

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**GLBT  
Historical  
Society**  
*museum & archives*

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## **GLBT Historical Society Hires Roberto Ordeñana as Executive Director**

**San Francisco** — The GLBT Historical Society announces that Roberto Ordeñana will be joining the organization as its Executive Director. Roberto will start work in mid-October and will be publicly introduced at the society's annual Gala on October 19.

For more than 25 years, Roberto Ordeñana's career has focused on strengthening local LGBTQ communities at the nexus of equity, economic opportunity, health, well-being and culture. The son of proud Nicaraguan immigrants, Roberto was born and raised in the Mission neighborhood of San Francisco, California. His service began in the late 1990s at STOP AIDS Project where he developed nationally recognized HIV prevention programs and community organizing projects with Latinx gay, bisexual, and trans youth. While at the SF LGBT Center, he built direct service, arts and cultural programs and worked to strengthen its organizational capacity and long-term sustainability. At the Center, he served in several leadership positions, including director of community programs, director of development and marketing and most recently as deputy executive director.

In addition to his long professional career leading LGBTQ programs and institutions, Roberto has also volunteered his time as part of San Francisco community boards and city commissions. He served as president of the board of directors of Bay Area Young Positives and as a member of the LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission. In 2012, Roberto was appointed to the San Francisco Arts Commission where he served as president of the Commission from 2019 to 2022. Roberto is also a proud graduate of San Francisco State University, where he holds a B.A. in Social Sciences with an emphasis in Human Sexuality Studies.

“I’m thrilled to join the GLBT Historical Society as its executive director. We are at a pivotal moment of history for LGBTQ people, women, immigrants, and communities of color,” said Roberto. “Our hard-fought gains are under attack by political extremists who wish to force us back into the closet, lock us up in cages, or make us disappear altogether. Now more than ever it is vital that we preserve and exhibit our queer history and contributions to culture and society.

“For nearly 40 years, the GLBT Historical Society has proudly shone a light on our history and culture. I’m honored to join an organization that has worked to lift up the histories of trans people, nonbinary people and communities of color. I look forward to working with the incredible staff of the GLBT Historical Society to establish a permanent home for its internationally recognized archives, exhibitions and public programs. Such a space will allow our entire community and allies to continue to learn from our past, in order to build the future that we and future generations deserve and desire.”

“We are beyond excited to welcome Roberto to the GLBT Historical Society, where he will head up a team that protects one of the largest and most important collections of LGBTQ historic materials ever assembled,” said Andrew Shaffer, interim co-executive director. “Our search and selection efforts have been incredibly extensive, and we are grateful to all of the people who contributed to the process and helped us create a clear vision for what we need in our next leader. Roberto’s deep commitment to LGBTQ communities, and his impressive background in capacity building and sustainable growth are exactly what we need at this pivotal moment.”

“The GLBT Historical Society welcomes Roberto Ordeñana as our new Executive Director. Roberto steps in with two and a half decades of work in the community, which will prove invaluable during a pivotal time for our organization and the nation and ensure the successful launch of a capital campaign to find a permanent home for the archives and museum,” said the Board of Directors in a statement.

“With Roberto’s leadership experience and commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access, we will ensure that we not only represent but also respect the true diversity of LGBTQ communities, including a thorough examination of our name and logo. All of this will happen against a backdrop of conservative politicians across the United States attacking and disenfranchising our Trans siblings and crafting ‘Don’t Say Gay’ bills. Under his guidance, we will not just say “Gay” but loudly and proudly declare ‘Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Nonbinary, Gender-Nonconforming, Two Spirit, and Queer’ so that our histories and experiences are widely heard and never forgotten.”

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**ABOUT THE GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The GLBT Historical Society is a public history center and archives that collects, preserves, exhibits and makes accessible to the public materials and knowledge to support and promote understanding of LGBTQ history, culture and arts in all their diversity. Founded in 1985, the society is recognized internationally as a leader in the field of queer public history and maintains one of the world's largest archival collections of LGBTQ historical materials. Our operations are centered at two sites: the GLBT Historical Society Museum, located in the heart of San Francisco's Castro neighborhood; and the Dr. John P. De Cecco Archives and Research Center, open to researchers in the Mid-Market district. For more information, visit [www.glbthistory.org](http://www.glbthistory.org).

## **GRAPHICS**

The following images may be reproduced only in association with coverage of the GLBT Historical Society's new executive director. Credits noted in captions are mandatory.



Photograph of Roberto Ordeñana; courtesy same.

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