


**Halo**

Sky Sports, a streaming network, released the Halo Sports TikTok profile on Nov. 13, 2025. This account was specifically created to engage and entertain female sports fans. After three days of its release, the account received enough criticism resulting in the account being shut down. They later released a statement reading: "Our intention for Halo was to create a space alongside our existing social channels for new, young female fans. We've listened. We didn't get it right. As a result we've stopped all activity on this account. We're learning and remain as committed as

ever to creating spaces where fans feel included and inspired."

The introduction of this account caused an uproar online from women all over the world who believed the company was being ignorant. TikTok users commented on the redundancy of the TikTok account and their posts. User @xheyitsgeorgia posted a tiktok mocking Halo's attempt at female targeted media by posting a video of a soccer game with "Barbie Girl" by Aqua and the caption reading "Thank you [Sky Sport Halo], I've finally understood why I couldn't understand football before. It's because there was no pink writing on screen with

loads of girlie emojis."

This cliché marketing tactic not only affects the traction female sports get, but also young girls and their views on sports. When asked how female sports teams are underappreciated, Olivia Jasiewicz, senior at Troy High School and member of the varsity soccer and basketball team, said, "Sports overall are male-dominated, so it's kind of hard for a woman to get into that because so many men are involved in it." Jasiewicz has not only been playing sports but also watching them and sees the unbalanced support for females.

Female sports aren't inherently new, and neither is the

female stance of feeling like they don't belong in them. Kerry Brennan, an assistant principal at Troy High School and athlete since childhood, says, "I felt like that since probably the day I was born." Brennan continued to share: "The market is there, people are going to games. They're watching games. That's exciting, but they're not getting the recognition that I think they should be getting in comparison to men's sports."

Missing the targeted audience is not the only reason female sports struggle to gain popularity. Part of popularity comes from availability. Joseph Verhelle, a teacher at

Troy High School, coach for the Athens High School soccer team as well as a sports enthusiast, spoke on how female sports are not just "harder to watch" because it's unpopular but also "because it's not accessible." When comparing male and female sports marketing, Verhelle mentions how rather than it simply being a struggle to reach a targeted audience, it's also made difficult because "in society or as a culture, we don't consider the storylines [of female sports] to be as integral to our daily life like we do with men's sports."

Photo courtesy of Sky Sports.

## Girls Only Like Pink?

The failure of sports companies in trying to reach a female audience.

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## Opening the Door

Ann Arbor's Jerry DeGriek

Ivy Qin // Staff Reporter

On March 14, 1968, three weeks before his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered one of the final public speeches of his life in the predominantly-white, all-Christian Detroit suburb of Grosse Pointe. As protestors lined the streets outside, King spoke to the nearly 3,000 audience members crowded in the gymnasium of Grosse Pointe South High School, uttering the line now engraved in a historic landmark plaque on the campus: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

In the crowd, defying his self-stated "avowedly racist" parents by attending, was Jerry DeGriek, an active teen Democrat, freshly 18, unaware that history would soon call on him to turn King's call for justice into reality.

But DeGriek's presence was not his only secret that night. He was also gay, and he knew it. An anomaly to the "overtly racist" and "narrow community" of Grosse Pointe, as staffed by DeGriek, he turned to politics as an outlet for self-expression. In the fall of 1968, upon enrolling at the University of Michigan, DeGriek finally found his escape. The site of the first teach-in student protest to the Vietnam War, 1960s Ann

Arbor was alight with student activism. By his senior year, DeGriek had led the fight for the first student-led campus bookstore, served as vice president of the student council and was arrested while demonstrating in Washington, D.C. A year later, in a stunning upset, DeGriek became the youngest-ever person elected to the Ann Arbor City Council.

But for DeGriek and his fellow Human Rights Party elect, Nancy Wechsler, this was just the beginning. On July 10, 1972, the Council passed the Human Rights Ordinance proposed by the duo, making Ann Arbor the first city in the country to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

The night of October 14, 1973, Wechsler and several lesbian patrons were expelled from The Rubaiyat, a local straight bar, for dancing and kissing. Wechsler attempted to explain the violation of the Human Rights Ordinance to the police, to no avail. In fact, there had been several such complaints since the passage of the Ordinance, all ignored by Ann Arbor City Attorney Ed Pear. Despite its significance, the ordinance and DeGriek and Wechsler's call for equality were falling on deaf ears. Frustrated, but deter-

mined, the pair made a choice that would change American politics forever.

At the City Council meeting the next day, DeGriek and Wechsler seized the moment to come out and become the first openly gay elected officials in American history.

As DeGriek recalls, all he saw from his fellow council members was "disgust." They "could not look at us," recalls Wechsler. During a time when homosexuality was still classified by the American Psychological Association as a "mental illness," coming out as gay, much less in office, was unthinkable. DeGriek and Wechsler continued to receive massive amounts of "hate mail." They incurred the wrath of fellow party members who did not want the association or believed it was a political strategy, and even the gay community for not dressing and acting in a "politically correct" way.

But all DeGriek felt was liberation. For the first time since he was eight years old, "I finally am who I am, and I can tell the world."

A month later, Ann Arbor City Attorney Pear sued a local motel owner for the firing of a gay employee, marking the first time the Human Rights Ordinance was enforced in Ann Arbor.

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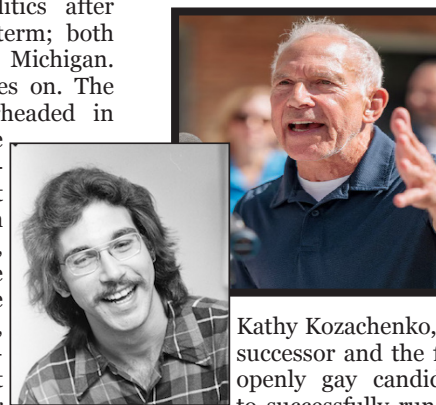
DeGriek and Wechsler withdrew from politics after their historic first term; both no longer reside in Michigan. But their legacy lives on. The policies they spearheaded in Ann Arbor, from the Human Rights Ordinance, to the first formal declaration of Gay Pride Week, have become the standard across the country. And yet, even in the LGBTQ+ community, most don't know their names.

"Electoral politics is not about the individual," said DeGriek. Yet that is often where it begins.

"Being the first of anything comes with great responsibility, anxiety and fear," stated Laurie Pohutsky, a former representative in the Michigan State Legislature, herself openly bisexual. "It's hard to overstate just what Jerry DeGriek and Nancy Wechsler coming out means for all of us."

On Sept. 4, 2025, a Michigan historic landmark commemorating the Human Rights Ordinance and the first to honor LGBTQ+ history was unveiled

at the University of Michigan. DeGriek, now 75, spoke alongside former Council member



Kathy Kozachenko, his successor and the first openly gay candidate to successfully run for office. "We need to get more young people involved," DeGriek stated at the ceremony. It harkens back to that night in 1968, when DeGriek defied his parents to hear Martin Luther King, Jr. speak at Grosse South High School. DeGriek's life was a testament to the words King had spoken nearly half a century ago: "Freedom is the bonus you receive for telling the truth. Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

Photos courtesy of Ann Arbor District Library.