



Give the People Light and they will find their own way.

# The Wisconsin Light

## National Coming Out Day Is October 11

[Santa Fe, NM]- Thousands of Lesbians and Gay men will be taking their next step out of the closet on October 11 by participating in coming out events from coast to coast.

Among these will be the Oprah Winfrey Show which, on October 11 hosting Rob Eichberg, Ph.D., co-founder of National Coming Out Day. This will be the third year in a row that the event has been covered on the Winfrey Show.

But throughout the country, many as individuals, will be affirming their Gay or Lesbian identities by coming out to family, friends, employers and others.

"Telling the truth about who we are is the most positive thing we can do as individuals and as a community," said Lynn Sheppard, Executive Director of National Coming Out Day. "There are over 25 million Gay and Lesbian Americans and most folks don't think they know any of us. Isn't that absurd?"

Jean O'Leary, co-founder of National Coming Out Day added, "Polls indicate that the vast majority of people who report knowing someone Gay overwhelmingly support our rights."

Eichberg said, "If the AIDS epidemic has taught us anything, it has made it clear that we will only achieve equality under the law if we are out and visible. This cannot be done from the closet."

For more information, write: National Coming Out Day, P.O. Box 8349, Santa Fe, NM 87504 or call (505) 982-2558.

## Madison Holds Gantt Fundraiser October 19th

[Madison]- A coalition of Madison residents concerned about human rights, Lesbian and Gay rights, freedom of speech and the arts are hosting a fundraiser for Harvey Gantt. Gantt is running for the U.S. Senate against Jesse Helms (R-NC).

The Gantt fundraiser will be held October 19, 1990 from 5:00-7:30 p.m. at the Cardinal Bar, 424 E. Wilson St. in Madison. There will be complimentary hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. A \$15 donation is requested.

According to latest polls, Gantt is in a dead heat with Helms; this, in spite of the fact that Helms is out spending Gantt by a ratio of 14 to 1. Helms has been an outspoken critic of Lesbian and Gay rights, Women's rights, civil rights and the leader of the recent attack on government funding of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Members of the Lesbian and Gay community can help unseat Helms by attending this fundraiser or sending a check directly to the Gantt campaign at: Gantt for U.S. Senate, 700 E. Stonewall St., Suite 655, Charlotte, NC 28202.

For more information, call (608) 255-1523 or (608) 257-6089.

## Anti-ROTC Meeting Nov. 9

[Minneapolis, MN]- The Lesbian and Gay Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union will be hosting a one-day nationwide conference for campus organizers fighting ROTC's anti-Gay policy. The conference will be held on Friday, November 9, 1990, in Minneapolis, in conjunction with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's annual Creating Change conference.

Among the speakers will be Allan Berube, author of *Coming Out Under Fire* and Miriam Ben-Shalom, National Chair of the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America.

For registration or further information, contact Sofia Gruskin, ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, 132 W. 43rd St., New York, NY 10036; (212) 944-9800, Ext. 706.

## WISN Radio Accused Of Spreading AIDS Misinformation To The Public



Milwaukee County Executive Dave Schulz (third from left) and Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist (behind girls with scissors), MAP Director Doug Nelson and Susan Mudd (center) look on as the ribbon is cut to begin the Wisconsin AIDS Walk on September 30.

## Woman Sues AT&T For Surviving Partners Employee Benefits

[New York, NY]- In the first federal suit involving domestic partners' benefits, the surviving Lesbian partner of a deceased AT&T employee has charged the company with discrimination for denying her the pension benefits that are routinely extended to surviving family members.

The complaint, filed by Sandra Rovira, accuses AT&T of violating federal, state and local laws as well as its own internal policies which prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or marital status.

Rovira spent 12 years in a committed relationship with her partner, Marjorie Forlini. They owned a house together, had joint finances, raised Rovira's children from an earlier marriage (Forlini even claimed them as dependents on her tax forms), and formalized their relationship through a ceremony with rings, vows and a written certificate. Rovira cared for her partner until Forlini's death from cancer in 1988.

Rovira told the *New York Times*: "She died in my arms. But when I called AT&T, they treated me as if I was nothing and our whole relationship was nothing. It was so humiliating. We were a family like any other family, and we deserved to be treated like one."

AT&T says its benefits are for legal spouses only and since the law does not recognize homosexual unions, neither

does (the company). "We recognize that this is someone who's hurting, but this was not a legally protected marriage," said a spokeswoman for AT&T.

Rovira is represented by the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. Her attorney, Paula Ettelbrick, told the *Washington Blade* she would not argue that Rovira and Forlini were a married couple. "But as domestic partnerships come up, our challenge will be to convey to the court — and in this case to AT&T — that this is a committed family relationship and that it should be taken seriously."

"It's a real uphill battle," Ettelbrick told the *New York Times*. "We're talking about overhauling the whole system that was based on the 1930's family consisting of a male wage earner, a non-working wife and some kids."

Nan Hunter, a professor at Brooklyn Law School and a long-time activist for Gay rights, said: "I think there will be broader recognition of domestic partnerships in the next five years, at least in large cities."

Hunter told the *Times*: "The law is not very well developed yet, but I expect that there will be more cases in a variety of contexts, asserting that where a non-traditional couple's relationship functions as a marriage, it should be treated as a marriage."

## Gay Student Needs Are Focus Of Teachers' Convention Workshops

[Milwaukee]- For the second year in a row, a workshop targeting the needs of Gay/Lesbian and Bisexual youth will be presented at the 17th Annual Milwaukee Teachers Education Association (MTEA) Convention to be held November 1-2, 1990 at the Grand Hotel. The workshop entitled, "Breaking The Silence: Creating Change and Building Support Systems for Gay and Lesbian Students," will be presented by Michael S. Lisowski, MSW, Director of Gay Youth Milwaukee (GYM) on Friday, Nov. 2, at 1:30 p.m.

The workshop will discuss how to effectively deal with Gay/Lesbian topics in the classroom; how teachers can be instrumental in changing students' attitudes and how to establish support systems and resources for Gay/Lesbian students. Successful model programs from across the country will be presented

to consider how these can be implemented within the Milwaukee Public School system. Establishing a networking system for concerned professionals will also be discussed.

GYM is a rap support group for young Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual people 18 years of age and under. GYM offers opportunities for young people to meet together in a comfortable environment, to discuss and share similar concerns encountered in school, with families, friends, and in both social and sexual relationships. Begun in 1979, GYM now meets on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays at the Downtown public library on the first floor meeting room from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

For more information, please call 265-8500 or write: GYM, P.O. Box 09441, Milwaukee, WI 53209.

[Milwaukee]- On September 20, 1990, Mark Belling, an afternoon talkshow host on WISN-AM radio discussed ACT-UP Milwaukee's informational action at a dental clinic held the previous day. In a letter to Dr. Richard Holcomb of WISN, ACT-UP charged that Belling "spread dangerous misinformation about AIDS to the public."

Belling, who characterizes his program as one of "Uncommon Common Sense" has the reputation of being ultra-conservative.

In its letter to Holcomb, ACT-UP said that "The rights-protected under the umbrella of 'talk radio' do not include the right to spread ignorance about a fatal, communicable and epidemic disease."

Belling's discussion centered on the question "should dentists be required to treat AIDS patients?" In using the question, ACT-UP charged that Belling showed himself ignorant of several facts: 1) there are 6,000 HIV+ people in Milwaukee; 2) therefore, the average dentist sees 6 infected people whether he/she knows it or not; 3) the vast majority of HIV+ people are not aware of their status and hence, cannot inform the dentist. This means that dentists must use full precautions with every patient, every time and that when such precautions are used, "the status of both dentists and patients becomes irrelevant."

According to ACT-UP, Belling should either of done his research or called ACT-UP Milwaukee before the program aired.

ACT-UP-Milwaukee also charged that Belling used the terms "AIDS activists" and "Gay activists" interchangeably.

ACT-UP pointed out that AIDS activists include "straights, Gays, men, women, Blacks, Hispanics, whites" and "anyone dedicated to bringing about an end to the AIDS crisis, AIDS." ACT-UP told Holcomb, "is not a Gay disease. AIDS does not discriminate" and pointed out nationwide educational efforts that have stressed these facts.

On the show, Belling repeatedly stated that the majority of AIDS victims are responsible for their condition; that 95% or people with HIV are personally responsible for their infection and should not complain. ACT-UP told Holcomb that this statement was "horribly callous."

Belling claimed that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) had estimated the risk of HIV transmission during vaginal sex to be 1/10,000. However, ACT-UP-Milwaukee learned from the CDC that "no statistics regarding the likelihood of HIV transmission during vaginal sex had ever been released by them."

ACT-UP said that "Belling repeatedly suggested... that a person who does not have anal sex with Gay males (why not anal sex with women too?) and does not use IV drugs, is not at risk for HIV. ACT-UP told Holcomb that this was "completely untrue," saying in addition that "Belling and WISN-AM are encouraging" the spread of HIV "by broadcasting blatant misinformation about AIDS."

ACT-UP has charged that "WISN-AM has provided a forum for an ignorant man to spread AIDS misinformation" at great cost to the community. ACT-UP further stated that it viewed WISN-AM's actions as "a serious threat to public health" and demanded "an on-air apology and correction" of "this dangerous misinformation."

A copy of the letter along with a copy of the broadcast at issue have been sent to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). ACT-UP-Milwaukee intends to follow up on this issue.