

**Record Series #:** 1121-1002  
**Name:** Robert W. Bush Papers  
**Dates:** 1993-1999, 2004, 2013-2021, no date  
**Extent/Size:** 168 digital files (1.89 GB)  
**Language:** English

**Creator:**  
Robert W. Bush

**Biographical History:**

Robert W. Bush (1964-) is a gay native Georgian and human rights lawyer, who has been advocating for the LGBTQ+ community in Savannah, Georgia for decades.

Bush was born in Warner Robins, Georgia in 1964. He was raised in middle Georgia and attended the University of Georgia Law School in Athens. He moved to Savannah in 1989 after obtaining a job with a local law firm. Bush joined the First City Network (FCN), a local LGBTQ+ organization mainly focused on social activities to help foster friendships and a safe community. Bush became a longtime member of FCN and served on the Board. He was interested in getting more involved in the advocacy and politics of the LGBTQ+ community in Savannah. With help from other advocates, he started the Community Action Group in 1993 to respond to media on LGBTQ+ issues and bring a voice to the First City Network. The Community Action Group operated under FCN and Bush served as chair, officer, and member.

Robert Bush was the first openly gay local columnist for a *Savannah Morning News* weekly free supplement called *The Edge* which started publishing in 1994. He wrote a weekly column for the whole year that the publication was issued. The column critiqued and commented on issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community and commented on other topical events at that time.

After a few years working for a local law firm, Bush was hired to the Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP) a nonprofit law firm with offices throughout the state. As a lawyer, he sought out cases of clients living with HIV/AIDS to help advocate for their rights. With the help of another local organization Union Mission, Bush applied for a grant to start an HIV/AIDS legal project under the GLSP. The project lasted for thirteen years, and outside of Atlanta was the only program in the state focused on HIV/AIDS legal issues. Bush, serving as the sole attorney within this program, did federal litigation, advanced directives, immigration cases, and educated the public with speeches at conventions and local events. He was limited in the number of clients he could represent, so he created a pamphlet, "Arming the Advocate," to distribute as much legal information about people living with HIV/AIDS so they could represent themselves in court.

In 1996, Bush was instrumental in the passing of a bill for Standby Guardianship which gives temporary guardianship to individuals in Georgia. He was involved in other advocacy groups to further the LGBTQ+ cause in Savannah. He served as Chair of the Savannah-Chatham AIDS Coalition, which is an organization that brings awareness, education and resources to people living with HIV/AIDS. He served on the City of Savannah Commission on Human Rights as the LGBTQ+ advocate during Mayor Floyd Adams term from 1996-2004.

The State Bar of Georgia gave the Stonewall Bar Association Award to Bush in 2004 for his LGBTQ+ advocacy legal work. He would go on to institute forums for the Savannah community on various LGBTQ+ issues, including advanced directives to secure same-sex relationships, LGBTQ fifty plus project, transgender legal issues, and self-defense training. The forums were held at local institutions and in collaboration with other LGBTQ+ organizations.

**Record Series 1121-1002, Robert W. Bush papers**

As of 2022, Robert Bush is still an LGBTQ+ advocate and lawyer working at the Georgia Legal Services Program in Savannah, Georgia.

***Scope and Content:***

The Robert W. Bush papers contain papers Robert Bush created during his advocacy efforts in the LGBTQ+ Savannah community. These papers reflect the events, organizations, and legal work he participated in. His writings from *The Edge* weekly newspaper are also. Other types of records in this collection include brochures, correspondence, PowerPoint presentations, and certificates. A record of note in this collection is the pamphlet "Arming the Advocate," which was created by Robert Bush to help people living with HIV/Aids represent themselves in court.

***System of Arrangement and Ordering:***

The Robert W. Bush papers are arranged alphabetically by subject. These records are made available digitally <https://savannahga.gov/3510/Robert-Bush-Papers>. If you have issues accessing the material, please contact the Archivist via email at [Archives@savannahga.gov](mailto:Archives@savannahga.gov) or call the Municipal Archives at (912) 651-6412.

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One document has been closed for 75 years to protect the privacy of living individuals [O.C.G.A. 50- 18-72(a)(13)].

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***Digital Access:***

<https://savannahga.gov/3510/Robert-Bush-Papers>

***Related Collections:***

Record Series 1121-1001, Proud Savannah Oral History Collection, #12 Robert Bush, City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Viewable online here, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l207pyOOyrU>.

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***Access Points:***

AIDS activists  
AIDS education  
First City Network  
Georgia Legal Services Program  
HIV/AIDS  
LGBTQ people  
Same-sex marriage  
Savannah-Chatham AIDS Coalition  
Savannah morning news  
State Bar of Georgia  
United States. Defense of Marriage Act  
United Way of the Coastal Empire  
World AIDS day

***Preferred Citation:***

Record Series 1121-1002, Robert W. Bush papers, City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

***Processed by:***

M. Kerkhoff, June 2022.

**Record Series 1121-1002, Robert W. Bush papers**

***Inventory:***

*This collection is digital and made available online <https://savannahga.gov/3510/Robert-Bush-Papers>. Please contact the Municipal Archives if there are any access issues.*

<b><i>Folder #</i></b>	<b><i>Folder Title, Date(s)</i></b>
Folder 1121-1002-0001	Arming the Advocate seminar and supporting publication by Robert W. Bush, circa 1998
Folder 1121-1002-0002	Community Action Group correspondence, 1994
Folder 1121-1002-0003	Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) forums, presentations, articles, and brochures, 2017-2018, 2021, no date
Folder 1121-1002-0004	First City Network brochures, correspondence, and articles, 1994, 1996, no date
Folder 1121-1002-0005	Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP), 2014, 2017, no date
Folder 1121-1002-0006	LGBTQ 50 plus project, 2014, no date
Folder 1121-1002-0007	LGBTQ advocates, 2016 [RESTRICTED until 2091]
Folder 1121-1002-0008	Military's policy on excluding LGBTQ from service, 1993
Folder 1121-1002-0009	My Brothaz H. O. M. E. certificate of appreciation, 2004
Folder 1121-1002-0010	News articles and drafts, 1994-1995, 1999, 2013, no date
Folder 1121-1002-0011	Same sex marriage, 2015
Folder 1121-1002-0012	Savannah-Chatham AIDS Coalition, 1997, no date
Folder 1121-1002-0013	Standby guardianship, 1994-1996, no date
Folder 1121-1002-0014	World AIDS Day, 1994-1995, 2017, no date