Consortium Members,

The Consortium Executive Board is saddened to learn of the passing of Robert “Bob” Schoenberg, one of the founding members of the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals and founding Director of the University of Pennsylvania.

Known as one of the three Pocono Parents, Bob worked with Sue Rankin and Ronni Sanlo to build what is now the Consortium. During his time with the Consortium and his local communities, he was known as someone who deeply cared about supporting others through outreach, education and advocacy. We will miss his caring words and presence in the Consortium community yet his legacy will continue in the work that we all do together.

For members who did not have the opportunity to know Bob, our team wants to highlight a few select testimonials from fellow Consortium members that speak to how dearly he will be missed:

Ronni Sanlo, Ed.D.

UCLA LGBT Center Director Emeritus/Retired

Professor, UCLA Masters of Education in Student Affairs/ Retired

“Many in Philadelphia know and remember Bob Schoenberg for his pioneering work in LGBT issues in town and at Penn, but his reach goes much further. Bob was one of the three Pocono Parents – with Sue Rankin and myself – who laid the foundation for what is now the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals. Bob hosted the first meeting of a small group of campus directors who in 1994 wanted to connect with others for support of this new lesbian and gay (as it was called then) campus work. We met more formally at Creating Change Conference in Dallas (1994) and Detroit (1995).

At the 1997 NASPA/ACPA conference in Chicago, we met again to consider creating a professional organization for the still-few of us doing this work. Bob and Sue and I agreed to meet at Bob's bungalow in the Poconos – hence Pocono Parents – in the summer of 1997 to create a structure, a vision, and an identity for LGBT campus directors, and the National Consortium of Directors of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Resources in Higher Education was born (the name has sense been changed). I was the first executive director; Bob was the second, but we did this work in tandem. In 2002, Bob and Sue and I again collaborated, this time on the book Our Place on Campus: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Services and Programs in Higher Education (2002, Greenwood Press). The book focused on the transformation of college and university campuses into places of welcome and respect, where social justice prevails…exactly as Bob desired. Bob Schoenberg was a pioneer, a national activist, and a powerful voice for LGBTQ people, for students, for us.

His work will live on in the Consortium and with those who do LGBTQ work on college and university campuses. Bob was more than a colleague; he was my friend and I miss him."

Sue R. Rankin, Ph.D.

President/Owner

Rankin & Associates Consulting, LLC

"Bob was a dear friend and colleague whose legacy is his passion and dedication in creating safe, brave campus environments for LGBTQIA and non-binary students. His scholarly work laid the foundation for campus centers across the country. His contributions to the creation of the Consortium and mentorship of young scholars in our field are immeasurable."

Erin Cross

Director of the University of Pennsylvania's LGBT Center

"Bob truly was a pioneer," said Erin Cross, director of Penn's LGBT Center. "He helped create the LGBTQ+ student services field, laying the foundation for the over 200 LGBTQ+ campus centers across North America. His legacy will live on through all who use their services, but especially those who are part of the Penn LGBT Center's family. Our touchstone for LGBTQ+ issues has passed, but we will carry Bob in our hearts as we continue his fight for equity and justice." Read more of Erins' words and others through this article.

Debbie Bazarsky, Ph.D.

Director of the Boston University LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff

"Bob was a living legend who contributed mightily to the profession, his campus at the University of Pennsylvania, his local community of Philadelphia, and to other colleges and universities. He was cofounder of the Consortium, founding director of the second center in the country—a role he was in for 35 years, a servant leader to his core, a tenacious advocate, a fundraiser extraordinaire, and hugely successful in his work at Penn and nationally. Bob was a trailblazer and the advocacy work and support services on his campus were models that set the stage for change nationwide. Bob was incredibly generous with his time and energy, thoughtful, and kind hearted. He mentored and provided support for countless colleagues, students, and alums. Bob always had time for you, whoever you were, and he was always quick to offer his support to others to help them personally and professionally. Bob's legacy is tremendous. His work and love for those he supported and mentored lives on in the people, organizations, and campuses he influenced during his journey. Bob will be missed. May his memory as well as his fierce commitment to and tremendous love for the LGBTQIA+ community and profession be carried forward and live on in our work, our lives, and in our hearts."

We send our deepest condolences to all who knew Bob including his family, friends, faculty, staff and alumni of the University of Pennsylvania. Those with the available financial resources can donate to the University of Pennsylvania's LGBT Center in Bob's honor.

In solidarity and with love,

Consortium Executive Board