

# The “Pied Piper” Historian

**Kirkwood’s Steven Brawley is on a mission to archive St. Louis’ lost LGBT history**



Just in time for Pride Month, the St. Louis LGBT History Project has launched the first video in its ongoing documentary series, and Kirkwood’s Steven Louis Brawley is behind the effort.

As the St. Louis LGBT History Project’s founder, Brawley considers himself the “Pied Piper” of local queer archival efforts. The documentary, titled “In Our Voices,” is a narration of queer history, told firsthand by people who were present. The first video was released on May 30.

The documentary, which has no set number of episodes, takes an unusual and unique approach to sharing this history. Rather than individuals answering questions posed by an interviewer, a group of people directly involved with the subject location (former customers and employees) gather and reminisce.

## A Love Of History

A love of history has been present in Brawley for most of his life. Born and raised in St. Louis, with a brief stint in Indiana, Brawley’s grandmother helped kindle his fascination with history —both by riveting him with tales of her life in Lafayette Square, but also by sharing stories of former First Lady Jackie Kennedy Onassis, with whom Brawley has continued to have a life-long fascination.

It’s a “pop culture obsession,” he insists, “not a traditional one.”

Brawley further credits his interest in history to his first job at Silver Dollar City, where he spent a fair amount of time as a child, as his family owned a resort in Branson for many years.

After moving back to St. Louis from Indiana in 1972 after the death of his brother, Brawley graduated from **Hazelwood West High School** in 1983.

# Easy as 1, 2, 3: The ultimate guide to Student Press Freedom

Do we relinquish our First Amendment rights the moment we step past the schoolhouse gates?

Does my principal have a legal justification for censoring that article critiquing the school's budget cuts, or does she simply want to avoid backlash?

And if I'm a private school journalist, am I entitled to the same First Amendment defenses as my public school student counterparts?

Our rights as student journalists are a mountainous, confusing terrain to traverse alone. I, a student journalist, and Mike Hiestand, the Senior Legal Counsel for the [Student Press Law Center](#), are here to help.

Below, you'll find a guide to student press freedom — a topic that, once broken down, will be as easy as 1-2-3: We'll explore the **one** right we should all cherish, the First Amendment, the **two** Supreme Court cases that defined our rights, *Tinker v. Des Moines* and *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*, and the **three** key concepts (public versus private schools, prior review, and helpful resources from the SPLC) that are necessary in understanding our rights.

Let's get started, shall we?

## TWO: COURT CASES TO KNOW

In *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969), junior high school students Mary Beth Tinker and Christopher Eckhardt were suspended from their school in Des Moines, Iowa, for wearing black armbands in support of a truce in the Vietnam War. The case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, and the 7-2 ruling was utterly sublime for students nationwide.

"It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate," Justice Abe Fortas wrote for the majority, which ruled in support of Tinker and Eckhardt. Essentially, the *Tinker v. Des Moines* ruling protects all student speech except disruptive speech, such as encouraging a school walkout.

Despite certain limitations, the Tinker case set a precedent, according to Hiestand.

"The Tinker case was really the first time where the [Supreme Court] said that yes, in fact, students are persons under the Constitution, and they are protected by the First Amendment, even when they're in school," Hiestand said. "That is the foundation upon which every student speech case is built, so you have to know that one."

Nearly 20 years later, another Supreme Court case rolled around, *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*, that more precisely defined student journalists' rights, and distinguished them from student rights as a whole. The ruling, however, was grim.

In 1988, student journalists at [Hazelwood East High School](#) planned to publish two articles about family life, one about divorce and the other about the experiences of pregnant students, who remained anonymous. The principal's response? He stopped the articles from being printed, finding them both to be inappropriate. The case, which Hiestand's colleagues at the SPLC felt would be "easy" to settle, eventually made its way to the Supreme Court.