

## For Immediate Release

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## Katten Celebrated Pride Month With Featured Speaker Dr. Eric Cervini

(CHICAGO) Katten announced today that *New York Times* bestselling author and Pulitzer Prize finalist Dr. Eric Cervini joined firm attorneys and business professionals in a virtual fireside conversation about the history of LGBTQ+ politics in the United States and the continued battle for LGBTQ+ rights.

“What history provides us is a guidebook, not just of what worked, for example activists organizing in California, recruiting unlikely allies like Ronald Reagan to come out against the bill [to ban gay teachers and administrators from working in the state’s public schools], and so many ways that we were able to be successful, but also how we failed,” said Cervini, a historian of LGBTQ+ politics who graduated summa cum laude from Harvard College and was a Gates Scholar at the University of Cambridge, where he received his PhD.

The event, held June 30, was moderated by Katten Financial Markets Litigation and Enforcement partner J Matthew W. Haws, a member of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago and the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association.

With more than 300 anti-LGBTQ+ bills proposed this year across the country, Cervini acknowledged that it is a “dark time.” He added, “But as I remind people, we have been through much worse. We have survived the inquisition, the Lavender Scare, the AIDS crisis, and Anita Bryant [who successfully pushed for the repeal of a gay rights ordinance in Florida in the 1970s]. We can certainly get through this. But we need to be studying up, how we were successful and how we failed in the past and then also be recruiting new allies, just as Frank Kameny recruited the ACLU, we need to be recruiting new allies today.”

Kameny, an astronomer who lost his federal job because of his sexual orientation, is a central character in the nonfiction book Cervini wrote titled *The Deviant’s War: The Homosexual vs. the United States of America*, which is being adapted into an Amazon limited series.

“Discussing the past and current challenges faced by LGBTQ+ persons is important to remind us all of the progress made, as well as the discrimination, hardships and threats to personal liberty that are ongoing for the LGBTQ+ community,” said Brandon D. Hadley, co-chair of Katten’s

LGBTQ+ Coalition. “Now is the time to support one another, use your voice and be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community and every other person facing similar social, political and legal challenges, through continued learning, understanding, empathy and discussion.”

As an authority on 1960s gay activism, Cervini serves on the advisory board of the Mattachine Society of Washington, DC, a nonprofit dedicated to the preservation of LGBTQ+ history. He also is the creator and executive producer of the history docuseries *The Book of Queer*, which premiered in June on the Discovery+ streaming service.

“The reason why I made this show was to prove that actually, if there’s anything that queer history teaches us, it’s not just how to fight back but also to find joy and love and community despite so much of that darkness,” he said.

Throughout the year, Katten supports the LGBTQ+ community in a number of ways, such as through the pro bono work of attorneys representing LGBTQ+ individuals as well as charitable contributions to the National LGBTQ+ Bar Foundation and LeGaL Foundation, which provides legal services to the LGBTQ+ community. The firm recently adopted a firm-wide “opt-in” gender pronoun policy to include gender pronouns in signature blocks as one way to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion and maintain an environment built on acceptance of individualization.

In June, Katten offered “pop-in” sessions to learn more about topics at the forefront for the LGBTQ+ community, including gender pronouns, trans identity and allyship. The firm also sponsors the annual Lavender Law Conference & Career Fair, the largest LGBTQ+ legal conference in the country, and hosts a biennial LGBTQ+ retreat for its attorneys participating at the conference.

Katten is honored to have earned the designation as one of the Best Places to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality by receiving a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s 2022 Corporate Equality Index, the nation’s foremost benchmarking survey and annual report measuring corporate policies and practices addressing LGBTQ+ workplace equality.

Katten is a full-service law firm with approximately 700 attorneys in locations across the United States and in London and Shanghai. Clients seeking sophisticated, high-value legal services turn to Katten for counsel locally, nationally and internationally. The firm’s core areas of practice include corporate, financial markets and funds, insolvency and restructuring, intellectual property, litigation, real estate, structured finance and securitization, transactional tax planning, private credit and private wealth. Katten represents public and private companies in numerous industries, as well as a number of government and nonprofit organizations and individuals. For more information, visit [katten.com](https://www.katten.com).