would likely lose the appeal.⁸⁵ However, on September 14, 1984, the Maryland Court of Appeals overturned the Circuit Court decision siding with the election panel that the petition was too vague and could not be advanced to a referendum. Although Crowley and the Citizens of Decent Government vowed to fight on, the appellate court ruling offered them no more challenges in court, leaving the referendum challenge over. The last obstacle to adding sexual orientation to the county's anti-discrimination code was essentially over.⁸⁶

Suburban Maryland Lesbian and Gay Alliance After 1984

SMGA began evolving in the middle of the battle over the anti-discrimination bill. In early 1984, the organization changed its name to the Suburban Maryland Lesbian and Gay Alliance (SMLGA) in an effort to attract more female members.⁸⁷ After achieving its top priority to obtain inclusion for sexual orientation into the anti-discrimination code, SMLGA set its focus on other goals which included ensuring the passage of anti-discrimination legislation for sexual orientation in other counties and at the state level and efforts to repeal the state's sodomy law. Coggin continued to lead the organization's efforts over the next few years, although many responsibilities passed to other members. Wayne Lerch led the effort to ensure the passage of anti-discrimination legislation in Prince George's County.⁸⁸ In January 1985, SMLGA began documenting hate crimes and violence on the gay and lesbian community by conducting another survey.⁸⁹ The survey would be used to educate political candidates and officials of the prevalence of hate crimes and the need to ensure legal protections.⁹⁰ By 1986, much of

⁸⁴ Frank Jossi, "Gay Rights Petition Rejected," *The Montgomery County Sentinel*, July 27, 1984. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁸⁵ Jim Marks, "Md. Judge Orders Vote on Rights Law," *The Washington Blade*, October 2, 1984. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁸⁶ Dave Walter, "Crowley Group Will Continue to Fight," *The Washington Blaze*, October 12, 1984, page 5. Rainbow History Collection MS0764 RHC Series VIII Box 5.

⁸⁷ Don Crisostomo, interviewed by Eric Griffiths, 16 March 2022.

⁸⁸ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 81, February 1985 SMLGA Newsletter.

⁸⁹ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 81, January 1985 SMLGA Newsletter.

⁹⁰ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 81, May 1985 SMLGA Newsletter.

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SMLGA's advocacy work broadened to more of a state-wide effort that began focusing on the sodomy law repeal and ensuring passage of a state-wide anti-discrimination protections for sexual orientation. In December 1986, SMLGA leadership decided to drop "Suburban" and become the Montgomery County chapter of the of the Maryland Lesbian and Gay Alliance (MLGA).⁹¹ Don Crisostomo does not recall this evolution coming to fruition. He also notes that the SMLGA declined after the passage of the anti-discrimination bill. This was likely because Coggin increasingly removed himself from leading the organization, leaving much of the operation to others. Crisostomo recalls the campaign in Montgomery County over sexual orientation inclusion into the anti-discrimination code took a heavy toll on Coggin's mental and physical health. Coggin was the driving force in this effort and by Crisostomo's own assertion, "put his heart and soul" into the effort while his own health became increasingly compromised by chronic myotonic muscular dystrophy.⁹²

4509 Bennion Road and Later Years

In 1988, Coggin and Crisostomo bought the house in Silver Spring at 4509 Bennion Road, where Coggin would live the remainder of his life. Francis and Mary Kennedy owned the property at the time of the house's construction in the 1940s.⁹³ In 1959, Mary Kennedy, a widow, sold the property to William and Martha Tamblyn.⁹⁴ In 1988, Martha Tamblyn, a widow, sold the property to Robert Coggin and Don Crisostomo for \$94,000.⁹⁵

Don Crisostomo recalls the property purchase was a typically normal real estate transaction. He does not recall any discrimination or negative reaction from people in the neighborhood when he and Robert purchased the house at 4509 Bennion Road. Robert and Don took a liking to the house at 4509 Bennion Road and the surrounding neighborhood. The Viers Mill Village neighborhood during the late 1980s was a working class neighborhood for modestly income families. All of the houses in the neighborhood were considerably small. Shortly after Robert and Don purchased the house at 4509 Bennion Road, they converted one of the two bedrooms in the house into a dining room, which provided a little more social space.

After purchasing the house, Coggin and Crisostomo became increasingly involved in more DC area gay social groups. During the late 1980s, they joined a DC/Maryland/Virginia area gay couple's support group. It was with this group where they met and became close friends with Tanner Wray and Karl Debus-Lopez.⁹⁶ The couple's support group was primarily a social organization where gay couples could meet and connect with other gay couples in the area.

⁹¹ Robert Coggin Papers, Rainbow History Collection, MS0764 Series VIII, Folder 81, December 1986 SMLGA Newsletter.

⁹² Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, March 16, 2022.

⁹³Montgomery County Deeds Book 1234, page 80. Accessed online at mdlandrec.com

⁹⁴Montgomery County Deeds Book 2549, page 166. Accessed online at mdlandrec.com

⁹⁵Montgomery County Deeds Book 8413, page 547. Accessed online at mdlandrec.com

⁹⁶Tanner Wray and Karl Debus-Lopez, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, February 17, 2022.

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Occasionally, the couple's support group did host educational events with speakers.⁹⁷ The group tended to circulate among members houses for social events. Crisostomo recalls he and Robert hosting a barbeque and their tenth anniversary celebration at the house but does not recall ever hosting any educational events. The small size of the house prevented hosting large groups, which made their house not an ideal venue for the group.⁹⁸

In 1993, Coggin and Crisostomo ended their thirteen-year relationship, with Crisostomo moving to San Francisco a year later. Coggin continued to live in the house at 4509 Bennion Road and remained involved in gay and lesbian organizations, even hosting social events at the house.⁹⁹ He joined a Montgomery County gay men's group and remained active in the organization for several years. Like the gay couple's support group, the Montgomery County gay men's group was primarily a social organization where gay men could meet and socialize. Coggin hosted annual picnicks for group members at the house at 4509 Bennion Road.¹⁰⁰ Coggin continued to work for NIH until 2000, when he retired on disability due to the myotonic muscular dystrophy. Coggin died of complications of the disease on January 19, 2014.¹⁰¹ Ike Leggett who was then serving as the County's Executive was among the speakers at Coggin's memorial service.

Robert Coggin's Legacy

Robert Coggin is considered the founder of the LGBTQ rights movement in Montgomery County. Prior to Coggin's arrival in Maryland in 1980, there was a lack of adequate legal protections and no organization to advocate on behalf of the LGBTQ community. Up until that time, only one county, Howard County, had any legal protections for the gay and lesbian community through local anti-discrimination legislation. No similar protections existed at the state level and in any other counties in Maryland, including Montgomery County. The Civil Right Movement in the 1960s codified legal protections in Chapter 27 of the Montgomery County Code from discrimination in local law for minorities, women, and the elderly, but such protections did not extend to the gay and lesbian community. The ruling against Acanfora underscored the need for such legal protection and the consequences for the gay and lesbian community without such protections.

Coggin became the single most important person in obtaining the long sought-after legal protections for the gay and lesbian community in the early 1980s. His leadership, persistence, and charisma were key factors in the campaign to add sexual orientation to Montgomery

⁹⁷ Tanner Wray and Karl Debus-Lopez, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, June 22, 2022.

⁹⁸ Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, June 28, 2022.

⁹⁹ Don Crisostomo recalls Robert hosting cookouts for a Montgomery County gay men's group at the house in the years after they parted ways.

¹⁰⁰ Tanner Wray and Karl Debus-Lopez, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, June 22, 2022; Don Crisostomo, Interviewed by Eric Griffiths, June 28, 2022.

¹⁰¹ Lou Chibbaro, Jr. "Gay Activist Robert Coggin Dies at 62," *Washington Blade*, January 29, 2014. Obtained 8 February 2022 at <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2014/01/29/gay-activist-robert-coggin-dies-62>

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County's non-discrimination code.¹⁰² Coggin understood the importance of establishing a political centric advocacy organization for the gay and lesbian community. He, along with his partner Don Crisostomo, founded the first such organization, the Suburban Maryland Gay Alliance (SMGA) in 1982. Prior to the founding of SMGA, there was no organization or group to educate the public and officials of the discrimination and other difficulties the gay and lesbian community faced at this time. Coggin provided the leadership in obtaining support from the HRC and later the County Council. Through this process, Coggin and his allies faced significant opposition from conservative Christian churches, notably the Citizens of Decent Government led by Reverend Robert Crowley, who vehemently opposed to extending any protections to the gay and lesbian community. These churches brought to this fight a broader organization base and alliances that provided a real challenge to SMGA goals. By contrast, Coggin and his allies in the SMGA were a much smaller origination that did not have the assistance of national civil rights organizations like the NAACP. Understanding the challenges before him, Coggin provided the leadership needed to galvanize a broad coalition of supporters that included leaders of other gay and lesbian friendly originations and religious congregations, and a legal assistance. This coalition provided the sufficient broad-based advocacy needed that resulted in the 1984 passage of Montgomery County Bill #65-83 that amended Chapter 27 of the Montgomery Code to extend legal protections form discrimination to the gay and lesbian community, making Montgomery County only the second county in Maryland to do so. This passage of Bill #65-83 represented a watershed moment for local LGBTQ rights, being the first time Montgomery County extended legal protections to the LGBTQ community. This achievement became a stepping-stone to future progressive measures in Montgomery County to ensure more inclusive LGBTQ rights, including marriage equality.¹⁰³

The House at 4509 Bennion Road is the most appropriate property in Montgomery County associated with the life and legacy of Robert Coggin. The house was his primary residence for over twenty-five years. Prior to moving into the house, Coggin lived temporarily at several apartment communities between 1980 and 1988. Coggin purchased the property at 4509 Bennion Road with his partner Don Crisostomo in 1988 to be their permanent home in Montgomery County, a place where they both worked tirelessly to ensure legal protections for the LGBTQ community. Coggin continued to host LGBTQ events at his home, particularly for the gay men's social organizations he became heavily involved with, for several years even after he and Crisostomo separated in 1992.

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¹⁰³Ike Leggett, Interview by Eric Griffiths and Rebeccah Ballo, February 25, 2022.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark

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___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 0.2

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 39.05316111N | Longitude: 70.08641944W |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

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- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

National Register Boundaries for the property include all of Lot 5 of Block G in the Viers Mill Village subdivision in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Lot 5 of Block G is the original lot on which the house was constructed in the 1940s. This was the also the extent of the property purchased by Robert Coggin and Don Crisostomo in 1988 and the property sold from Coggin's estate following his death in 2014. The 8,819 – square foot lot includes all of the house and its immediate setting.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Eric Griffiths and Alyssa Stein
organization: EHT Tracerics, Inc.
street & number: 440 Massachusetts Avenue
city or town: Washington, D.C. state: DC zip code: 20001
e-mail eht@tracerics.com
telephone: 202-393-1199
date: May 2022

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Robert Coggin House

City or Vicinity: Silver Spring

County: Montgomery

State: MD

Photographer: Eric Griffitts

Date Photographed: April 25, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

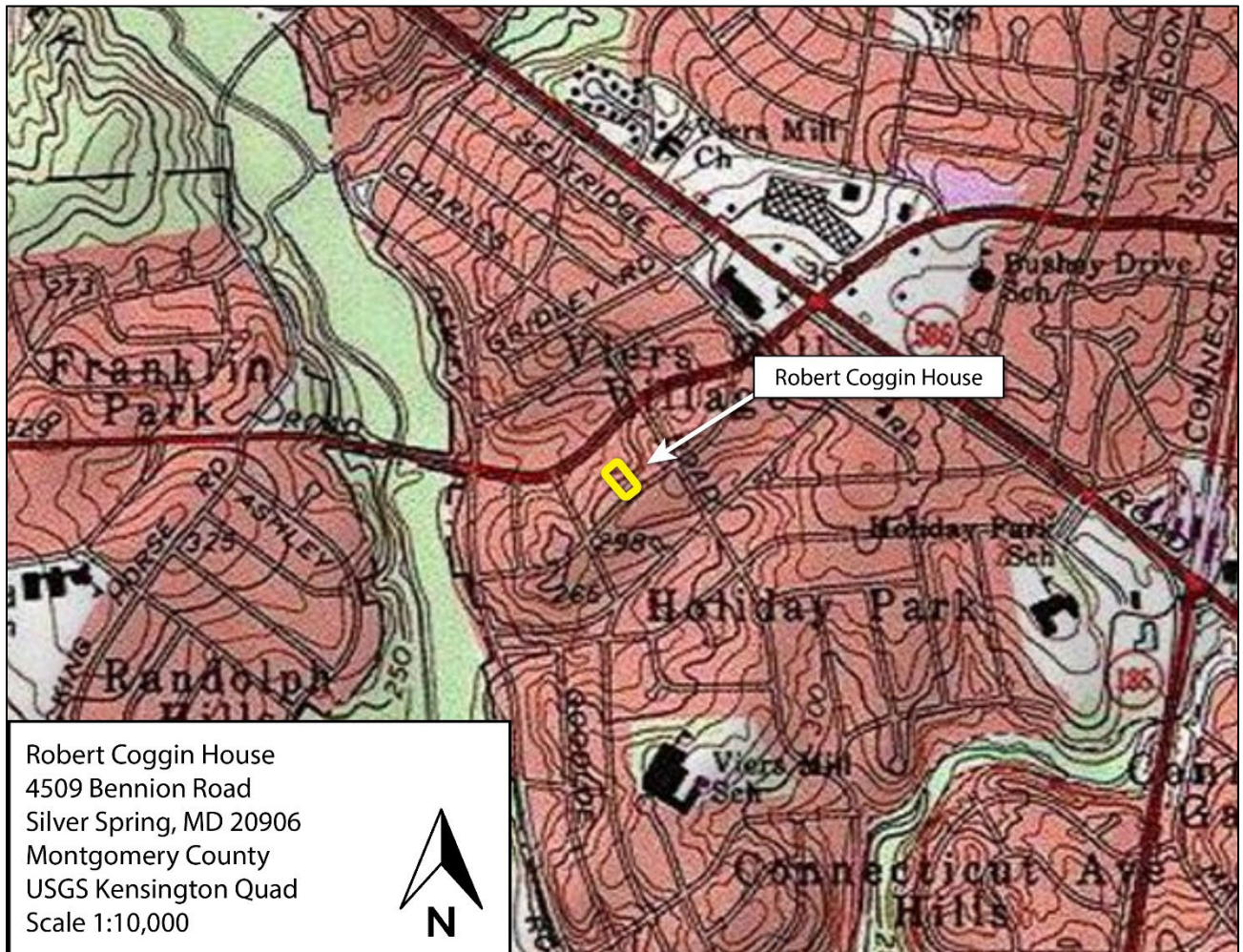
1 of 2: MD_Montgomery County_Robert Coggin House_001.tif. South (front) Elevation, facing northwest

2 of 2: MD_Montgomery County_Robert Coggin House_001.tif. South (front) Elevation, facing north.

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Location Map

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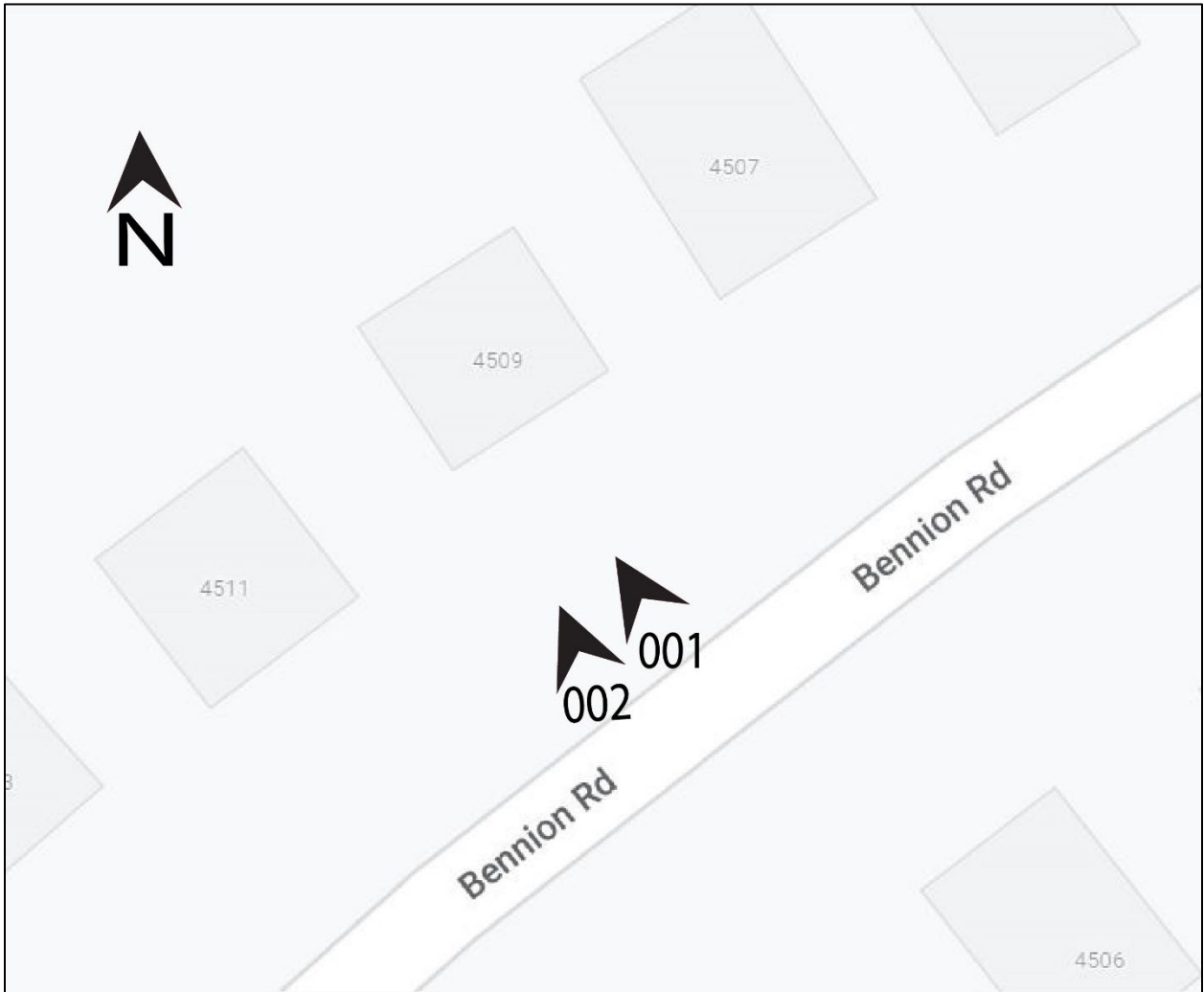


Tax Map Showing National Register Boundaries (Block G Lot 5)

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Sketch Map Showing Photo Directions (Google Maps)

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Photo 1 of 2: MD_Montgomery County_Robert Coggin House_001.tif. South (front) Elevation, facing northwest

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Photo 2 of 2: MD_Montgomery County_Robert Coggin House_002.tif. South (front) Elevation, facing northwest