



# OutSmart

NOVEMBER 1999 • COMPLIMENTARY

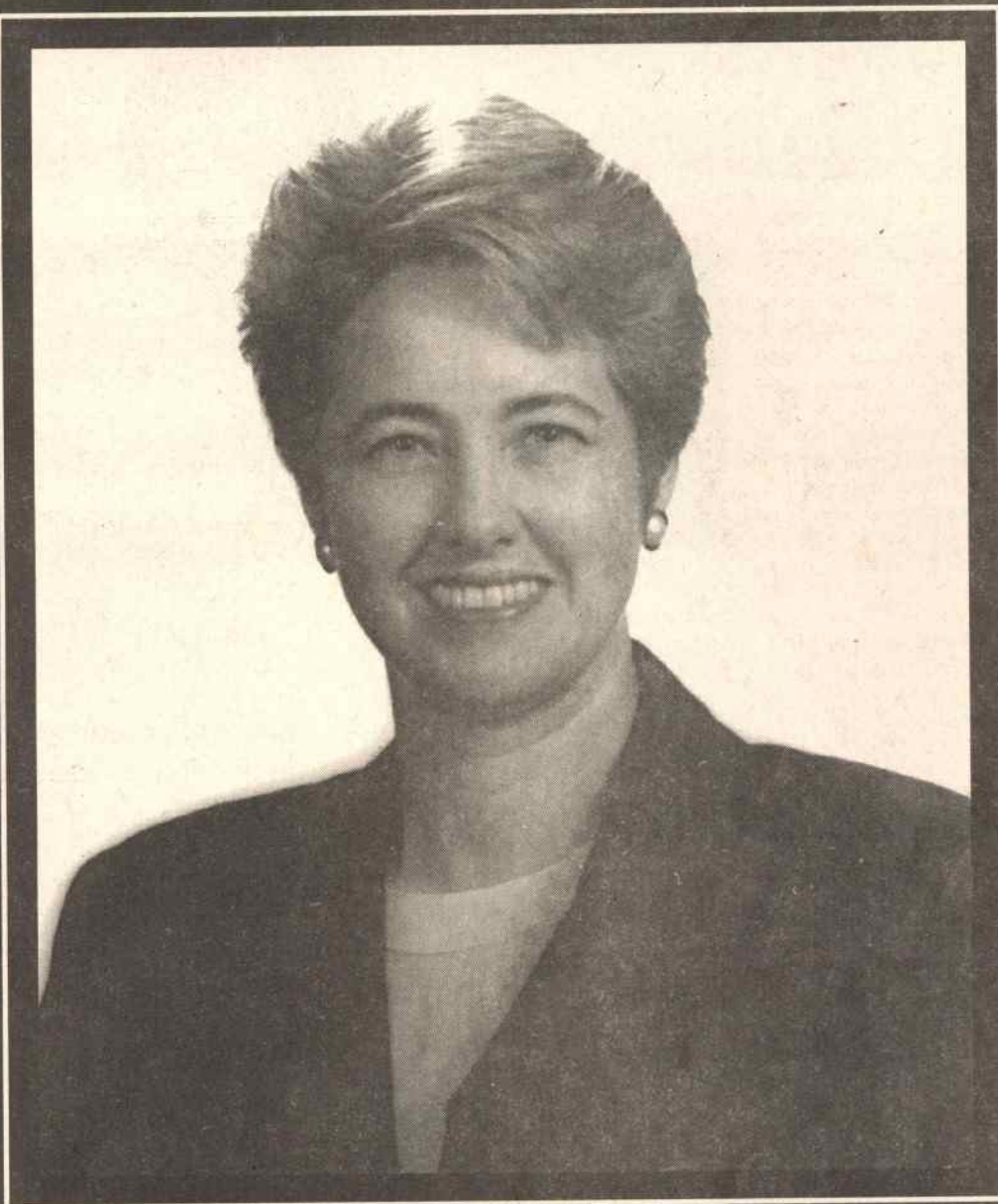
Houston's Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine

## WHITE LIGHT

Gay Religious Leader  
Mel White Reaches Out  
to Jerry Falwell

### ALSO

- Three Houston Women Artists Show Their Skills
- HIV-Positive Triathlete Jim Howley Runs for His Life




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**ANNISE PARKER**

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Annise Parker  
Member, Houston City Council

Campaign Headquarters: 713-807-9100  
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[www.anniseparker.com](http://www.anniseparker.com) • [annise@anniseparker.com](mailto:annise@anniseparker.com)  
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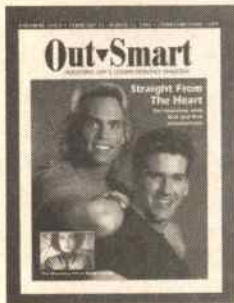
 **Re-Elect  
Annise  
Parker**

## TIMELINE 1994-96

Each month *OutSmart* continues its timeline series on the past 30 years of Houston gay history.

by Tim Brookover

**1994** Following the 1993 March on Washington, thousands of re-energized gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals returned home to establish a wave of new service and social organizations in their communities. In Houston, the years after the historic event saw the founding of a number of groups that remain fixtures today. Businessman and activist Jay Hollyfield created the **Hollyfield Foundation**, which was endowed by his estate upon his death from AIDS-related conditions in 1994. This prominent organization continues to provide grants in the fields of HIV/AIDS service and gay and lesbian civil rights. The foundation also offers meeting space to organizations at its headquarters, the Hollyfield Center, a venerable building on Albany recalled by gentlemen of a certain age as the Officers Club. Another organization with an advocacy mission, **It's Time, America!**, became the first group with a national scope seek-



The premier issue of *OutSmart* magazine

ing to secure the rights of transgendered and gender-variant persons. Formed during the 1994 Transgender Law Conference, **It's Time, America!** works at the federal, state, and local government levels to influence legislation. **SISTERS**, a support group for African American women, began meeting at the Montrose Counseling Center. Two popular social groups, the **Houston Area Bears** and the **Rainbow Ranglers**, arrived on the scene. The former promotes "friendship and brotherhood among like-minded men," according to a local bear website, and raises money for charitable efforts. The latter promotes Western dancing. Finally, inspired by the March on Washington, the founding fathers and mothers of *OutSmart* magazine launched this publication.


**1995** A group of business-minded types founded the **Greater Houston Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce**, now one of the most visible organizations in the community. Best known for sponsoring the annual Empower expo in October, the chamber offers network-

ing opportunities for members and guests at monthly dinner meetings and other events, a small-business counseling service through the University of Houston, and a business mentoring program. The chamber is now helping to identify the next wave of community powerhouses through its ongoing Leading and Learning Initiative. **The Center for AIDS** opened as an information and advocacy organization that shares news on medical treatment and scientific advances in HIV/AIDS. The center continues to perform this critical work through a newsletter, regular fo-



Janine Brunjes, an original **Uncommon Legacy** member

rum and informal mixers, and a useful website. A Houston chapter of the national **Uncommon Legacy** organization began advocacy and fundraising for causes of interest to and benefiting lesbians. The group awards




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raising for causes of interest to and benefiting lesbians. The group awards scholarships to promising students with leadership potential and awards grants to fund projects and organizations that contribute to the community's health, education and culture. Legacy also promotes philanthropy among women and demonstrates the growing power of lesbian giving. Another advocacy and social group, the **African American Lesbian and Gay Alliance**, got its start in 1995.

**1995 AssistHers** started serving women with life-threatening or debilitating illnesses this year. A corps of trained volunteers provides direct care, including emotional support, meal preparation, shopping, hospital and home visits, pet care, transportation, and other nonmedical duties. Assistance often extends to a woman's partner, caregiver, or family. Another organization for women, **Lesbians United in Coalition**, debuted. Two now-prominent gay and lesbian employee groups at major local firms—the **Chase Bank PRIDE Team** and **SEAShell** at Shell Oil Company—demonstrated the growing acceptance of the community within corporate America. The **Garden And Yard Society (GAYS)**, an association of gay men and women interested in gardening and landscaping, started keeping things beautiful on the home front; this group also wins best acronym. **Queer Artists Collective (QuAC)** began striving to create a new arts culture in Houston. For the next three years, this group of people in their 20s (more commonly known as QuAC) presented exciting, challenging performances and events, including the 1997 HomolImprovement. In July 1999, QuAC gave its final show, Y2Q. The individual QuAC artists promised to continue pushing queer art into the next century.

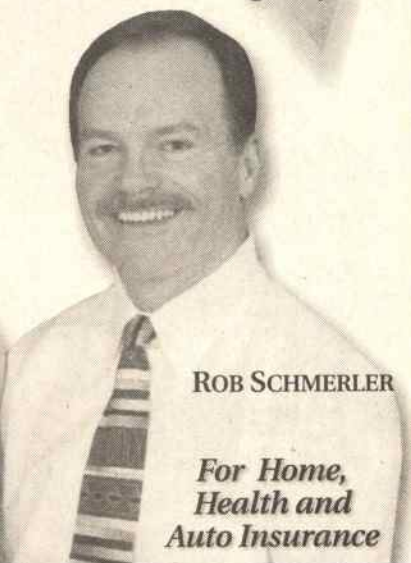
*Timeline constructed from personal interviews, personal recollections and documented information.*

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