

Rape survivors memorial founded

Our war has never been declared and our veterans do not organize

BY KAMILA AL-NAJJAR

The word *rape* may evoke different images in different minds, but a commonly felt emotion among most women is fear and the desire for self-protection. Many women make decisions based upon the fear of rape — not taking a night class, not going on a late-night walk or run without a companion, even avoiding certain secluded places during the daytime hours. Although women do many things to protect themselves from rape, there is still no guarantee of safety. Many women are raped by someone with whom they are acquainted.

Because rape has become an integral part of the lives of women, a group of Portland women are taking a new approach to bring the subject to the forefront of public awareness. Zekra Brasher, Chari Chauvin, Leslie Haigh, Dorsie Hathaway and Carolyn Gage have formed the founding committee for the Women's Rape Museum Project.

Gage, an active member and one of the founders of the Portland Chapter of the National Organization for Women, said, "The idea of the Women's Rape Museum came to me in stages. I was reading the book *Shrapnel of the Heart*, which documents individuals' reactions to the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington, D.C. The memorial is a long black wall

carrying the 58,000 names of the men and women who died in Vietnam. Visitors leave flowers, letters and articles belonging to the soldiers on the ledge that runs under the names. These articles are collected and preserved in a special museum associated with the war memorial. Volunteer veterans staff the memorial 24 hours a day and assist people who need help handling their rage and grief. The testimonies in the book demonstrated the healing power of a ritual gathering place for survivors.

"I began to envision such a memorial for rape survivors. Our war has not only never been declared, but it has never even been acknowledged as war, and our veterans do not organize. As I worked with the idea of a rape memorial, I began to run into problems. Our victims are still alive and certainly do not want their names publicized. Also, our war is not over, and there is as much need for education and defense strategies as for grief and healing. I saw that a museum could combine these functions."

Gage encourages community involvement and support; persons interested may attend the Women's Rape Museum Project planning meeting on Sunday, June 19, from 7 to 8 pm, at the Portland NOW office, 2215 SE Division St. For more information, call 236-6341. •

Cretin banner sparks confrontation at Lloyd Center

The central mall area of Lloyd Center was the scene of a confrontation between members of the gay community and cretins petitioning to overturn Executive Order 87-20.

The cretins displayed a 10-foot banner emblazoned with *NO SPECIAL RIGHTS FOR HOMOSEXUALS*; also on display were Bibles and other anti-gay propaganda.

David Olstein, a gay man who complained about the anti-gay banner to Lloyd Center operations personnel, was himself banned from Lloyd Center property. Olstein reported that Bert Smith, Lloyd Center operations manager, called him a "faggot." Smith denied Olstein's claim.

Bob Stevens, Lloyd Center director of marketing and public relations, said that Lloyd Center is powerless to have the offensive banner removed from their property. "I find the sign being used offensive and unnecessary," Stevens commented. "Lloyd Center asked that the sign be removed and the petitioners refused, invoking the court order that allows them to be in the center."

The petitioners must gather more than 63,000 valid signatures by July 1, 1988, for the initiative to appear on the general-election ballot in November.

— Harold Moore



Rose Festival Court

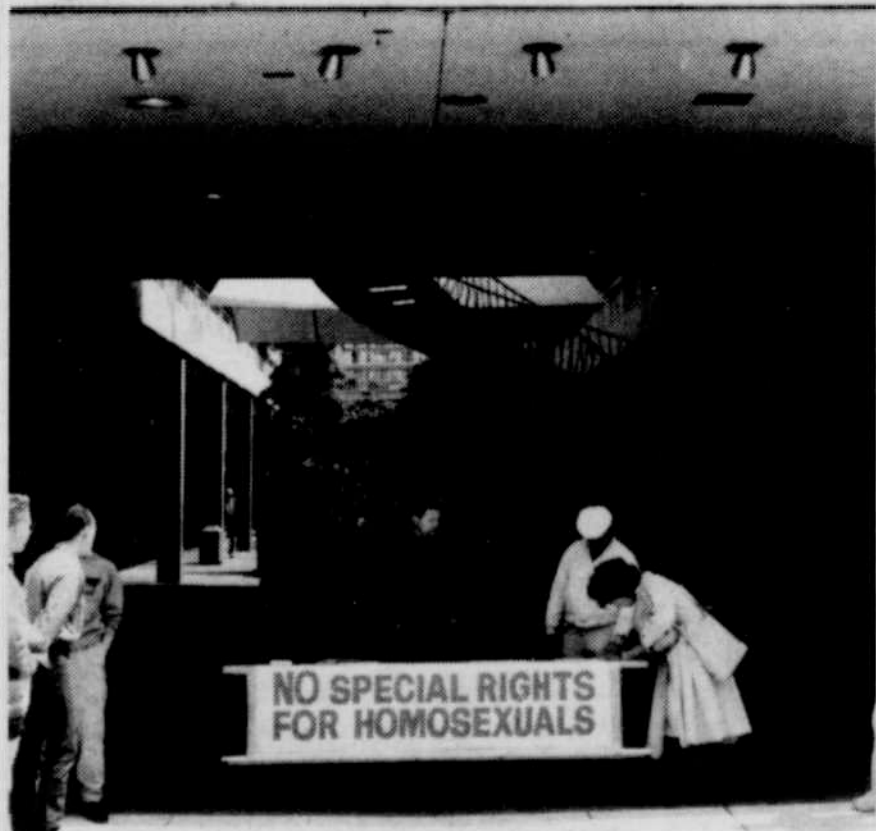


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