

Thousands march in San Francisco

Thousands of candle-bearing marchers moved down Market Street from the Castro District to City Hall in San Francisco on Sunday, November 27, to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the assassinations of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk.

The march was peaceful and solemn, but some participants voiced bitterness and anger at the imminent release of Dan White. White is due to be released on January 6, 1984. Many marchers shouted "He got away with murder," as they neared City Hall.

The march drew a crowd estimated at 5000, some waiting to leave Harvey Milk Plaza at Castro and Market as others streamed into City Hall Plaza a mile away. The crowd attracted in equal numbers veteran lesbian and gay activists and newcomers in what has become an annual ritual.

One speaker at the rally which concluded the march, John Laird, newly elected gay mayor of Santa Cruz, California, said that Harvey Milk had been his inspiration, and after his death, Laird had resolved, "Nothing was going to stop me from being exactly what I wanted to be!"

The march may also have been in part in protest of the U.S. Justice Department's decision last week not to prosecute White on federal charges that he violated the rights of Moscone and Milk by killing them. Several people passed out flyers calling for a day of

protest when White is released. "There must be no business as usual" in San Francisco on that day, said one marcher. Protesters called for an outpouring of feeling between 1 and 1:15 p.m. on Friday, January 6.

Police said there was no tension or violence although riot police were on duty during the march and at the City Hall rally.

When the speakers were finished, hundreds of demonstrators left their candles flickering on a bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln at the left corner of City Hall, turning it into a temporary altar for peace.

Bostonians elect first gay councillor

David Scondras, a veteran community activist, was elected the first gay city councillor in Boston's history representing a district with a large gay and lesbian population.

A 103-vote margin out of 14,311 votes cast, led Scondras to victory over former Carter White House aide Mark Roosevelt.

Scondras credited a coalition of tenants, women, blacks, Hispanics and members of the lesbian and gay community for making his election possible. He also gave credit to "straight white males" after one of his supporters pointed this out during Scondras' victory speech.

Scondras' election was the result of a run-off held on November 15. In the campaign preceding the October 11 preliminary election two candidates from a field of four (Scondras and a former assistant district attorney) gained significant support from lesbians and gay men. According to *GCN* the split in support resulted from the Boston Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance endorsing no candidate in the preliminary election. Scondras did gain the endorsement from BL/GPA prior to the run-off election on November 15.

During the campaign for the run-off election both Roosevelt and Scondras spent con-

siderable effort outlining the differences between them. Roosevelt included a number of visible lesbian and gay men in his campaign efforts and gave strongly supportive answers to questions on issues of the gay and lesbian community. Scondras, however, pointed to his progressive politics and his identity as a gay man which, he said, better suited him to an understanding of those issues. Roosevelt raised considerably more money in his campaign than did Scondras; \$61,000 to Scondras' \$36,000.

— *Gay Community News*

Sullivan executed maintaining innocence

Robert A. Sullivan was put to death in Florida's electric chair on November 30, after spending more than ten years on death row for a murder he said he did not commit. He died with a plea for an end to "this monster of capital punishment."

Sullivan's case had earlier elicited a plea from Pope John Paul II, who had requested that Sullivan's life be spared for "humanitarian reasons." The pope's request was based on the church's stand against capital punishment, not on a question of guilt or innocence.

Convicted of the murder of a motel clerk in 1973, Sullivan had spent more time on death

row than any other current inmate. His attorneys fought to the end to spare his life.

Many observers contend that the defense of Sullivan, a gay man, was ineptly handled. He was defended by a public defender after his adopted father had refused to hire a lawyer to handle his case. And it wasn't until 1977 that his case was brought to the attention of an attorney who took an active interest in his plight.

Every attempt by Sullivan's new attorney, Roy Black, came to nothing. He was refused a new trial even after investigators turned up new evidence and testimony by alibi witnesses. All of his appeals were denied. And on November 30, 1983, he was executed by the State of Florida.

Navy officer dismissed for sodomy conviction

Commander Gerald M. Vanderwier, stripped of one of the Navy's prize commands, was convicted by a military judge last week of engaging in homosexual acts with an enlisted member of his crew. Vanderwier became the first known Navy officer to be found guilty of engaging in such a relationship with a member of his command.

The judge, Captain Maitland G. Freed, took only 15 minutes to find Vanderwier, a 19 year

veteran who earned one of the military's top decorations during the Vietnam war, guilty of three counts of sodomy.

Vanderwier was ordered dismissed from the service and to forfeit up to \$1,200 in pay. The case will be reviewed automatically by Vice Admiral Edward M. Briggs, head of Atlantic Fleet surface forces, and the Court of Military Review. It could then be appealed to the Court of Military Appeals.

The forfeiture in pay would not begin until the automatic reviews are completed, which could take a year. Vanderwier cannot be dismissed until and unless the verdict is upheld by the appeals court and the order signed by the Secretary of the Navy John Lehman. Dismissal, the equivalent of a dishonorable discharge for an enlisted sailor, would mean the loss of retirement benefits.

During the three-day court martial portions of a diary kept by Vanderwier's accuser, a hospital corpsman, were read as evidence of the commander's guilt.

According to Jeff Levy, spokesman for the National Gay Task Force, the military is currently processing 1800 cases of homosexual misconduct. The majority of pending actions against lesbians and gay men in the military, Levy said in a Pacifica Radio interview, are combined with charges of drug abuse. Levy also said that men in the military who become ill with AIDS have *ipso facto* engaged in acts of homosexuality.

The military has denied all allegations of engaging in a campaign of attrition against lesbians and gay men, although recent actions indicate that the opposite is true.

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