



HARVEY MILK

(1930-1978)

Harvey realized he was gay when he was fourteen, but at first he chose not to tell anyone. After school, he joined the navy. Later, he fell in love and moved with his partner to San Francisco, where they opened a camera shop. It was while helping people with their problems, perhaps because he hadn't let anyone help him when he needed it most. To carry on helping others, he decided to go into politics.

He wanted to gain a position on the city council. In the first election, he came tenth. In the second, seventh. In the third, fourth. And then, finally, Harvey succeeded, becoming the first openly gay elected official in the history of the city.

Straight away, he got to work. He created programmes for minorities, workers and the elderly. He passed a law that made it illegal for employers or landlords to discriminate based on sexuality. He promoted free public transport and cheaper childcare. He even made it illegal not to clear up your dog's poo.

When a law was put forward that would have prevented gay and lesbian teachers from working in schools in California, he put a stop to that.

On 27th November 1978, an angry, troubled man, who opposed what Harvey stood for, shot and killed him in his office.

The whole city was distraught.

Thirty thousand people marched with candles to show how much Harvey had meant to them. He became a symbol for the whole gay-rights movement. In 2009, Barack Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and every year, on 22nd May, people across America celebrate Harvey Milk Day.

