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southern lesbian feminist activist HERSTORY PROJECT

Collecting, archiving, and celebrating oral and written stories of unsung, Southern, lesbian-feminist activists during the second half of the twentieth century.

February 2025 Spotlight

LESBIAN

Trailblazer

KECIA

Cunningham





For Black History Month we are celebrating a Southern history maker, Kecia Cunningham, the South's first openly lesbian African American elected to office. In 1999, she was elected to the five-member Decatur, Georgia, City Commission.

At that time, she was one of only two African American lesbians in elected office in the entire USA!

In 2013, she was elected mayor pro tem of Decatur. During those years, she was partnered with Lenny Lasater, whom we spotlighted in December. The two of them made a point of being out and proud—referring to Lenny as “First Butch of Decatur.”

Kecia Cunningham grew up in South Carolina, and attended Wellesley College, then Agnes Scott in Decatur, where she graduated and settled down. We have every right to claim her as a Southern sister and lesbian change-maker. You can read about her experiences thanks to our new interview by Silk Jazmyne Hindus, a young Black Southern writer who calls herself a “student of life and journalist of the heart.”

[Read the February Spotlight](#)

Coming in March



We are developing a new feature in March, called *Remembering Lesbians*, which can be found under the Showcase tab. These are our lesbian sisters in spirit who are gone but not forgotten. [The page](#) is called "She Who Will Be Remembered."

Some tributes and remembrances honoring them are already posted. In March many more will be highlighted in this section. Our herstory is rich and varied, and saved from obscurity by our SLFA Herstory Project!

You are invited to participate:
Who inspired you to lesbian feminism?
Send us the name of your most significant Shero
with a brief reason why she inspires you.

Both she and you can remain anonymous if you want (just say so) since we will PUBLISH these here on our SLFAHP website.

Send submissions today to: slfainspired@gmail.com. Here's an example:

Rose Norman got her inspiration from Nancy Finley. "At the time, Nancy Finley was the chair of the Sociology Department at my university. She said, 'Let's see who might be interested in starting a women's studies program.'

"She made feminism seductive, and she opened my eyes to structural causes of oppression. She walks the talk in all aspects of her life."

**The Southern Lesbian Feminist Activist
Herstory Project**

We collect, archive, and celebrate oral and written stories of unsung, Southern, lesbian-feminist activists during the second half of the twentieth century. We are proud of our contributions to lesbian culture, strengthened by our collective voices.

Many of us recognized that the lesbian-feminist voices of Southern lesbians had been omitted or marginalized in mainstream literature of the LGBTQ movement as well as from feminist history. We are the antidote to this omission. We worked with Duke University to set up archives, did interviews all over the south, and eventually collaborated with Julie Enszer to publish 6 issues of *Sinister Wisdom*, full of all our stories. Now we maintain our website and update it monthly, as you hear about

through this newsletter. We are still gathering more Southern lesbian stories, interviewing, writing, editing, tracking, and networking.

We are always ready to welcome new collaborators! If you would like to join the SLFAHP group, email us at SLFAHerstoryProject@gmail.com.

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