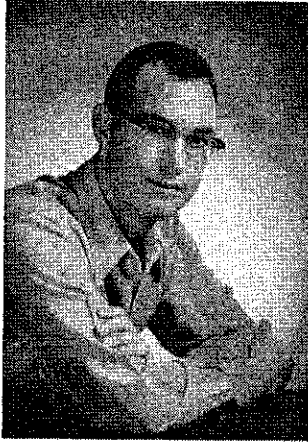


## William Edward (Billy) Glover (1932- )

Vern L. Bullough



Billy Glover, as he is known to his friends, was a dedicated volunteer at ONE who, without any intent to do so, was a precipitating force in the division of ONE into two competing groups. He then became the loyal supporter and volunteer to Don Slater at the Homosexual Information Center in Hollywood, and was a decisive influence in eventually merging the Slater collections into the new united library of gay and lesbian materials at the University of Southern California. His activist life emphasizes just how much individual personalities played in the struggle for gay and lesbian rights.

Born in Shreveport, Louisiana, September 16, 1932, and named William Edward Glover, Billy now still lives in the house in Bossier City, Louisiana, that he was raised in. He attended Bossier schools, and after graduation from high school in 1950 he entered Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. There he was active in Methodist and YMCA/YWCA student groups, which struggled to initiate some form of racial integration in the south. His activity was such that his father's employer, Dow Chemical, cautioned him about the activity of his troublemaking son. It was in a psychology class at LSU that Billy realized he might be homosexual and soon decided he was. After graduating from LSU he joined the army where his protests about the army's slowness in paying First Division troops returning to the United States from Germany got him transferred to another post. Angry at what he felt was unjust treatment, he said, "I flaunted my sexuality" with the result that he was kicked out of the army with an undesirable discharge. He found that this did not interfere at all with his ability to get employment at major companies, at one of which he was transferred to San Francisco. While in California he made contacts with Hal Call in San

Francisco and Jim Kepner in Los Angeles, volunteering his service first briefly with the Mattachine in San Francisco and then with Don Slater and Dorr Legg with ONE in Los Angeles. Since Billy had an independent income, he could choose and do what he wanted, and mainly he enjoyed acting as office manager and doing the essential staff work at the 232 South Hill Street office of ONE, and later at the new headquarters at 2256 Venice Boulevard.

Increasingly there was disagreement between Don and Dorr over potential programs made possible by the new headquarters. When an opening on the board of directors of ONE appeared, Billy was nominated by Don to fill the vacancy. Dorr opposed the nomination. Don Slater, feeling that the annual election had been rigged against Billy, seized the opportunity to move the library and most of the files to a new headquarters on Cahuenga Pass in Hollywood. Billy emphasizes that the intention of Don and his colleagues (they had a majority of the legally elected members to the board) was not to destroy ONE but to see that its work was not stopped, and the move was regarded as a bargaining tool to force Dorr to agree to changes. Certainly there was an outburst of activity from the Cahuenga group, which sponsored a motorcade through Hollywood demanding that gays be drafted, picketed the *Los Angeles Times*, participated in a gay love-in in Griffith Park, produced an all-male cast of Clare Boothe Luce's play, *The Women*, and cohosted a week of discussions on homosexuality on a popular radio show. After the legal suit between the two contending factions was settled, the Homosexual Information Center, as it was called, continued to publish *Tangents*, a continuation of *ONE*, for several years until other publications came to the fore. Billy continued to work with Don until he returned to Louisiana in 1989 for family reasons. There he decided to create a new center for homosexuality. Unfortunately, because of political opposition and a series of unforeseen circumstances, he was unable to do quite what he planned to do, but he continued to maintain a Los Angeles address and telephone message center where he could remain active.

Billy had a fairly long-term relationship with Melvin Cain but mainly he lived alone or with others in groups and he said he always avoided intimate contact with his fellow workers. As he told me, his advice to later generations of gays is to get involved in a cause they believe in.

You don't have to know anything at first. You don't even have to become a "leader" or "expert" but just being there to help and support each other is the main benefit to you and the cause. And when you look back years later, as I have, you will see that by luck you seemed destined to do what you have done, and you can have no regrets for what you didn't risk doing since you took a chance and followed what

seemed like a dream. As one of ONE's founders said in the fifties, to actually someday see people like us marching down Hollywood Boulevard proudly and to have lived to see that day multiplied around the nation is enough.

Billy adds that while Don and Dorr insisted that "we should honor the organization and goals" and not "worship the people doing the work or make them celebrities," it is clear that our lives and work were in fact done better because of the people we met and with whom we worked. Moreover, "we won."

## Jim Kepner (1923-1997)

Lewis Gannett  
William A. Percy III



When Jim Kepner died unexpectedly on November 15, 1997, at the age of seventy-four, he left a legacy to the gay and lesbian cause that stretched from the early 1950s through the entirety of his life. Moreover, he contributed in a remarkable number of ways. Cofounder of many activist initiatives and organizations, he decried the movement's tendency to splinter into ego-driven antagonisms. Journalist, archivist, bibliographer, essayist, and chronicler, he insisted that knowledge of history, both distant and recent, is vital to homosexual self-awareness. Mentor, sage, and, above all, educator, he strove to promote understanding.

With Dorr Legg and others in 1956, Kepner created the first gay studies program in America—indeed, one of the first anywhere worldwide after the Nazis torched Magnus Hirschfeld's institute in Berlin twenty-three years earlier. To complement the program's classes he started the first American reference library for gay and lesbian issues, about which there is much more to be said. In 1958 he launched yet another first, the *ONE Institute Quarterly of Homophile Studies*, the debut in this country of scholarly journalism devoted exclusively to gay and lesbian topics.

At a time when the production or even the possession of frank writing on homosexuality was illegal, Kepner published prolifically in such journals as *ONE Magazine*, *Mattachine Review*, and *ONE Confidential*. Kepner exhibited an intellectual daring quite rare in the 1950s, to which he added an

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