

A Resolution Issuing a Statement on the Passing of Jim Toy

A bill for the consideration of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government

January 12, 2022

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Whereas, the mission of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government (hereafter LSA SG) is to “actively seek the voices of LSA students and advocate their interests to improve academic and non-academic life”;¹ and,

Whereas, Jim Toy, a prominent UofM alum, LGBTQ+ activist, and founder of the UofM Spectrum Center passed away on January 1st, 2022;^{2,3} and,

Whereas, LSA SG commits itself to uplifting marginalized voices and communities, including the LGBTQ+ community.

Be it therefore resolved, LSA SG offers its deepest condolences to the family and many friends of Jim Toy, including everyone at the UofM Spectrum Center; and,

Be it finally resolved, LSA SG endorses the statement in Appendix A,⁴ and directs the External Relations Officer to post the statement on the LSA SG social media accounts after the Spectrum Center and MESA are given a chance to sign onto the letter if they so choose.

¹ The Constitution of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government. Article II

² Click on Detroit Longtime Ann Arbor LGBTQ activist Jim Toy dies at 91

³ UofM Spectrum Center Jim Toy, One of Spectrum Center's Founders, Dies at 91

⁴ [LSA SG Statement on the Passing of Jim Toy](#)

Appendix A



January 12, 2022

To our LGBTQ+ friends and the U-M community at large,

We at LSA Student Government are in mourning because of the recent passing of [Jim Toy](#), one of the founders of the Spectrum Center (originally called the Human Sexuality Office) at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The Spectrum Center, founded in 1971, was the first higher educational center for LGBTQ+ people not only in the United States but was also the first of its kind in the world. Jim Toy had a [long and prolific career](#) in public service having worked as a social worker, prominent LGBTQ+ activist, and a distinguished member of the Ann Arbor City Council. As a council member he successfully passed the [first official Pride Week declaration](#) ever issued by a governing body, a legacy which is now honored with the annual Ann Arbor Pride Festival.

We are proud to have a UofM alum and Ann Arbor community member enshrined in the history of the LGBTQ+ struggle for justice equality. Jim was a founding member of both the Ann Arbor and Detroit chapters of the [Gay Liberation Front](#). He worked tirelessly, although unsuccessfully, to lobby the Michigan House of Representatives to pass an expansion to the Elliott-Larsen Act that would have expanded the rights of all LGBTQ+ residents of the state of Michigan. Jim also notably took a strong stance against the Vietnam War in a [famous 1970 speech](#) in Detroit, where he is widely believed to have become the first Michigander to publicly come out as gay. In 1989, as both the AIDS pandemic and global hysteria disproportionately affected LGBTQ+ people, Jim Toy stepped up as the [first co-coordinator of HIV/AIDS education](#) for the Episcopal Diocese.

Jim, who was Chinese-American, stands alongside other trailblazing LGBTQ+ activists who were Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) like [Marsha P. Johnson](#) and [Sylvia Rivera](#). His intersectional identities being Gay and Chinese pivoted the LGBTQ+ movement to discuss important topics on how Race/Ethnicity and Sexuality intersect. In an [2015 NBC interview](#) Jim said of his identity:

"That said, my "identity" is a tapestry of many threads--race and ethnicity, color, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability/disability, appearance, age, religious belief, political belief, etc. If one of the threads is plucked, the whole fabric is bound to move."

Although we receive the news of Jim Toy's passing with great sadness, we must also take this moment to educate ourselves about his inspiring work and commit ourselves to furthering it. In recent years, the visibility of LGBTQ+ people has been more prominent on the global stage, but it is imperative to understand that there is still much progress to be made.

In Solidarity,

Brandon De Martínez, Chair of the Diversity Affairs Committee LSA SG
Zackariah Farah, Vice President of LSA SG
LSA Student Government Assembly