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Houston Chapter Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays Presents

Healing the Hurt

Conference on Homophobia

Friday March 11 University of Houston

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

7:30 AM **REGISTRATION BEGINS** **Lobby, 2nd floor**
CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST **Conrad Hilton Ballroom**

8:30 AM **OPENING SESSION** **Conrad Hilton Ballroom**
Welcome to Conference: Pat Rickey
Co-president, P-FLAG Houston
Welcome to University of Houston: Dean Karen Haynes
Dean of Graduate School of Social Work, University of Houston
KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Bruce Hilton
Director, National Center for Bioethics
Author, *Can Homophobia Be Cured*

9:45 AM--10 AM **BREAK** Exhibits of Community Resources **Lobby**

10 AM--11:30 AM **WORKSHOPS 1 A--1 F**

11: 45 AM--1:30 PM **LUNCH** **Conrad Hilton Ballroom**
Recognition of Special Guests: Pat & Gail Rickey, P-FLAG Houston
Introduction of Dr. Mosbacher: Randall Shields, AT&T, San Francisco
KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Diane (Dee) Mosbacher, M.D. , Ph.D.

1:30 PM--1:45 PM **BREAK** Exhibits of Community Resources **Lobby**

1:45 PM--3:15 PM **WORKSHOPS 2 A--2 F**

3:15 PM--3:30 PM **BREAK** Beverages
Exhibits of Community Resources **Lobby**

3:30 PM--4:45 PM **PLENARY QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION** **Conrad Hilton Ballroom**
Panel composed of Bruce Hilton, Dr. Diane Mosbacher, and workshop presenters who represent the scope of topics addressed during the conference, answering questions from attendees. (Write your questions on the index cards provided in the conference folder and turn in at designated areas throughout the day.)

4:45 PM--5:45 PM **MARKETPLACE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES** **Lobby, 2nd floor**
SOCIAL HOUR (cash bar)

MORNING WORKSHOPS

1 A Homosexuality--Myths and Facts

Presenters: Travis Peterson, LMSW-ACP, LPC, LCDC, Houston & San Antonio
Annise Parker, Business Owner, Community Leader, Houston

Examines facts about homosexuality and the myths that contribute to homophobia.

1 B Families--Keeping Families Together

Presenters: Members of P-FLAG Houston (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)

An experiential look at how families deal with the knowledge that a family member is gay.

1 C Civil Rights--Equal Rights or Special Rights?

Presenters: Sheila Jackson Lee, Houston City Council
Juan Palomo, Columnist, Houston Post

Examines the increase in hate crimes, current limitations of rights for gay and lesbian persons, and the need for achieving equality for all citizens.

1 D Gay and Lesbian Teens--Our Invisible Youth

Presenter: Robert McLaughlin, Ph.D., Psychologist, Houston

Explores the needs of youth as they come to terms with their sexuality, with emphasis on the absence of basic information about homosexuality, the lack of positive gay and lesbian role models, and the need for family support.

1 E Spirituality--Jesus Loves Me, Unless I'm Gay

Presenters: Rev. Dr. Sid Hall, Pastor, Trinity United Methodist Church, Austin
Bruce Hilton, Keynote speaker of conference, author of Can Homophobia Be Cured?
Rev. Dr. Donald Sinclair, Pastor, Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, Houston

Three ministers discuss the non-acceptance of gay men and lesbians in the church, and the anxiety homosexuality causes within the ecclesiastical family. A look at moves toward inclusiveness in the church, with special attention given to the Methodist Church's model of Reconciling Congregations.

1 F Mental Health--Origins of Mental Health Disorders

Presenter: Lou Ann Todd Mock, Ph.D., Psychologist, Baylor College of Medicine

Exlores the roots of homophobic thoughts and behaviors, and the ways that homophobia impedes the building of trustng relationships. Includes effects of isolation and shaming on emotional psychological development.

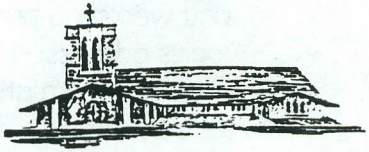
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AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

2 A ***Sexual Orientation Biology--A New Science***

Presenter: Cheryl Weill, Ph.D., Professor of Neurology and Anatomy, L.S.U. Medical School, New Orleans

The latest scientific research about the origins of homosexuality.

2 B ***Parenting--What Do I Do If My Child Is Gay?***

Presenters: Members of P-FLAG Houston (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)

A practical guide for parents and for professionals who provide counseling for families. Outlines the typical stages that parents and other family members go through, and offers a variety of resources.

2 C ***Legislation--Moving Toward A More Just Society***

Presenters: State Representative Garnet Coleman
State Representative Glen Maxey

State legislators discuss the existing laws that affect gay men and lesbians, the upsurge in attempts to limit their rights, and legislation needed to achieve equality under the law.

2 D ***Teen Suicide--Stopping the Slaughter***

Presenter: Lisa Rogers, LMSW, Program Coordinator, Out Youth Austin

A report on the frightening reality of suicide among gay and lesbians teens, with discussion about recognizing and helping teens who are at risk.

2 E ***The Judeo-Christian Heritage--What Does the Bible Say?***

Presenters: Rev. Doug Ensminger, D. Min., Community of the Reconciling Servant, Houston
Rev. Carolyn Mobley, MCC of the Resurrection, Houston
Rabbi Peter Schaktman, Temple Emanu-El, Houston

An overview of Biblical passages used to support anti-homosexual religious teachings, along with interpretations by religious leaders.

2 F ***Overcoming Oppression--Countering Our Fears***

Presenter: Shevy Healey, Ph.D., Psychologist (retired), Florida

Experiential workshop on overcoming hatred and the stigma of being hated.

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To find out more about LiB or to get information on LiB's meeting schedule, please call the LiB Line: 529-0077

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Houston Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays

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Healing The Hurt '95

Conference on Homophobia

Friday March 31 - Saturday April 1, 1995

Sheraton Astrodome

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your doctor,

your neighbor,

your plumber,

your teacher,

your niece,

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GAY AND LESBIAN PEOPLE ARE PART OF *our* LIVES.

Open your hearts and minds. Learn from families and friends with gay and lesbian loved ones.

PFLAG
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Table of Contents

- Welcome from National PFLAG President 2
- Welcome from PFLAG Houston President 3
- Floor Plan of Hotel 5
- Workshop Descriptions 6
- Biography of Janie Spahr 10
- Biography of David Mixner 11
- Biographies of Presenters 12
- Information about PFLAG 25
- Thanks & Appreciation to Financial Contributors 27
- Human Rights Award for Bravery 29
- Winner of Human Rights Award for Bravery 30
- Nominees for Human Rights Award for Bravery 33
- Human Rights Award for Bravery Trophy 39
- Judges for Human Rights Award for Bravery 39
- PFLAG Houston Board Members 41
- Conference Co-Sponsors 41
- Paul Van Order Memorial Scholarship 43
- Did You Know? 43

Welcome from the National President of PFLAG



PFLAG
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Healing the Hurt '95 is a sign of hope for our world. At a time when families, communities and nations are divided by distrust and hostility, this conference offers new avenues of understanding and support.

Homophobic fears that have plagued our society for decades are now being fanned by political and media campaigns that are further demonizing our gay and lesbian family members and friends. The stereotypes and misunderstandings they exploit are damaging not just to gay people but to everyone, gay and straight, by injecting fear and distrust into ordinary relationships. They are destructive to families, religious communities, businesses, schools, and above all to young people.

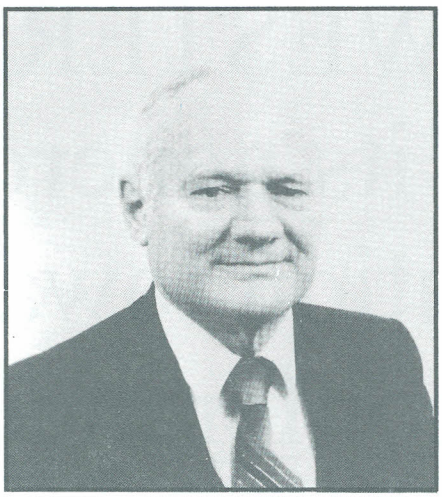
Public education is one of the primary missions of PFLAG. As families and friends of gay and lesbian persons, we have faced our own ignorance about sexual orientation, and embarked on personal journeys of self-education. We have also experienced first-hand the violence of homophobia.

PFLAG salutes our Houston chapter for bringing outstanding educational resources to the Houston community. Healing the Hurt offers a unique opportunity for assistance in developing a new vision for our society. Corporate managers, mental health professionals, law enforcement and school personnel, religious leaders as well as a broad spectrum of lay persons are participating in this conference. On behalf of the Board of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and our 362 affiliates, I welcome you.

Mitzi J. Henderson

Mitzi Henderson
National President, PFLAG

Welcome from the President of PFLAG Houston



PFLAG
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Several times, while working on this conference, I would hear different persons say, "Do you have the feeling that something big is happening in our world?" I do have that feeling. Working with PFLAG introduces you to families that know how to love and have the grit to stand up for their gay/lesbian/bisexual members in a society educated and trained to make a homophobic response to these family members.

Because you are here, and because this conference is here, great strides are being taken toward correcting a serious injustice--even persecution--of our own family members. The whole society is in a homophobic closet, and such a conference as this is our way out. Where else can any of us go to get the information we need to help ourselves and others. This conference is the only place and the ideal place for us to 'get it right' and to help others do the same.

Thank you for taking the time and showing the interest to come here. These sessions should fill you with the information and data you need. I hope the extra strategy session we added this time for Saturday morning will provide you the practical approach needed in your situation.

Don Sinclair

Don Sinclair
President, PFLAG Houston

Workshop Descriptions

Friday Morning Sessions

1a. SEXUAL ORIENTATION BIOLOGY: The Latest Research.
The latest scientific research on the origins of homosexuality, including the influence of hormones on fetal development and information on genetics.
Presenter: Cheryl Weill, PhD

1b. HOMOSEXUALITY: Myths and Facts.
Examines basic facts about homosexuality and myths that contribute to homophobia. The author of *Is It a Choice?* and *Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights* presents his insights on sexual orientation that are particularly helpful to those who are just beginning to consider the facts about sexual orientation.
Presenter: Eric Marcus

1c. GAY AND LESBIAN TEENS: Needs of Youth.
Explores the needs of youth as they come to terms with their sexuality, with emphasis on the need for information and positive role models.
Presenter: Robert McLaughlin, PhD

1d. RELIGION & HOMOSEXUALITY: Is It a Sin?
How different faiths approach the issue of homosexuality.
Presenters: Doug Ensminger, D.Min. (Presbyterian); Carolyn Mobley, M.R.E. (MCCR); Carol Aston, M.Div. (United Church of Christ); Robert Schaibley (Unitarian); Edwin Peterman, B.Div. (Lutheran); Christopher Kerr, M.Div. (Catholic); Rabbi Matthew D. Michaels (Jewish); and Don Sinclair, D.Min. (United Methodist)

1e. COUNSELING IN OUR SCHOOLS: Making a Difference for Our Youth.
Educators and counselors are often the first persons a young student approaches with questions about sexuality. Being able to respond sensitively may make a big difference in the life of a teen. This workshop will look at some ways in which school personnel can respond to the needs of sexual minority youth.
Presenter: Kevin Gogin, MFCC

1f. PROTECTION FOR ALL: Law Enforcement Issues.
A look at how we can provide education and support to law enforcement professionals and develop programs for better protection of gay and lesbian citizens.
Presenter: Tom Potter, Portland, Oregon, police chief, retired

1g. CIVIL RIGHTS AND PRACTICAL POLITICS: Fulfilling the Promise of the Constitution.
A leader of the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) will talk about the current status of civil rights legislation, with insights on how to support enactment into law. The progress made by the HRCF will be discussed, along with practical strategies for achieving the goal of equal rights for our children.
Presenter: Gregory King

Workshop Descriptions (continued)

1h. ADDICTION AND THE GAY & LESBIAN COMMUNITY: Where It Comes From, How We're Doing, Where We're Going.
A top professional in the field analyzes the problem and presents practical steps for finding a solution.
Presenter: Shawn McVey, MA, LCDC

First Friday Afternoon Sessions

2a. GAY & LESBIAN TEENS: Hearing from Our Youth.
Teen panel from HATCH. Experiences of gay and lesbian youth and discussion of support through HATCH. The importance of a place where gay and lesbian teens can meet to share their feelings and experiences.
Presenter: Robert McLaughlin, PhD

2b. KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER: A PFLAG Parents Panel.
Experiences that parents share as they make their journeys from shock to support and nurturing within the family. Real family values from PFLAG's point of view will be discussed.
Presenters: PFLAG Parents

2c. THE INTEGRATION OF SPIRITUALITY AND SEXUALITY IN THE CHURCH: Opening the Door of the Church's Closet.
Our keynote speaker explores how to see the gifts of gay and lesbian people in our churches and how we can move towards greater understanding and acceptance.
Presenter: Janie Spahr, D.Div.

2d. GAY & LESBIAN WORKPLACE ISSUES: Productivity in Diversity.
Job security, benefits and other equal rights issues for gay and lesbian persons in the workplace, and a discussion of how acceptance of diversity can be good business..
Presenters: Columnist Juan Palomo and Attorney Dale Carpenter

2e. COUNSELING CLIENTS: Special Skills for Helping People with Gay-Related Issues.
How counselors, therapists and other mental health professionals can better serve clients seeking help on gay-related issues. An experienced professional in this field shares her insights on the special needs of sexual minorities..
Presenter: Barbara Ellman, M.A., LMSW-ACP

2f. GAYS & LESBIANS MAKING HISTORY: The Struggle For Justice
A review of the emergence of the gay and lesbian equal rights movement in the United States.
Presenter: Eric Marcus

Workshop Descriptions (continued)

2g. TEEN DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE: Stopping the Slaughter.
The author of an upcoming book about how a family dealt with the suicide of their gay son discusses depression and suicide among our youth. The frightening number of teen suicides among gay and lesbians will be explored, along with some of this group's special needs.
Presenter: Leroy Aarons

2h. ADDICTION AND THE GAY & LESBIAN COMMUNITY: Where It Comes From, How We're Doing, Where We're Going.
(Repeat of 1h)

Second Friday Afternoon Sessions

3a. SEXUAL ORIENTATION BIOLOGY: The Latest Research.
(Repeat of 1a)

3b. HOMOSEXUALITY: Myths and Facts.
(Repeat of 1b)

3c. RELIGION AND HOMOSEXUALITY: Is It a Sin?
(Repeat of 1d)

3d. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR GAY, LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL YOUTH: A School-based Program that Works.
Three components of a school-based program and some of the concerns that may arise.
Presenter: Kevin Gogin, MFCC

3e. CHOOSING AN AFFIRMATIVE THERAPIST: Finding the Help You Need.
Providing direction for parents who want to choose a family therapist who is knowledgeable and supportive in the area of gay and lesbian issues.
Presenter: Ann Moon, PhD.

3f. OVERCOMING OPPRESSION: How Homophobia Hurts Us All.
Our keynote speaker discusses homophobia and how it hurts not only gay and lesbian persons, but also parents, friends and even people who "don't know anyone who is gay."
Presenter: David Mixner

3g. CIVIL RIGHTS AND PRACTICAL POLITICS: Fulfilling the Promise of the Constitution.
(Repeat of 1g)

3g. TEEN DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE: Stopping the Slaughter.
(Repeat of 2g)

Workshop Descriptions (continued)

Saturday Interactive Workshops

4a. REDUCING HOMOPHOBIA IN SCHOOLS AND MAKING THEM SAFE.
Providing safe, nurturing environments for all children; legal rights for teachers and staff; identifying homophobia of faculty; getting support groups into schools; alcoholism; recognizing warning signs of suicide; drop-outs, runaways and family abuse; do's and don'ts for counselors.
Moderators: Kevin Gogin, Tammy Bradley, Steve Seifert, Renee Buck, and Leroy Aarons

4b. CIVIL RIGHTS/HUMAN RIGHTS.
History of the political and legal movement; "how to" for lobbying legislators; Human Rights Campaign Fund; National Gay & Lesbian Task Force; gay issues in the workplace.
Presenters: Gregory King, Tom Potter, Houston community leader Annise Parker and Dianne Hardy-Garcia, executive director of the Lesbian & Gay Rights Lobby of Texas

4c. THE LOST SELF: THE EFFECTS OF REPRESSIVE SOCIALIZATION ON LESBIAN AND GAY INDIVIDUALS.
To provide a heightened awareness as to the effects of repressive social messages on the development of lesbian and gay individuals using a concept from IMAGO Relationship Therpy.
Presenters: Diana Storms, LMSW-ACP, and Patrick Vachon, LMSW-ACP

4d. RELIGION.
Raising awareness of sexual minorities in churches; educating church membership; strategies for changing church policies; church-based gay & lesbian support groups; reviewing existing church reports on sexuality.
Moderators: Janie Spahr, Doug Ensminger, and Don Sinclair

Events to Follow Conference

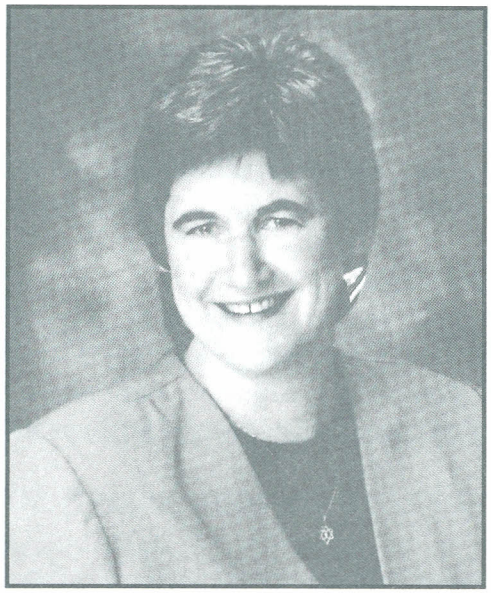
▼ **PFLAG REGIONAL MEETING (reservations required), Room Alamo 3, noon til 2:30 PM**

▼ **KEYNOTE SPEAKER REV JANIE SPAHR TO SPEAK & PREACH**
Rev. Janie Spahr will be the guest speaker at the Mind and Spirit Adult Education Class at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, located at 5501 S. Main, on Sunday, April 2, at 9:45 AM.

Rev. Janie Spahr will preach at Bering Memorial United Methodist on Sunday, April 2, at 10:50 AM. Bering Memorial is located at 1440 Harold St. at Mulberry, 5 blocks west of Montrose and 2 blocks south of Westheimer.

▼ **TEXAS MARCH TO STOP THE VIOLENCE, STOP THE HATE**
The Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas has announced that thousands of concerned people from across the state will meet in Austin on April 2, 1995, at 12 noon for a march to the State Capitol against the hate, violence, and discrimination faced by lesbian and gay Texans.

Janie Spahr, D. Min.
Keynote Speaker



Rev. Jane Spahr, or Janie, as she prefers to be called, is a Presbyterian minister and a self-identified lesbian who has become a flashpoint in an escalating debate over religion and sexuality.

She describes herself as "the mother and friend of two adult men, Jim and Chet, twin sister of Joan Adams Fenten, daughter of Sue and Chet Adams, a lesbian, a feminist, a justice seeker, a learner, and a truth teller." As a minister, she is committed to justice issues for lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, "pursuing connections for wholeness with other oppressed communities claiming their freedom."

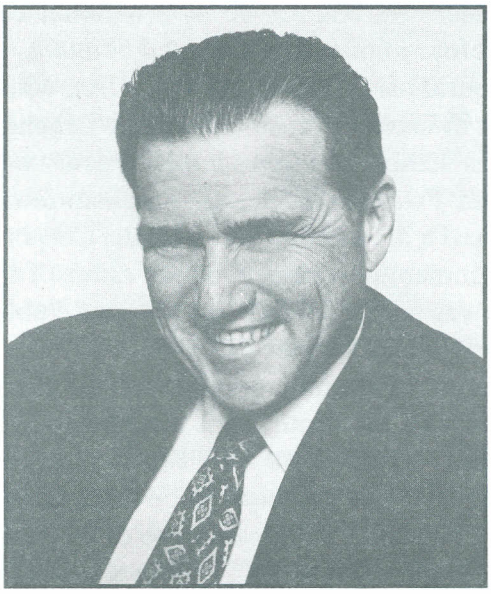
Since March, 1993, Rev. Spahr has been employed as an evangelist for "That All May Freely Serve," a mission project sponsored by the Downtown United Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York in partnership with the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Tiburon, California. Spahr and the congregations of these two churches are working within the denomination to help it grow toward greater inclusiveness for all people.

Spahr's association with the Rochester church dates back to 1991 when The Downtown United Presbyterian Church called her to be one of the church's four co-pastors. The call was the first time that a congregation of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. had chosen an openly lesbian pastor. A group of other churches in the Rochester-area Presbytery challenged the call. After several appeals, the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. refused to allow Rev. Spahr to assume the co-pastorship.

The Downtown United Presbyterian Church then voted to fund a new position, Evangelist. In that role, Janie now travels throughout the country, educating and informing Presbyterians and others working on behalf of greater inclusivity for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people.

Before assuming her current position, Rev. Spahr was the founder and first executive director of Spectrum, Center for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Concerns. She previously held pastoral positions in the San Francisco/Oakland area, and in Pittsburgh, her birthplace.

David B. Mixner
Keynote Speaker



David B. Mixner has been involved in public life, policy and business for nearly 30 years and has become one of the premiere fund-raisers in the Democratic Party.

For his work, Mixner was honored at a reception during the inaugural activities of President Bill Clinton that attracted Sen. Edward Kennedy and other party luminaries. During the 1993 March on Washington week, Mixner spoke about gay and lesbian issues at the prestigious National Press Club luncheon speaker program, which rarely invites openly gay people to speak.

Mixner is president of DBM Associates, a corporate strategic planning consulting firm in West Hollywood, California, and a pioneer in the political process for gay and lesbian people.

Mixner has been an unofficial advisor to numerous elected officials, including President Clinton on domestic and foreign policy. Mixner is a strong supporter of the president because he believes gays and lesbians have achieved a great deal of progress under this administration.

Nevertheless, he has never let that loyalty stand in the way of his loyalty to the the cause of lesbian and gay equality, as was evidenced by his willingness to be arrested outside the White House to protest the Clinton policy on gays in the military.

His reputation as a business strategist and implementor is nationally known. Numerous universities, including Oxford, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, UCLA, Princeton and London School of Economics, have invited him to lecture.

At *Healing the Hurt '95*, Mixner presents the luncheon keynote address. Later he will lead a workshop on "Overcoming Oppression: How Homophobia Hurts Us All," including parents, friends -- and people who believe they don't know anyone who is gay.

"It's always sort of amazing to me that people think gays and lesbians' not wanting to lose their jobs because of who they are is 'special treatment,' " says Mixner. "No one is talking about quotas or affirmative action. We are talking about the Constitution. That's all."

Biographies of Presenters

LEROY AARONS

A journalist, author, editor, and playwright, Aarons recently completed his first book, *Prayers for Bobby*, to be released in June. Aarons served as a national correspondent and editor at the *Washington Post* for 14 years before joining *The Oakland Tribune.* He is founder and president of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA), with more than 1,000 members.

In 1982, Aarons spent a year in Israel covering the Israeli-Lebanon war as a free-lancer for *Time* magazine. During his tenure as senior vice president for news with *The Oakland Tribune*, that newspaper won the 1990 Pulitzer Prize for its photojournalism during the 1989 earthquake in the Bay Area. In 1992, he co-authored a docudrama that won the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Gold Award for best live entertainment program on public radio. Titled "Top Secret: The Battle for the Pentagon Papers," the show was performed live on National Public Radio by a cast that featured Edward Asner, Stacy Keach, and Marsha Mason.

Prayers for Bobby is the account of a family coping with the suicide of their gay son, telling the story of Bobby Griffith who leapt to his death from a highway bridge onto a freeway. Bobby's mother, Mary Griffith, has become an advocate for PFLAG, working to prevent other teens from tragically ending their lives. Aarons' book promises to be invaluable to PFLAG in its mission.

Aarons lives in Sebastopol, California, with his spouse of 14 years, Josh Boneh.

CAROL ASHTON

Ashton is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. A graduate of the Houston Graduate School of Theology in Houston, she is a doctoral student at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. Now serving as interim pastor of Christ United Church in Cypress, Texas, Ashton is also chair of the UCC Houston Association Church on Ministry Committee. She serves as a member of the UCC South Central Conference Board of Directors, Crisis Response team, and UCC Houston Association Council.

Trained in clinical pastoral counseling at the Samaritan Center for Counseling and Education in Houston, she has served as a pastoral counselor and chaplain. Ashton is a member of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

TAMMY BRADLEY

A high school coach from Austin, Texas, Bradley is a founding member and co-president of ANGLES, Austin Network for Gay and Lesbian Educators and Supporters. ANGLES concentrates on issues facing gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons at all levels of education.

"So how did a laid-back, tolerant, closeted lesbian get to be so involved in the equal rights movement and become co-president of a highly political organization such as ANGLES?" asks Bradley. "I experienced one of the most pivotal points of my life when I coached basketball at Austin High School. One of my athletes tried to kill herself because of the struggle she was enduring in being a young lesbian. The idea of a 14-year-old who believed she did not deserve to exist because of feelings that came naturally to her caused me to re-evaluate my own existence and rethink my position as a role model in society."

With two other presenters at *Healing the Hurt '95* -- Renee Buck and Steve Siefert -- Bradley helped form ANGLES, which was the driving force behind Austin School Board's decision to include sexual orientation in its Anti-Harassment/Non-Discrimination policy. Bradley also helped start a support group for gay and lesbian teens at Austin High School.

Biographies of Presenters (continued)

RENEE BUCK

Vice-president of Austin PFLAG, Renee Buck is the mother of three children. Her oldest daughter, age 17, is lesbian. A founding member of ANGLES -- Austin Network for Gay and Lesbian Educators and Supporters -- Buck was mobilized by the near-suicide of her lesbian daughter. Now a tireless worker on behalf of gay and lesbian youth in Austin, especially within the school district, Buck says, "I believe that the parents and students in our community are grossly under-educated regarding the facts about homosexuality, and I will continue to work to ensure the safety of our gay and lesbian students."

Recently Buck was elected one of the first three non-gay members of the Board of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL). Born in East Texas, she was reared in Houston and has lived in Austin for 16 years. She will soon open a Bed and Breakfast in Austin.

DALE CARPENTER

A lawyer with Vinson & Elkins in Houston, Carpenter specializes in large corporate litigation involving antitrust, securities, contracts, and banking disputes. Before joining the law firm, he was judicial clerk for Judge Edith H. Jones of the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Carpenter graduated from Yale University *magna cum laude* and went to the University of Chicago Law School, where he graduated with honors in 1992. He was editor-in-chief of *The University of Chicago Law Review* and was the recipient of a prize for excellence in legal scholarship.

Since moving to Houston, Carpenter has become a member of the board of directors of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus and is active in numerous community organizations. He writes a column for *OutSmart*, a monthly magazine geared to Houston's gay and lesbian community.

BARBARA ELLMAN, L.M.S.W.-A.C.P.

A psychotherapist in private practice, Ellman works with families, couples, and individuals. She is an expert in the field of gender relations, making frequent presentations on this topic.

Ellman graduated *magna cum laude* from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, and earned her masters of social work from Rutgers University. Her professional career has included serving as an adjunct professor at the University of Houston's Graduate School of Social Work, as a member of the community development board of the University of Houston's Women Studies Program, and as a volunteer trainer for the Women's Information and Referral Exchange Service of the Houston Area Women's Center.

W. DOUGLAS ENSMINGER, D.Min.

Rev. Douglas Ensminger is an ordained Presbyterian minister with more than 20 years experience as a pastor within that denomination. He has been committed to justice issues throughout his life. He was an early opponent of the Vietnam war, and is an advocate for women's rights in the church and society.

Ensminger has actively supported the rights of gays, lesbians and bisexuals for more than 20 years. Locally he has worked with Planned Parenthood, the AIDS Advisory Council of FIRM, and the Campaign for the Homeless.

In May, 1991, Ensminger's younger brother Morgan, who was gay, died in his arms after living

Biographies of Presenters (continued)

with AIDS for four years. A passage from Morgan's farewell to his family and friends helped lead his brother to Ensminger's present ministry with The Community of The Reconciling Servant. "One pompous request to everyone I've touched," wrote Morgan. "Stop the hate where and whenever you can. It is too hurtful and hateful to be silently allowed anymore."

Ensminger attained his ministerial degrees at the University of Chicago and a *summa cum laude* psychology degree at Princeton University. He has served congregations in Wisconsin and California before coming to Houston in 1982. He is married and the parent of four children.

As a member of PFLAG, Ensminger is a director for the organization's southern region, which covers Texas and Louisiana, and is also vice president of the Houston chapter.

KEVIN GOGIN, MFCC

For the past five years, Kevin Gogin has been the director of Support Services for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth of the San Francisco Unified School District. Support Services, the only program of its kind in the country, works with sexual minority youth and their families and is completely integrated into the school district.

Before accepting this position, Gogin was the founding director of Peter Claver Community, a residence for women and men with HIV/AIDS. It was the first program of its kind and has been replicated throughout America and Australia.

In addition to holding a master's degree in marriage and family therapy, Gogin also has a master of arts in English, a master of divinity and a master of sacred theology. Besides providing training for teachers and counselors in the San Francisco Bay Area, he has spoken at numerous national conventions geared to educators.

Gogin is active in lesbian and gay parenting issues and is rearing a daughter with his partner.

DIANNE HARDY-GARCIA

As executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL), Hardy-Garcia lobbies and organizes statewide for lesbian and gay equal rights in Texas. She has devoted enormous energy to directing national media attention to the rise of gay hate crimes in Texas.

Following the trail of eight brutal murders committed since April, 1993, she has brought the heinous issue to the public's attention. Hardy-Garcia was the moving force behind a major article in the February, 1995 issue of *Vanity Fair* and a feature segment on NBC television's *20/20*. Those stories led to a recent *Donahue* show devoted to gay murders in Texas.

Hardy-Garcia's goal is to strengthen Texas's hate crime law. Through her leadership, thousands of people will gather in Austin on Sunday, April 2, to participate in "Texas March to Stop the Violence, Stop the Hate." The march will be followed by LGRL Lobby Day on April 3.

Before her directorship of LGRL, Hardy-Garcia worked as a legislative aide, social worker, and organizer on social justice issues including homelessness, domestic violence, AIDS activism, women's rights, mental health, criminal justice, and lesbian/gay/bisexual rights. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and English from Incarnate Word College in her home town, and a master's of science degree in social work from the University of Texas at Austin.

Hardy-Garcia is the co-chair of the Austin Lesbian/Gay Political Caucus. She lives in Austin with her partner of eight years, Mary Anne Messina.

Biographies of Presenters (continued)

CHRISTOPHER KERR, M.Div.

Chris Kerr entered the Franciscan seminary at age 18 and was ordained a Catholic priest nine years later. He has served in a variety of ministries, including teaching, missions with Navajo and Pueblo Indians, college Newman ministry, parish ministry and alcohol and drug counseling.

Kerr was also a minister and executive director at the Kolbe Project, a Houston ministry to the gay and lesbian community and people with AIDS.

While in a recovery program for alcoholism in 1984, Kerr came to accept that he is gay. Growing in acceptance of himself, finding positive role models and discovering that "being gay is a gift from God" eventually led him to leave the priesthood in 1993.

The former priest is now the executive director of the Dizinger Foundation, a nonprofit AIDS service organization providing art programs, an art gallery, hospital visitation, and a city AIDS memorial.

Kerr earned his master's degree at the University of Dayton and his master's of divinity at Saint Leonard College in Dayton, Ohio.

GREGORY KING

Gregory King was the communications director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund from 1989 until early 1995. As the spokesperson for the country's largest lesbian and gay political organization, he played a key role in advancing the cause of lesbian and gay civil rights in recent years.

King has been a professional communicator for more than 15 years. Before joining HRCF, his experience included stints as communications director of the Kellogg Company and for two congressmen. He has written and spoken extensively on issues ranging from civil rights, HIV and AIDS, anti-gay violence, discrimination and youth issues.

Educated at the George Washington University and the London School of Economics, he is the tenth child in a family of 17.

ERIC MARCUS

Eric Marcus, a former associate producer for *Good Morning America,* is the author of numerous books and articles that are invaluable in understanding the gay and lesbian experience. *Is It A Choice: Answers to 300 of the Most Frequently Asked Questions About Gays and Lesbians*, was published in 1993. *Making History: The Struggle for Gay & Lesbian Equal Rights, 1945 to 1990, An Oral History,* provides insights into the modern day struggle. Most recently, Marcus co-authored *Breaking the Surface,* the autobiography of Olympic diving champion Greg Louganis.

Marcus, 37, is one of 120 gay men and lesbians featured in *Uncommon Heroes, A Celebration of Heroes and Role Models for Lesbian and Gay Americans.* "What I know how to do is draw people out about very private things in their lives, sometimes very painful things," writes Marcus, as an introduction to his *Uncommon Heroes* profile. "My ability to do that has everything to do with the painful experiences in my own life."

Writing in *Newsweek* in 1992, in an article titled "'They're Not Telling the Truth', An Author's Personal Response to the Attacks From Anti-Gay Crusaders," Marcus said, ". . . as long as the anti-gay campaigners continue to spread their message of ignorance and hate, our nation will remain a hostile, dangerous and sometimes deadly place for us, our friends and millions of America's gay and lesbian citizens."

A native of New York, Marcus earned his masters degree at the Columbia University Graduate

Biographies of Presenters (continued)

School of Journalism. He lives in New York City. His mother is an active member of the New York chapter of PFLAG.

ROBERT McLAUGHLIN, PH.D.

McLaughlin, who has a doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Texas, devotes his professional life to assisting adolescents with their problems. Gay and lesbian teenagers are particularly at risk from suicide, school failure, school drop-out, sexually transmitted diseases, and drug abuse," says McLaughlin.

The son of a Methodist minister, McLaughlin is a frequent presenter, teaching workshops ranging from "Issues and Concerns regarding Teen Sexual Identity" to "Self-esteem and Student Learning."

McLaughlin is on the training faculty and a supervisor at the Houston Psychotherapy Institute, and is a clinical supervisor in the division of psychology at Baylor College of Medicine.

SHAWN McVEY, MA, LCDC

Director of Montrose Counseling Center's Early Intervention Program, McVey is also active on the boards of several lesbian/gay health oriented organizations. He is a licensed chemical dependency counselor and a licensed marriage and family therapist whose experience includes treating clients with issues ranging from chemical dependency to sexual orientation identification.

McVey earned his bachelor of arts degree, with a major in psychology at the College of the Ozarks, his master's of arts in behavioral science at the University of Houston at Clear Lake, and is continuing his studies at the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work.

MATTHEW D. MICHAELS

Michaels joined the staff of Congregation Emanu El in Houston as its associate rabbi in 1988. A native of Los Angeles, Michaels received his bachelor of arts degree in political science from UCLA and a master of arts in Hebrew letters from the Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. He was ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. Before coming to Houston, he served as rabbi at temples in Brownsville, Texas, and Evansville, Indiana.

Michaels has served as president of the Houston Rabbinical Association and on the boards of Planned Parenthood and the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston and Hillel. Currently, he is a member of the boards of directors of Jewish Family Service and the American Jewish Committee.

Michaels and his wife Franne have four children--Mara, Martin, Melinda, and Benjamin.

CAROLYN MOBLEY

Mobley is assistant pastor at Houston's Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection (MCCR). Near downtown Houston, the church is renowned for its ministry to gays and lesbians.

In 1981, Mobley was forced from her position as interim director of a Southern Baptist mission in Atlanta because of questions about her sexual orientation. Later she served as interim chaplain at Women's Pre-Release Center in Atlanta and as deacon at First MCC in Atlanta. Her professional experience includes serving as a youth director at Shiloh Baptist Church in Orlando, Florida, and working on the staff of two Baptist mission centers and two Baptist churches while in the seminary. In Atlanta, she was a member of the board of directors for the Atlanta Gay Center and African-American Lesbian/Gay Alliance.

Biographies of Presenters (continued)

Mobley earned her bachelor of arts degree in religious education at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, and her MRE degree from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta.

ANN MOON, PH.D.

Ann Moon is a psychologist in private practice in Houston.

Born in Lubbock, Moon earned her bachelor of arts degree at the University of Texas, graduating *magna cum laude*, and her master of arts and PhD degrees in clinical psychology at the University of Houston. Immediately she began to publish in professional journals and to participate in community health organizations in addition to her work as a clinical psychologist. A frequent lecturer on mental health and fitness topics, she has taught in the department of psychiatry at both Baylor College of Medicine and the University of Texas Medical School.

Moon is an avid long distance runner. She has completed 17 marathons and holds two age records for the Houston-Tenneco Marathon. In 1981 she was named Outstanding Runner of the Year by the Houston chapter of the American Medical Joggers Association. For the past 18 years she has been a contributing columnist for *Inside Running.*

JUAN R. PALOMO

Prize-winning journalist, Palomo was born in Grafton, North Dakota, to migrant worker parents. He grew up in Crystal City, in deep South Texas near the Mexican border.

After earning a bachelor of science in art education from Southwest Texas State University and two years of teaching high school, Palomo began his journalism career with *La Otra Voz*, a small community newspaper, which later merged with the *Hays County Citizen* in San Marcos, Texas. With a masters in journalism from American University in Washington D.C., Palomo is now a columnist and editorial writer for the *Houston Post.*

Palomo sought to come out in one of his columns in 1992, but the newspaper killed the column. After the incident was exposed by the *Houston Press*, Palomo was fired but, as a result of protests from Hispanic as well as gay and lesbian groups, he was rehired. In *Uncommon Heroes, A Celebration of Heroes and Role Models for Gay and Lesbian Americans,* author Leroy Aarons says, "Juan Palomo has become a symbol of the difficulties gay and lesbian journalists have to overcome once their sexual orientation is known. His attempt to come out publicly in his column was unprecedented and courageous." Palomo is one of 120 people featured in *Uncommon Heroes.*

In 1992, Palomo received the editorial writing prize for the Charles E. Green Journalism Awards, sponsored by the Headliners Foundation of Austin. He also won first prize in editorial writing in both the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors and the Press Club of Dallas contests.

A member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and a former board member of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists, Palomo is also a member of PFLAG Houston and served on the *Healing the Hurt '95* steering committee.

ANNISE PARKER

Annise Parker is a community leader in Houston who advocates for gay and lesbian rights. In both 1991 and 1995 she ran for Houston City Council as an openly gay candidate.

For the past 10 years she has served on the Police Advisory Committee, acting as a liaison to the Houston Police Department, and she coordinates gay sensitivity training for police cadets.

A native Houstonian and a National Merit Scholar, Parker graduated from Rice University.

Biographies of Presenters (continued)

With degrees in anthropology, psychology and sociology, Parker has presented such workshops as "What is Homophobia" at the Texas Lesbian Conference VI, and "The Police and the Gay & Lesbian Community: A Matter of Education" at the National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference XV.

A reservoir engineer with Mosbacher Energy Co., Parker has served as an officer of a number of gay/lesbian organizations, including two terms as president of the Houston Gay/Lesbian Political Caucus. She is active on many Houston committees, including Neartown Community Development Corporation and the Bayou City Committee.

Parker has received the "Community Service Award" from the Executive and Professional Association of Houston, the Don Hrachovy Award -- Lifetime Achievement from the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, and was grand marshall for the Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride Week parade in 1990.

A woman of many talents, she is a member of MENSA, a published poet, and a former rugby and softball team player.

EDWIN D. PETERMAN, B.D.

Pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Houston, Peterman served at churches in Illinois and Missouri before coming to Houston in 1968. He received his B. D. from the University of Chicago Divinity School.

Peterman has been a member of the board of the Houston Institute of Religion, president of the Greater Houston Clergy Association and ecumenical relations coordinator, Texas-Louisiana Synod, Lutheran Church in America. He sits on the M.D. Anderson Chaplaincy Advisory Committee and is president of the board of The Melanchthon Institute.

TOM POTTER

Chief of Police for the Portland Police Bureau from November, 1990, to July, 1993, Tom Potter is a proud supporter of his daughter Katie--a police officer on the Portland force and a lesbian.

"I am here as the chief of police of Portland and also as the father of a lesbian daughter," said Potter, introducing himself to an Oregon State Senate committee when he testified in favor of a bill that would outlaw discrimination in employment and housing based on sexual orientation.

Earlier, when he was sworn in as chief of police, Potter had surprised many Portland citizens by including homophobia along with racism and sexism as social ills he was committed to fight. In 1991, Chief Potter rode in uniform at Katie's side in Portland's Gay Pride parade.

A Portland police officer since 1966, Tom Potter was the commander of the Community Policing Division from its creation in 1988 to his appointment as Chief. In mid 1993, after 27 years of service in the department, he retired from the Portland Police Bureau, and in mid 1994 he began consulting on police issues with the Community Policing Consortium, which is composed of the I.A.C.P., P.E.R.F, Police Foundation and the National Sheriffs Association.

In the soon-to-be-released *Straight Parents, Gay Children*, by Robert A. Bernstein, one chapter is devoted to Tom and Katie Potter. "Candor, warmth, humor, an air of quiet self-confidence--they would seem to run with the genes," Bernstein once wrote about the father and daughter.

The father of four children, Potter, 55 enjoys hiking, camping, kayaking, and archaeology. Both Tom and Katie Potter are members of Portland PFLAG.

Biographies of Presenters (continued)

ROBERT SCHAIBLEY

Schaibley, senior minister of Unitarian Universalist Church in Houston, is a self-described activist minister, dedicated to "holding before people an awareness of the religious in the midst of the commonplace."

A native of Michigan, Schaibley was graduated from Michigan State University and Harvard Divinity School. He has continued his education at the Gestalt Institute, Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, and Manchester College in Oxford, England, as well as with Zen master Thick Nhat Hanh at Plum Village in France.

STEPHEN SIEFERT, LMSW-ACP, LPC

A clinical social worker in Austin, Texas, Siefert has been in private practice since 1993. Previously he was a therapist at Austin Regional Clinic-Mental Health Association and at The Oaks Treatment Center. As a clinical social work fellow, he worked in the division of child and adolescent psychiatry at UTMB in Galveston.

Siefert joins Tammy Bradley and Renee Buck in telling about the formation of ANGLES (Austin Network for Gay and Lesbian Educators and Supporters) and the impact that the organization is having on Austin ISD. They all are on the team of presenters at Saturday's interactive session, "Reducing Homophobia in Schools and Making Them Safe." Siefert co-leads an in-school support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered youth.

DON SINCLAIR. D.Min.

Sinclair, pastor of Bering Memorial United Methodist Church in Houston, is the president of PFLAG Houston. A Methodist minister for the past 45 years, he has served churches in Longview, Palestine, Beaumont, Nacogdoches, Daingerfield, and Houston. Sinclair has long been a civil rights champion, participating in the Selma march and advocating the rights of minorities.

As minister of Bering Memorial, Sinclair initiated a vast HIV/AIDS ministry known as the Bering Care Center. The center serves the special needs of adults with AIDS or AIDS-related diseases who have limited financial resources. The Bering Dental Clinic is reserved exclusively for persons with AIDS and those diagnosed as HIV positive, and is staffed by a full-time paid dentist and a pool of volunteer dentists and dental hygienists.

In 1992 Bering Methodist became the first Texas Methodist church to affiliate with the Reconciling Church Program -- a network of Methodist churches that declare themselves to be inclusive. "It's a terrible thing to say that a Christian church needs a statement to be inclusive," says Sinclair. More than 90 Methodist churches across the nation have joined the program.

A World War II veteran with two years service in the Philippine Islands, Sinclair attended Stephen F. Austin State University for a bachelor of science degree, SMU in Dallas for a Bachelor of divinity degree, and Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, for his doctor of ministry in missional family life.

Sinclair and his wife, Kathy, are the parents of three sons. Their youngest son, whom the Sinclairs later realized was gay, was murdered as a teenager in 1979.

Biographies of Presenters (continued)

DIANA STORMS, LMSW-ACP

Storms is a clinical social worker in private practice who specializes in psychotherapy with women. She serves a large number of lesbian clients.

Storms earned her master of social work degree at the University of Houston where she was a member of Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society. Prior to opening her own practice, she directed the women's counseling program at Montrose Counseling Center -- a non-profit agency specializing in gay and lesbian concerns. A veteran conference presenter, she speaks on such topics as feminist therapy, gender issues, intimacy, lesbian identity development, and lesbian families and lesbian couple relationships.

Storms lives in Houston with her partner of 10 years, Karen, and two teenage sons.

PATRICK VACHON, LMSW-ACP

Patrick J. Vachon is a licensed master social worker and advanced clinical practitioner associated with the New Counseling Center. After receiving his masters degree from the University of Houston, Vachon studied with the Institute for Relationship Therapy and became a certified Imago relationship therapist. He has presented relationship seminars for singles and couples in Houston and New York. Vachon specializes in gay and lesbian couples therapy.

Vachon is a member on the National Association of Social Workers and the Association of Imago Therapy and is active with the AIDS Foundation. As a volunteer, he is a peer group facilitator supervisor at Body Positive.

CHERYL WEILL, PH.D.

One of the most popular presenters at *Healing the Hurt '94*, Cheryl Weill, professor of neurology and anatomy at LSU Medical School in New Orleans, returns to teach a workshop titled "Sexual Orientation Biology: The Latest Research."

Homophobia is in part a consequence of ignorance and misunderstanding as regards the biology of the development of sexual orientation," says Weill. "It is the goal of this workshop to provide the lay person with an understanding of data that support the conclusions that sexual orientation is not a choice and is directed by fetal hormones and not influenced by maternal factors during pregnancy."

The real block to a societal acceptance of homosexuality is intolerance, regardless of its origins," says Weill. "Intolerance is the most difficult behavior to counteract, because it is not based on fact. Still, however, the best weapon is the dissemination of the facts and truth about homosexuality and a recognition of the fundamental humanity of homosexual people."

Weill did her undergraduate work at the University of California at Berkeley, and earned her doctorate in organic chemistry at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

On the National Science Foundation's advisory panel for cellular neurosciences, Weill is also a member of the Society for Neurosciences, the International Society for Neurochemistry, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the New York Academy of Sciences.

Weill is a member of the New Orleans chapter of PFLAG.

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Information about PFLAG

PFLAG is an international organization with grass-roots chapters in more than 350 communities in all 50 states, and with affiliates in 12 other countries. The membership represents mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, grandmothers and grandfathers, uncles and aunts, friends and supporters of gay men and lesbians. Many men and women who are gay are also members, joining in the work of the volunteer organization.

PFLAG works to create a society that is respectful of the diversity of human beings, educates the public about homosexuality, and fosters understanding of gay men, lesbians, and their families.

PFLAG's Mission
Support, Education, Advocacy

- **Supporting Families:** PFLAG works to keep families in loving relationships by helping them understand and support their gay, lesbian, and bisexual members.
- **Educating the Public:** PFLAG seeks to dispel the myths and misinformation about homosexuality by working with educators, community groups, and the general public.
- **Advocating for Equal Rights:** PFLAG works to broaden the base of support for equal human and civil rights by mobilizing millions of non-gay family members from all political, economic, and social sectors of society.

PFLAG Houston

Services: Monthly meetings, Helpline, Speakers Bureau, Monthly Newsletter--*PFLAG Flyer*
Helpline/Contact Number: (713) 867-9020
Address: P.O. Box 53796, Houston, TX 77052-3796 (This is a new address)
Email Address: PFLAGHOUTX@AOL.COM (America Online)
Meeting Place: St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 Piney Point
Meeting Time: 1st Sunday of month (moves to 2nd Sun. when 1st Sun. is holiday weekend)
2PM-4:30 PM
Meeting Dates/1995

April 9	July 9	Oct. 1
May 7	Aug. 6	Nov. 5
June 4	Sep. 10	Dec. 3

Other Texas PFLAG Chapters/Contacts

Athens: (903) 675-8326
Austin: (512) 302-FLAG
Bryan/College Station: (409) 694-2617
Dallas: (214) 348-1704
Denton: (817) 387-1491
El Paso: (915) 591-4664
Fort Worth: (817) 498-5607
Lubbock: (806) 799-5466
Odessa/Midland: (915) 362-4252
San Antonio: (210) 351-0395
Waco: (817) 750-7211

For Information about other chapters, contact:
PFLAG National Office: (202) 638-4200
1101 14th St., NW, Suite 1030, Washington, DC 20005
EMail Address: PFLAGNTL@AOL.COM (America Online)

PFLAG Houston
Human Rights Award for Bravery

No struggle for equality, liberty and justice has ever approached success without the personal sacrifices of people who have been willing to put their lives or their well-being on the line.

While human beings are born with certain rights simply because they are members of the human race, throughout history there have been those who would deny those rights to some members of society. The story of mankind has been the story of the constant struggle of individuals and groups of people to reclaim their natural rights.

Too often, cruelty and injustice is allowed to continue because of the mistaken belief by people that there is nothing that they, as individuals can do.

Robert F. Kennedy, on his 1965 trip to South Africa, talked about that.

"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself," he said. "But each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.

It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

It is precisely to help tear down those mighty walls of oppression and resistance to the cause of equality for our loved ones that we have established this award for bravery.

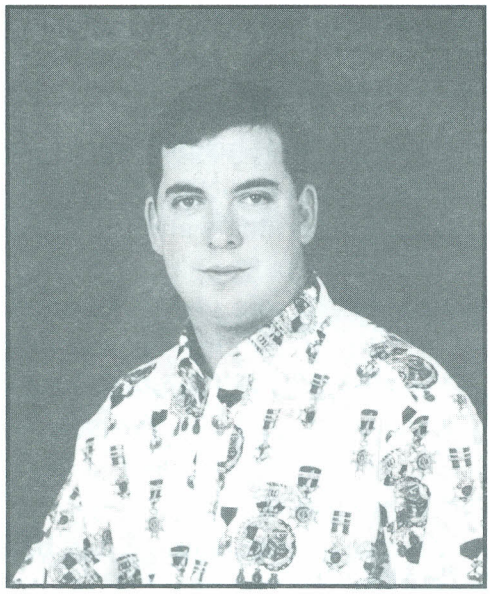
The world, if it is going to change, must know that there are people among us who will risk their lives, their reputations and their careers, to further the cause of equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual people and other sexual minorities.

It is our hope that through this award, through the work of the people recognized each year by this award, the world will begin to understand, at last, that for many of us, equality is more than a slogan.

PFLAG Houston is proud of this award. But it is even prouder of all the people who have been nominated for this very special recognition. Each of them, in his or her own way, is a winner in our hearts, and in the hearts and lives of those they worked to improve.

We salute their courage.

Wesley Beard
Winner of the PFLAG Houston
Human Rights Award for Bravery



"You are next," the caller said.

Wesley Beard didn't need any further explanation to know what those words meant.

"You thought I'd forgotten about you," the same caller said, a week later.

Again, the young East Texas auctioneer knew what the caller was talking about.

The calls were generated by Beard's campaign to draw attention to the Nov. 30, 1993 murder of Nicholas Ray West. The 23-year-old medical records clerk had been abducted around midnight from a Tyler park known as a gay gathering area, driven to a remote sand pit, beaten and then shot nine times until he died.

The case drew nationwide attention but it was barely mentioned in the state's mainstream media outlets. To change that, Beard organized a "Stop the Hate" rally in Tyler on Jan. 8, 1994 that drew some 700 people.

Wesley Beard, 22, came out publicly in March, 1993. Appearing on a local TV show in his hometown of Jacksonville, Tex., Beard told the world about his sexuality.

"I felt from the bottom of my heart that it was my responsibility to stand up to my community," he told the Texas Triangle.

At first, he was happy that his disclosure was met with support and love by his friends and family, and by those who patronized his antique auction business, which he'd started while still in high school.

Then he heard of the West murder.

"For the first time I started feeling a little bit scared," Beard explained at the time. "I had always thought something like this might happen in New York or Dallas or Houston, but not in Tyler. Now I realized that yes, these people actually do hate gay people as much as they say they do."

Instead of retreating into his relatively safe personal life, Beard decided to join hands with the few other openly gay people to organize the Tyler march.

"Without Wesley's courage and determination, the West murder would have gone unnoticed," wrote the Rev. Mel White of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, in supporting

Wesley Beard (continued)

Beard's nomination for the award.

"He refused to let the story die, refused to permit this ugly, anti-gay hate crime go unnoticed. He begged the Tyler paper to put the story on the wire services. They refused. So he drove up and down Texas looking for a reporter with courage to bring it to the nation."

He also went on national TV and was quoted in such publications as The New York Times, USA Today, Time, The Advocate, the Dallas Morning News, the Houston Post and others.

"When he leaves the excitement of these shows, he must come back to East Texas and face the reality that our smaller southern towns have a long way to go regarding the gay issue," wrote Pat Stone, president of PFLAG Dallas, which submitted Beard's name for the award.

"It cost Wesley a lot of suffering to be so young and yet so public in that east Texas town," wrote White. "His business suffered. He endured endless hate calls and personal threats against his business and his life. Even members of his family hated and threatened him. Still, he crusaded to get the story told.

As hate crimes multiplied, he protested, writing letters, making appearances, urging the media to pay attention. He was always cool, articulate and wise. And though he knew that each new public appearance could cost him more threats, more personal danger, more business losses, he refused to be silent."

To help his cause, Beard organized the East Texas Gay and Lesbian Alliance, of which he is president. He also became a board member of the Texas Human Rights Foundation.

In spite of his increasing business responsibilities, and in spite of the continued hostility to the cause of gay and lesbian equality in East Texas, Beard spent much of 1994 speaking out and encouraging others to do the same. He spent much of the winter of 1994 organizing a second successful "Stop the Hate" rally in Tyler that was held in February, 1995.

"Wesley could move to one of our larger and more supportive Texas cities," wrote Stone. "But he has chosen to remain in an area that is not always supportive of his dreams, where he knows he is needed the most."

It is because of Beard's willingness to keep up the struggle in such a hostile environment, with very little help from his community, that the judges selected him as the recipient of the PFLAG Houston Human Rights Award for Bravery. Beard received three out of five first-place votes and two second-place votes from the judges.

"Wesley took tremendous risks for himself and for the betterment of the gay and lesbian community by his being so public in such a small town, and because he is so young," says judge Harriet Dart, founder of PFLAG Detroit. "Knowing the amount of hate that is out there, and the fact that Wesley was not afraid to stand up to try to help people understand that every life is precious, was in my mind, a very, very brave thing for him to do."

Judge Collie Conoley, associate professor of educational psychology at the University of Nebraska, said Beard "clearly put himself in financial and physical risk. To be successful in his endeavors, he was required to overcome many roadblocks and it sounds as if he did a great deal without much support."

PFLAG Houston is proud to present Wesley Beard with its first Human Rights Award for Bravery, which carries with it a $2,500 cash prize and a beautiful and unique trophy by Houston designer Kelly Gayle Amen.

We hope that his actions, and the actions of the other 13 nominees -- as well as our recognition of their bravery -- encourage many others to follow in their footsteps and work to secure equality for our gay and lesbian loved ones.



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Nominees for the PFLAG Houston Human Rights Award for Bravery

Trish Barnes, of Ft Myers, Fla., was one of the founders of the Ft. Myers PFLAG chapter in 1993. In 1994, she also founded Citizens Organized to Promote Equality, a political committee that opposes the radical right and serves as its chairperson, and is forming a group for gay and lesbian teen-agers and a group for lesbians 20 and older. Barnes serves as moderator of Support, Inc., a group offering education and support for gays and lesbians and runs the local switchboard. In addition, Barnes is the media contact for the gay and lesbian community and she has appeared on numerous local talk shows. She is involved in her church, teaching Sunday school and coordinating the church nursery school. She also volunteers at the local AIDS task force. Barnes is a mother to a 9-year-old and is in a committed relationship.

Barnes was nominated by the Ft Myers, Fla., PFLAG chapter.

Margarethe Cammermeyer gained national prominence when she was dismissed from her post as colonel in the Army National Guard because she refused to lie about her lesbianism. The Vietnam War veteran, whose book about her experience became the basis for the NBC-TV movie, Serving in Silence, refused to give up her fight and has won reinstatement by an appeals court.

Cammermeyer was nominated by the Durango, Colo., and the Coventry, Conn., PFLAG chapters.

Shannon Byrne is a 24-year-old woman from Clarkston, Ga., who was forced to publicly confront her lesbianism when her father, the chairman of the Cobb County, Commission, voted for a resolution saying "homosexual lifestyle" violates community standards. The resolution was drafted in reaction to a plan to offer homosexual partners of Atlanta's municipal employees spousal benefits. Byrne chose to counter her father's actions by coming out of the closet in a June, 22, 1994 press conference, drawing worldwide attention because Cobb County was being considered as a site for some of the 1996 Olympics. Byrne chose to come out after spending many hours talking to her father, hoping to convince him to change his mind about the resolution. "There was nothing else I could do except come out publicly," she explains. "I had to let people know this was wrong." She ignored the threat of sniper fire to speak at a Human Rights rally in August, 1994.

Byrne was nominated by the Atlanta, Ga., PFLAG chapter.

Will Fitzpatrick is 33-year-old Rhode Island state senator who came out publicly shortly after his 1992 election. Fitzpatrick, from Cranston, R.I., was in effect "outed" by his opponent who claimed that Fitzpatrick's "sexual preference" was an issue in the campaign, and the Rhode Island State Right to Life Committee.

Fitzpatrick was nominated by the East Bay, R.I., PFLAG chapter.

David Gockley is general director of the Houston Grand Opera. It was Gockley, a straight man, who conceived of and guided to fruition the highly successful and critically acclaimed Harvey Milk opera, based on the life of San Francisco's first openly gay supervisor, who was assassinated in his City Hall office in 1978. Gockley faced considerable opposition from his own board of directors to the staging of Harvey Milk, but he persisted, arguing that the purpose of any arts organization is not to please or lull the audience, but to challenge them to look at the world around them. Under Gockley, HGO made a concerted effort to reach out to the city's lesbian and gay community to ensure support of Harvey Milk -- the first opera ever to feature a kiss between two men and a gay duet. The effort paid off and the opera

Nominees (continued)

drew more people than any other previous new work.

Gockley was nominated by the Houston, Tx., PFLAG chapter.

Jon Greaves and his partner, David Greer, were featured on the front page of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution on Pride weekend a year before the Cobb County Commission adopted its anti-gay resolution. When Greaves decided to become a leader in the anti-resolution movement, the mostly positive response he'd gotten from the Pride weekend article changed to harassments and threats. A white supremacist group demanded that his company fire Greaves and threatened to boycott it if it didn't. The threats got so bad that at one point police had to be assigned to protect Greaves and Greer and eventually the couple was forced to move to Atlanta.

Greaves was nominated by the Atlanta, Ga., PFLAG chapter.

David Livermore is the founder of the Hood River, Ore., PFLAG chapter, who first came out in 1992 at a meeting of the Gorge Ecumenical Ministries, an Oregon interdenominational service agency, in anticipation of the battle over Proposition 13, an anti-gay rights initiative. In an emotional speech, he convinced the group to take an anti-13 stand. Livermore's work against the proposition involved forming the Gorge Alliance for Human Dignity and speaking out to any group that would listen to his story. Two years later, Livermore again led the charge against a similar anti-gay resolution

Livermore was nominated by the Hood River, Ore., PFLAG chapter.

Nancy Rodriguez's son, Paul Broussard, came out to her when he was 19. Rodriguez, who lives in Warner Robins, Ga., was proud of her son and his accomplishments. Then, on July 4, 1991, she got a call from Houston, where Paul was working as a banker. Her son had been accosted and beaten up as they left a gay bar and Paul had been seriously injured. Rodriguez immediately flew to Houston but arrived too late: Paul had died. Rodriguez has returned to Houston many times since that day. The first time was to organize his memorial service, after which she joined Paul's friends at Paul's favorite bar, where they all danced to celebrate his life. At first, she had to convince prosecutors she was not going to sit back and allow her son's murderers to get off with little or no punishment. She took it upon herself to learn the ropes of the state's criminal justice system and demanded that she be kept informed of every step in the case. Eventually, the prosecutors and the judge relented and allowed her, in essence, to determine the sentences -- a first in Houston. Rodriguez has continued to monitor the sentences, fighting and winning the denial of every parole opportunity for those who were incarcerated.

Rodriguez was nominated by the Macon, Ga., PFLAG chapter.

Lisa Rogers is former director of OutYouth Austin, a seven-day-a-week drop-in center sponsored by the YMCA that offers a telephone help line, AIDS education, homeless support and discussion groups for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth. Rogers has consistently taken brave steps to support young people's needs, fighting back against rightwing efforts to undermine her work. Because of such political pressure, Rogers was dismissed as OutYouth Austin director by the YMCA in January 1995, but Rogers has been able to continue the program outside YMCA.

Rogers was nominated by the Austin, Tx., PFLAG chapter.

Dave Swartout-Steffen has endured gay-bashings, more than 20 death threats and threats of physical harm for his advocacy of equality for lesbians and gays in rural towns and for his work with

Nominees (continued)

isolated and fearful rural sexual minority youth. The 34-year-old Swartout-Steffen was reared in Ephreta, Wash., a small farming community. He came out publicly three years ago while working in the town's public library where he worked mostly with children and youth. In January, 1994, he organized a sexual minority youth advocacy organization and served as its executive director. In November, he and his life partner were married in a Yakima church wedding, the first such wedding in the town where they live with his partner's 6-year-old daughter. Swarthout-Steffen has written numerous articles and is working on a book to empower sexual minority youth to become their own role models.

Swarthout-Steffen was nominated by the Ephreta, Wash., PFLAG chapter.

Jon Ivan Weaver -- who had worked hard to help bring the 1996 Olympics to Atlanta -- was one of the leaders in the successful effort to convince the Atlanta Olympics Committee to remove its volleyball games from Cobb County, Ga., because of the anti-gay resolution passed by the Cobb County Commissioners. Weaver and his business/life partner personally financed much of the effort to keep the Olympics out of Cobb County and their business has yet to recover fully from his devoting so much time and effort to the drive. Weaver, co-chair of the Out of Cobb Coalition, received hate mail and death threats for his efforts, but he never wavered, and for his efforts, he was selected one of the 1994 Pride Parade grand marshals.

Weaver was nominated by the Atlanta, Ga., PFLAG chapter.

Melvin Wheatley, 79, a retired Methodist bishop, faced a "heresy" trial in 1983 for his defense of a gay minister he had appointed to a Denver church with a substantial gay population. Wheatley "came out" as the parent of a gay son to his fellow bishops in 1980 and presented a beautiful plea to open their hearts to the reality of what gayness is. Although he was cleared of the charge in 1984, Wheatley and his wife, Lucile, had to deal with the death of their gay son that same year. Since his retirement, Wheatley, who now lives in Laguna Hills, Calif., has continued to work tirelessly to convince the church to change its stance regarding homosexuality and he turns down all opportunities to lead spiritual life workshops unless he is free to make it clear it is directed to gays and lesbians.

Wheatley was nominated by the Denver, Colo., PFLAG chapter.

Mel White is the author of *Stranger at the Gate*, his book about his years -- while still deeply in the closet -- as a ghost writer for Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Oliver North and other rightwing politician/religious leaders. White is now dean of the Cathedral of Hope Metropolitan Church in Dallas and works tirelessly to expose the anti-gay agenda of many of the religionist right leaders. White has been arrested in front of the White House while protesting the Clinton administration's lack of movement on gay and lesbian issues, and most recently, he was arrested at Robertson's university complex in Virginia in February 1995 when he refused to leave until Robertson agreed to meet with him.

White was nominated by the Sault Ste. Marie, Minn., PFLAG chapter.

Special recognition goes to PFLAG Waco, which nominated its entire chapter membership for the award in recognition of every individual PFLAG member's bravery in coming out as a parent, friend or family member of a gay or lesbian person. Although the entry did not qualify under the rules, which called for nomination of individuals, the Awards Committee wishes to thank PFLAG Waco for its entry.

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PFLAG Houston
Human Rights Award for Bravery Trophy

When Wesley Beard picks up his $2,500 check as the first recipient of the PFLAG Houston Human Rights Bravery Award, he will also receive a beautiful trophy that is a unique and powerful work of art.

Designed by Houston artist/designer Kelly Gayle Amen, the trophy consists of a simple but eloquent design in the shape of an equilateral triangle, similar to the pink triangle that has become the symbol of the gay and lesbian rights movement. It is cast in solid bronze, the same material Amen uses for his stunning world-famous KGA Metal furniture, by the prestigious Robinson Iron Co.

"I wanted the trophy to be more than a thing you place on your mantle or bookshelf where it sits and collects dust," Amen explained. "I wanted it to be something potent, something that people will be moved to hold, touch and caress -- and feel its power."

Indeed, PFLAG Houston members felt that power when the trophy was passed around during the group's January meeting. Members were encouraged to fondle and caress it -- and to bestow their energy and blessing on it.

Amen, who describes the triangle as "bright and beautiful," said he wanted the trophy to be a living, changing *objet d'art* in the sense that its skin, or surface, will constantly change in appearance in reaction to such things as atmospheric elements and people's body oils. Because of its ability to change, this trophy will indeed be unique, even though future trophies will be similar in design. And because so many PFLAG Houston members have touched it, they will have had a part in creating it.

Kelly Gayle Amen is one of Houston's most, exciting, prominent and sought-after designers. He is also a warm and giving human being. PFLAG Houston is pleased and honored to extend its thanks and appreciation to him for his generous and beautiful contribution.

Judges for the PFLAG Houston Human Rights Award for Bravery

Collie Conoley is an associate professor of educational psychology at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The father of three children, he has written and lectured extensively on educational psychology issues.

Harriet Dart is president and founder of PFLAG Detroit. She has served as Northeast Regional director, Central Regional director and vice president for chapter development for National PFLAG.

Brooks Egerton is an assistant city editor at the Dallas Morning News and is chairman of the Texas chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association.

Frances Farenthold is a distinguished visiting professor of law at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University. She is former president of Wells College and a former Democratic state representative.

Vicki Torres is a business writer for the Los Angeles Times. She is a board member of the Los Angeles NLGJA chapter and writes on lesbian and minority issues for the Los Angeles-based Lesbian News and for The Washington Blade in Washington, D.C.

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Did You Know?

The **PINK TRIANGLE** was worn by male homosexuals in the WWII Nazi concentration camps (similar to the yellow star worn by Jews). This symbol was reclaimed as a symbol of gay liberation. A Pink Triangle means never forget, never go back.

The **BLACK TRIANGLE** was worn by lesbians as well as other political and social misfits in the concentration camps. Although there is less documentation surrounding this symbol and the plight of lesbians during the holocaust, it is currently being reclaimed by lesbians as a symbol of liberation.

The **RAINBOW** is a symbol of lesbian/gay pride and of the diversity and many colors of the lesbian/gay community. The RAINBOW FLAG originated in the 70s in San Francisco's Castro area as an alternative to the American Flag. It is now a recognized symbol of pride throughout the United States and Europe. The colors are red for light, orange for healing, yellow for the sun, green for natural serenity, blue for harmony and purple for spirit.

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