

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

The Wisconsin Light

D.C. Court Rules That a Gay Couple May Adopt Child Together

Washington, D.C.— A Gay couple may legally adopt a child under District of Columbia law as long as the adoption is in the child's best interest, a three-judge panel of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals ruled Friday, June 30, 1995.

"We conclude that unmarried couples living together in a committed personal relationship, whether of the same sex or of opposite sexes, are eligible to petition the court for a decree of adoption," Associate Appellate Judge John Ferren wrote in the opinion.

District law "expressly authorizes adoptions by any person without limitations," the opinion said. "Nothing in the legislative history can be said to exclude adoptions by unmarried couples."

Bruce M., a Gay man, began adoption proceedings for Hillary shortly after her birth in August, 1991. At the time of the adoption, Bruce had been living with his life partner, Mark D., for nearly five years.

The couple had reached an agreement with Hillary's natural mother to allow her regular visitation rights even after the adoption was finalized. But the mother later accused Bruce of denying her access to Hillary and sought to reverse the adoption, the opinion said.

After several court hearings, the mother and Bruce reached another agreement. The woman decided to waive her rights to the child, and the court signed a final decree of adoption in favor of Bruce.

However, the couple then petitioned the court to adopt Hillary together. But the trial court ruled that the district's adoption laws did not permit Mark to join in Bruce's adoption.

Bruce and Mark appealed the court's decision and won.

Gay Officer To Sue Navy For Lowering Severance Pay for Gay Personnel

Salem, OR— A U.S. Navy officer being discharged after telling superiors he is Gay plans a legal fight, including challenging a policy that reduces severance pay of Gay soldiers.

Lt. Richard Watson said on Monday, June 26, he will argue that the military's so-called don't ask, don't tell policy toward Gays and Lesbians in the military cannot work.

Watson, an instructor since 1992 at the Navy Reserve Officer Training Program at Oregon State University (OSU), said he told superiors last October he was Gay.

He then was told he would be separated from the Navy, because of his sexual orientation.

"My sexuality has no bearing on my performance," Watson said in a telephone interview.

He said he is to receive an honorable discharge on July 31 but that his separation pay will be reduced by 50 percent because he is Gay. That will amount to a loss of about \$30,000, he said.

Watson said he will sue in federal court in Portland to contest his discharge and also in an effort to force the Defense Department to eliminate the practice of cutting separation pay of Gay and Lesbian service members.

The separation pay policy "is particularly abhorrent" because it continues after the Defense Department said it would change discriminatory practices against Lesbians and Gay men, Watson said.

He also has filed a complaint seeking to force OSU to enforce its rules against discrimination based on sexual orientation. He says the Navy should be barred from the campus until its policy changes.

OSU spokesman Bob Bruce said the school will investigate the complaint. He says the school has agreed to coexist with the federal policies while also seeking to get them changed.

"We have expressed to the Defense Department we believe some military policies do not correlate with ours," he said.

Thousands March Past New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral as Bells Ring Out



Smiles All Around—Broadway star, Carol Channing greeted a capacity crowd at Milwaukee's Club 219+ bar on June 21, 1995. A benefit for the Milwaukee AIDS Project and the Broadway Cares Equity Fights AIDS, Miss Channing brought with her about 15 cast members from the national touring company of "Hello Dolly!" who performed a dance fantasy entitled "One Night in Heaven." The event raised about \$3,000.

Government Provides \$18.4 million in HOPWA Grants for AIDS Housing

Washington, D.C.—Federal housing officials have awarded grants of \$18.4 million to help homeless AIDS victims and their families find a place to live.

The grants are issued through a \$186 million Clinton administration program to provide housing and support services to homeless people with AIDS and HIV and their families.

"There is no more vulnerable population in America than people who are living on the streets and infected with the AIDS virus," said Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros.

The funds went to 12 nonprofit organizations, six state agencies and two local governments. They each are estimated to assist 12,261 people for up to three years.

Of those, 6,287 people with AIDS or HIV and 1,666 family members will receive housing assistance, and 4,308 people would receive supportive services.

The funds are distributed under the Housing for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program, designed as a national model for addressing the needs of poor people with AIDS in areas that receive no other housing funds for that purpose. It helps provide rent assistance, short-term housing and support for housing development or other necessary services.

Both Doug Nelson, Executive Director of the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin and David Clarenbach, acting Executive Director of the Madison AIDS Support Network, have

spent much time in Washington of late fighting to get the HOPWA grants and to get equitable distribution of the same.

The HOPWA money is allocated by formula to eligible states and cities. An additional \$167.4 million will be granted this fiscal year.

Grants were awarded to:
AIDS Task Force of Alabama Inc., \$705,623; Alaska Housing Finance Corp., \$667,567; Marin County Community Development Agency, San Francisco, \$1.1 million; State of Connecticut, \$998,648; Cornerstone Services, Inc., Joliet, Illinois, \$465,99; Travelers & Immigrants Aid of Chicago, \$1.03 million; UNITY for the Homeless, New Orleans, \$1.09 million; City of Baltimore, \$1.07 million; State of Maryland, \$1 million; AIDS Housing Corporation, Boston, \$990,534; Hospice of Southeastern Michigan, Detroit, \$534,054; State of Missouri, \$827,803; Community Counseling & Mediation, New York, \$963,050; Episcopal Social Services of New York, \$1.09 million; Greyston Foundation, Inc., New York, \$1.1 million; Southside Community Mission, New York, \$975,572; Asociacion de Puertorriquenos en Marcha, Philadelphia, \$1.03 million; State of Rhode Island, \$943,440; State of Vermont, \$719,950; and the AIDS Housing of Washington, Seattle, \$1.04 million

New York— It was an unlikely and unexpected start to this year's Gay Pride March in New York City.

As the tens of thousands of Lesbian, Gay men, Bisexuals and their supporters stepped off, to go up Fifth Avenue, the great bells of St. Patrick's Cathedral began to thunder and to peal.

Some said it was unintentional, others said not, but no matter, the carol that the bells sang was the jubilant and victorious "Song of Joy."

In the meantime, prior to the parade, Roman Catholic John Cardinal O'Connor, long a target for Gay protests for his condemnation of Gay sexual orientation, came out, not with venom, but with words of peace and conciliation.

"Most people whose sexual orientation differs from the majority are good, decent people who try to live responsible lives," O'Connor said Sunday, June 25 in a sermon at St. Patrick's to his congregation.

"They have their struggles as we all have our struggles. God gives them the same graces He gives everyone and loves them as He loves everyone, and as we must love them," the conservative cardinal said.

O'Connor advised his people not to judge people "because of their sexual orientation and went on to condemn violence against Gay people.

"We do not represent Christ or the Catholic Church through violence of any nature, violence in thought, violence in word, violence in action against those who disagree with us or with the teachings of our faith.

"I urge and pray that those who might be tempted to believe that in some way they are defending our faith through some form of violence, ask themselves one question: Is this what Christ would do?"

Less than two hours later, amidst the roar of motorcycles and with the pealing of St. Patrick's bells, LesBiGay men and women began their march, celebrating their beings and mourning their losses to AIDS.

"Those bells would have rung if the ropes had been cut and the Pope had ordered the clappers taken out," said Mark Chalber of Albany.

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, headed by Bill Donohue, a sociology professor, had demanded that city officials move the parade route so the marchers wouldn't pass the cathedral, saying marchers would masturbate on the church steps. Nothing like that happened and Donohue was nowhere to be seen.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani refused to overrule the police permit for the march and participated in the parade.

Olympic diving champion Greg Louganis, who came out as a Gay man a year ago and more recently disclosed that he is HIV positive, helped lead the parade as one of the grand marshals.

"There are no more secrets. They're seeing me as the whole person," Louganis said before the parade. "I hid for a long time and I felt like I was living on an island with barely a phone. This (disclosure) has been wonderful because it's kind of my ticket off the island."

Pop singer Cyndi Lauper danced and sang her hit "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" as her float passed St. Patrick's.

Marchers from the group Gay Men's Health Crisis struck a more somber note, chanting, "People are dying--where's the church?" Others chanted "Shame, shame" as they passed the great gothic church, going past observers on the way that were 5-6 deep.

Other marchers included organizations for Gay police officers in New York City and New Jersey, Gay Buddhists, Mormons and Catholics, and Gay military veterans.

Turnout estimates weren't immediately available. Police estimated that 110,000 people took part in the march and twice to three times that many stood on the sidewalks and watched.

Police Commissioner William Bratton called the march "a very respectable parade, one that I think Gays and Lesbians could feel quite proud of."

In Atlanta

The Gay Pride parade on Sunday, June 25, was the highlight of a weekend celebration for the LesBiGay community. Police expected

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