

Perez

Political Animal

The Life and Times of Stewart Butler

During Mardi Gras 1973, Stewart Butler fell in love with Alfred Doolittle—a wealthy socialite and schizophrenic from San Francisco. Their relationship was an improbable love story that changed the course of LGBTQ+ history. With Doolittle's money, Butler was able to retire and devote his life to political activism in the cause of queer liberation. A survivor of the horrific UpStairs Lounge arson, Butler was a founding member of the first statewide lesbian and gay rights organization in Louisiana and an early champion for transgender rights, playing a key role in the eight-year struggle to persuade PFLAG to become the first national LGBTQ+ organization to include trans people in its mission statement. In *Political Animal: The Life and Times of Stewart Butler*, author Frank Perez traces Butler's amazing life from his early childhood in Depression-era New Orleans, his adolescence at Carville where his father worked, his first unsuccessful attempt at college, his time in the army as a closeted gay man, his adventures in Alaska, his transformation into a hippie in the 1960s, his love affair with Doolittle, his decades as a gay rights advocate, and ultimately, his twilight years as an elder statesman. Based on Butler's own personal papers, including hundreds of letters, and dozens of interviews, *Political Animal* paints an intimate portrait of a legendary figure in gay politics and the times in which he lived.

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