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## **San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus To Perform For United States Navy's Naming Ceremony Honoring Harvey Milk**

SAN FRANCISCO (August 9, 2016) – The **San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus** (SFGMC) and **Dr. Timothy Seelig**, SFGMC Artistic Director, announced today that the Chorus will perform the National Anthem at the celebrated **USNS Harvey Milk Naming Ceremony** on Tuesday, August 16, 2016 at 2:00PM, held by the **United States Navy**. The event will take place on Treasure Island at the Great Lawn in San Francisco, CA.

Last week, USNI News reported that the Navy declared their intention to name a fleet oiler for Supervisor Harvey Milk, the first openly gay elected official in California. The notification by Ray Mabus, Secretary of the Navy, included the Navy's intention to also name ships after Robert F. Kennedy, Earl Warren, Sojourner Truth and Lucy Stone. The Chorus' announcement follows the United States Navy's formal invitations to the Naming Ceremony.

"On behalf of the Harvey Milk Foundation, we are humbled by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus enthusiastic participation in this historic occasion," writes **Anne Kronenberg**, Co-Founder of the Harvey Milk Foundation. "Harvey was very excited when Jon Sims founded the chorus in 1978, but he did not live long enough to hear the group perform. Harvey was proud of his naval service and he would be tickled pink to learn a ship was being named after him and that the SFGMC would be performing to commemorate this historic event."

The United States Navy's decision to name a ship after a major gay rights activist comes only five years after President Barack Obama repealed the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, thus allowing gay, lesbian and bi-sexual members of the military to serve openly in the United States Armed Forces, and six weeks after the Pentagon ended the ban on military service by transgender Americans.

"The future USNS Harvey Milk recognizes not only Harvey's legacy but the faithful, honorable, and patriotic service of our LGBTQ service members," continues

Kronenberg. “I think he would be proud to learn that so many members of the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus rushed to stand with our LGBTQ community that can now openly serve in our military.”

“For 38 years, the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus has been at the forefront of the struggles and triumphs of the LGBT community,” writes **Dr. Timothy Seelig**.

“Throughout it all, we inspire activism, community and compassion through extraordinary musical experiences, reaching all the way back to our very first public performance at the candlelight vigil for Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone in 1978, and extending forward to our recent appearance as the first openly gay chorus to sing at the Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel in Colorado Springs.”

Seelig continues, “This huge honor brings so much of our history together in one moment. We will be standing with our beloved city as the backdrop, performing in honor of our hero Harvey Milk, at the invitation of the United States Navy. It does not get more full-circle than that!”

The Chorus recently celebrated Harvey Milk’s legacy with the presentation of Andrew Lippa’s oratorio “I Am Harvey Milk” at Davies Symphony Hall in April 2016, in collaboration with the Bay Area Rainbow Symphony, and at the unveiling ceremony for the United States Postal Service’s Harvey Milk stamp at San Francisco’s City Hall in 2014. SFGMC’s original cast recording of “I Am Harvey Milk,” conducted by Dr. Timothy Seelig and recorded live by Grammy Award-winner Leslie Ann Jones, was released in 2013 to international acclaim, and won the Independent Music Award for Best Soundtrack/Cast Recording.

For more information on the Chorus, please visit [www.sfgmc.org](http://www.sfgmc.org).

### **About San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus**

For nearly 40 years, the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus has courageously served as the international standard bearer for a powerful and accomplished mix of high-caliber performance, human rights, community activism, empowerment and inclusiveness, establishing it as an icon among LGBT organizations. Founded in 1978, it was the first organization of its kind and is credited with starting the LGBT choral movement, galvanizing and changing the course of LGBT history. It continues to rally and inspire other arts-based community organizations around the world. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Dr. Timothy Seelig, SFGMC has in recent seasons established a heightened level of performance standards receiving audience and choral acclaim, increased its touring and recording profile and broadened its impact and reputation in the community while maintaining its signature blend of humor, personality and high-voltage performances. For more information, visit [www.sfgmc.org](http://www.sfgmc.org) and @sfgmc (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram).

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