

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Erotic Heritage Museum Mourns Passing of the Reverend Dr. Ted McIlvenna**

### ***EHM Co-Founder & United Methodist Minister was Instrumental in Designing Human Sexuality Education, Championing LGBT Rights, & Debunking Gay Conversion Therapy***

**LAS VEGAS (August 23, 2018)** – Directors and staff of the Erotic Heritage Museum mourn the loss of its co-founder, the Reverend Dr. Ted McIlvenna. The United Methodist minister, who was instrumental in coordinating educational experiences around human sexuality, including the establishment of the EHM, was 86 years old.

“Ted McIlvenna was a titan in the field of Sexology,” says EHM Director Dr. Victoria Hartmann. “From the time I began my undergraduate work, I knew I wanted to attend the Institute he founded. For nearly 40 years, the Institute was a shining beacon for students of Human Sexuality, and produced some of the most prolific names in Sexology today. I was fortunate to have his oversight during my educational process. His love of art and sexuality led him to co-found the EHM, which, as he explained to me once, was a beautiful marriage seeped in spirituality. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity I had to learn from him.”

The Rev. Dr. Robert Theodore McIlvenna was born March 15, 1932, in Epping, New Hampshire. At an early age, he moved with his family to the Pacific Northwest where his father, an itinerant Methodist minister and missionary. McIlvenna started college at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, on an athletic scholarship. Upon completing a B.A. degree in sociology and philosophy in 1954 at Williamette College, he was recruited to attend theological school. After an uncomfortable year in a traditional Christian environment, he went to Europe to study systematic theology and philosophy of religion at the University of Edinburgh and University of Florence.

Upon his return to the US, McIlvenna became the pastor of Wesley Methodist Church in Hayward, California in 1958. Because of his interest and expertise in social design, McIlvenna joined the staff of the Glide Foundation in downtown San Francisco in 1963. At Glide, he staffed the Young Adult Project, where he developed programs to reach out and meet the needs of young urban adults.

In his community outreach around Glide Church, McIlvenna became acquainted with the San Francisco gay community, witnessing the violence and persecution they often faced. In his efforts to help UCM leaders understand homosexuality,

who had commissioned him with the task of gay conversion, McIlvenna secured the sponsorship of two national Methodist agencies to convene a consultation of “30 clergy and homosexual persons” from May 31 to June 2, 1964, sharing his belief that people’s sex drives were as individual as fingerprints, and impervious to change.

The positive results of McIlvenna’s retreat led San Francisco participants – both heterosexual clergy and homosexual activists – to organize the “Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH),” where he became the first president and driving force in its initial period of development. McIlvenna was also a key organizer and convener of the “International Consultation on Church, Society, and the Homosexual” in London, England.”

Due to growing interest in designing educational experiences dealing with human sexuality, McIlvenna returned to San Francisco in 1968 to become co-director of the National Sex and Drug Forum. In 1976, he helped organize and was the first president of the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institute\\_for\\_Advanced\\_Study\\_of\\_Human\\_Sexuality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institute_for_Advanced_Study_of_Human_Sexuality)), where he continued to work as professor of forensic sexology.

Dr. Ted, also known affectionately as “the Night Minister,” served as a consultant to several foundations in developing programs and structures for alternative funding for voluntary organizations. In addition to speaking at numerous conferences, McIlvenna taught and lectured at many colleges and graduate schools, written numerous journal articles, authored seventeen books, and co-authored eight books. He has produced over 100 films and videos, mostly about sex education. He has also received special awards for several social projects he designed.

In the late 1990s, McIlvenna moved into retired status; the British media outlet The Telegraph had wondered where the “porn-again minister” would go next, as he was curator and trustee of the Exodus Trust, collecting and preserving erotic art, relics, and devices for decades, resulting in the largest collection in the world (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/4710272/The-porn-again-minister.html>).

The Las Vegas Erotic Heritage Museum (EHM) was originally created between McIlvenna and Déjà Vu founder Harry Mohny in 2006, to maintain a mission of preservation for erotic artifacts, fine art, and film. The EHM, opened to the public in 2008, houses more than 24,000 square feet of permanent and featured exhibits, designed to preserve wonders of the erotic imagination as depicted through the artistic expression of acts of sex and love. It is dedicated to the belief that sexual pleasure and fun are natural aspects of the human experience, that such pleasure must be made available to all, and that our individual sexuality belongs to each of us. The Museum is dedicated to the preservation of great erotic heritage that is typically undervalued, yet is of tremendous importance. Our

sole purpose is to perform educational, scientific, and literary functions relating to sexual, emotional, mental, and physical health.

“One of our great defenders and educators, friend, and family man, has left us,” says Mohny. “A man of the cloth, who believed in the health and wellness of sexual education, a man who dedicated his life to protecting individual rights. We send our deepest sympathy.”

In 2014, Dr. Ted McIlvenna was the recipient of the Gilbert Baker Pride Founder’s Award, for his activist work on behalf of the LGBT community. A preview for a documentary about his work, “The Night Minister,” featuring many of today’s sex educators and thought leaders, as well as McIlvenna, may be viewed at [https://youtu.be/9g\\_nw\\_nVN80](https://youtu.be/9g_nw_nVN80).

This October 2018, the Erotic Heritage Museum will celebrate having delivered a decade of sex education and artifact curation to the public. A memorial has been scheduled to occur during its upcoming Anniversary celebration, on October 13.

For more information on the Las Vegas Erotic Heritage Museum, visit <https://eroticmuseumvegas.com/>. The EHM may also be followed on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/eroticmuseumvegas> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/eroticmuseumlasvegas/>, where an interactive Events Calendar shares all upcoming events and information on how to purchase tickets. For location rental inquiries, workshop rates, upcoming events, and more, please email [EroticMuseumVegas@gmail.com](mailto:EroticMuseumVegas@gmail.com).

### **About Erotic Heritage Museum:**

The Erotic Heritage Museum houses more than 24,000 square feet of permanent and featured exhibits, championing the wonders of erotic imagination, as depicted through artistic expressions of sex and love. The museum’s ethos is that sexual pleasure and its depiction are natural aspects of the human experience and that such celebrations of individual human sexuality (i.e. pleasure) must be made available to all, regardless of gender, race or belief. With so much of global erotic heritage undervalued, criticized or even lost over time the EHM is dedicated to the preservation of as much erotic heritage as is possible to display.

Scouring the world for their exhibitions, The Harry Mohny Erotic Museum’s furthers its purpose by providing space for scientific and literary functions relating to sexual, emotional, mental and physical health. As such, the EHM is as much an assemblage of some of the most important sexual artifacts, tableau and interactive exhibitions in the world as it is a one-of-a-kind lecture and classroom space. In addition to the Museum space, the EHM's main theatre is home to the highly popular live show, Puppety of the Penis, as well as film festivals, burlesque shows, and more.

As the Sexiest Museum in Sin City, and a rare North American museum dedicated to the study of sexuality, the Erotic Heritage Museum is a must-go attraction for any tourist visiting Las Vegas. The Erotic Heritage Museum is owned and managed by the Harry Mohny Erotic Museum LCC, a Nevada corporation, and is located at 3275 Sammy Davis Jr Dr, Las Vegas, NV 89109. For more information, visit <https://www.eroticmuseumvegas.com> or call 702.794.4000.

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