



Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA (The Chicago Series on Sexuality, History, and Society)

John Donald Gustav-Wrathall

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Now associated with family health clubs, the YMCA's bland image is the result of relentless outreach and the studied avoidance of controversy. But, as John Gustav-Wrathall shows in his revealing social history of the organization, the life of the YMCA has been filled with strife, tragedy, and irony, a life that itself reflects the struggle over the shifting societal mores regarding masculine friendship and intimacy. *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand* presents the YMCA as an institution of profound contradictions, reflective of society's views of same-sex love and sexuality.

"Gustav-Wrathall's book offers an in-depth history of the origins and purposes of the Young Men's Christian Association and how it evolved into—and out of—a gay playland."—Arnie Kantrowitz, *Lambda Book Report*

"The book's absorbing exploration of the sometimes schismatic, sometimes synergistic relationship between spirituality and sexuality is a fascinating addition to the growing body of social history."—Jim Van Buskirk, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*

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