



1-26-1976

## Harvey Milk to George Moscone, 26 January 1976

Harvey Milk

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/mayor-moscone>



Part of the [History Commons](#), [Political Science Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Milk, Harvey, "Harvey Milk to George Moscone, 26 January 1976" (1976). *Mayor Moscone*. 6.  
<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/mayor-moscone/6>

This Letter is brought to you for free and open access by the The George Moscone Collection at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mayor Moscone by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [mgibney@pacific.edu](mailto:mgibney@pacific.edu).

# MOSCONE REJECTS MILK, LYON FOR POLICE COMMISSION POSTS

by Charles Lee

Mayor George Moscone rejected the names of two openly gay persons in forming his new five-member Police Commission last week.

Longtime lesbian activist and Community leader Phyllis Lyon and last November's supervisor candidate Mr. Harvey Milk were two members of the gay community whose names were submitted to Moscone by a forty-eight member screening committee on city commissions.

According to one source close to the Moscone office the new Mayor rejected any gay persons on the Police Commission because "George just felt that it wasn't the right time to do it."

Milk, who placed seventh in the race for the Board of Supervisors last year, responded with, "Just when does he think the right time will be?". Ms. Lyon echoed Milk's sentiment by asking, "When is anybody ever going to be ready?"

Milk pointed to his strong disappointment by saying, "I want to make it clear that this is not a personal

reaction to my not being named. But there should have been a gay person on that commission. Since last January George has been saying that he would appoint a gay to that commission. I think now is the time to let him know that we are serious about our demand and that he's got to come through with something of substance."

Moscone named three men and two women to the commission.

"I think George's concern for minorities is obvious when he names a black, a Latino, and two women to the commission," Milk continued. "but where's his concern for the gay community, which probably comprises 20% of the city's adult population?"

Ms. Lyon summed up the attitude of a wide variety of gay persons surveyed on the appointments to the Police Commission. "Considering the past problems of police-gay community relations I think an open gay person should have been appointed to the Police Commission. Maybe we should give everybody the benefit of the doubt but keep a close eye."

Moscone's choice of Charles Gain

as the new Chief of Police has also come under criticism from some segments of the gay community. Much of that criticism stems from the apparent lack of consultation by the new Mayor with the gay community over his choice of what the top staff aides to the Mayor have described as "the most critical appointment the Mayor will make as far as the gay community is concerned."

Gain formerly Police Chief in Oakland and more recently Under-sheriff to Sheriff Richard Hongisto here, receives poor marks from some gay leaders for his crackdown on gay bars in Seattle during his brief tenure there as Chief of Police.

Milk commented on Gain's appointment, "I don't know who Moscone consulted in the gay community about Gain's appointment. He certainly never mentioned it to me. I think a gay member of the Police Commission could have acted as a safety valve to a repeat of Gain's Seattle experience."

Moscone aides at City Hall were unavailable for comment.



# Castro Village Association

MM

from  
Harvey Mith

575 Castro Street • San Francisco 94114

January 26, 1976

George,

I have written a "letter to the editor" of the Sentinel in regards to the article they printed on your appointments to the police commission and my reaction to those appointments.

I would like to let you know what I said in that article. At first I talked about "reporting" and the valitiy of a paper which is based not upon the editorial comments but the facts or lack of them in news articles. Editoirial comments are one thing but distortion of facts in news is another. I then gave the following basic comments.

The very first statement that was reported why you did not appoint a gay person to the police commission was due to the fact that the time was not right. The first time I heard that statement was when I read it in the paper. The reporter, Charles Lee, never made any such statement to me. Thus, how could he quote my answer to that statement? The quote attributed to me was a fabrication. I also stated that I could not believe that you would ever make any statement whatsoever like that. And, that if that did happen my answer would be a long way from what Lee quoted.

The next part of my letter was to say that starting at that point the "facts" Lee quotes were not misreprenstation but changed. I have given many talks to many audiences. At no time have I ever used the percentage 20% in reffering to the number of gay adults in this city. I am well known to use the percentage 10%. I am willing to go into that any time with anyone - including the justice department. If the reported was to change that figure there must be a reason why, and, if he changed that to suit his own self then it is no wonder that he was willing to change other statements and even make up



statements.

The third point that I went into was the statement that was attributed to me where I am quoted as saying that you have said you would appoint a gay person to the police commission. The statement given to the reported was: "Since last ~~J~~anuary, at the instillation of the off~~I~~cers of the Eureka Valley Promotion Association, George Moscone was asked by me if he would appoint a gay to the police commission. At that time he said that he ~~'~~Would strongly consider appointibg a gay person to the police commission". At no time did I ever hear~~d~~ George say anything different. At no time did I hear ~~'~~george change one word of that. No matter what ~~t~~he audience was I have always heard George take that stand. He did consider appointing a gay person - in fact he considered appointing one of two. He did not. Period."

As far as my reaction to the appointments. I was disappointed. I was disapointed as would anyone be who applied. Anyone who seeks any position, and does not get it, should be disappointed. I was disappppointed at not winning a seat on the Board of Supervisors. Twice! That is normal. When a person trys for something, and really wants it, and does not gain that which is sought, there should be some disappppointment. That does not mean anything more. I was not crushed. I ~~went~~ on to explain that just because of a personal disapointment would be no reason whatsoever for me to attack a person. In fact to do so would be to close any dialouge with the mayor. I, in fact, want to continue that dialogue.

I ended the letter with words to the effect: I hope that there will be gays appointed to the boards and commissions. I hope that someday there will be a gay person appointed to the police commission. I hope that the Sentinel would print just the facts in their news articles. Not opinions. Not fabrications.

I think the article was ment to do two things. One, make our mayor look poor in the eyes of some in the gay community and



two make me look poor in the eyes of our mayor. The Sentinel has attacked me time and time again. They have changed news to suit their purpose. I have never answered them in the past. I have never bothered to call them, as they are so out-of-line that sometimes I cannot believe it. The Sentinel has attacked you. I find the tone of the paper on the level with hate notes by extremist groups. I am sadden that this paer which could play an important part in our community takes its position as yellow journalism carried to the extreme.

I am sure that they will print my letter somewhere on one of the inside pages. That is what papers do. Throw mud and duck when called on it. The paper suffers. We suffer. I am sorry.

I am sorry that I even have to answer ~~theer~~ reportage of news. There is so much that has to be done and to waste time and energy on negativism is taking away from positive directions.

Warmly,

*Harv Apple*