

national news

NEA bans discrimination

Gay and Lesbian Caucus sponsored a motion banning discrimination at recent convention, then helped it pass

The Gay and Lesbian Caucus of the National Education Association received overwhelming approval and support for several gay and lesbian issues that were brought before the more than 8,000 representatives of education attending this year's annual National Education Association convention held July 2-7 in Miami Beach, Florida. Three members of the caucus were from Oregon and Washington.

During the 1989 NEA convention, members of the NEA Gay and Lesbian Caucus sponsored and helped to pass a motion banning any organization or business that has discriminatory practices that are contrary to NEA's non-discrimination policies from exhibiting at the convention.

As a result, a booth promoting the Boy Scouts of America was removed from the NEA exhibit hall. The objection was based on the Boy Scouts' discriminatory practices on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, and religion, accord-

ing to members of the caucus. They have discriminated against gays and lesbians by not allowing them to be members or leaders in their organization.

Military branches have also been prevented from setting up exhibits because of the same NEA policy.

Among the other successes were adoption of three motions. The first calls for an advertising ban in all NEA publications by organizations or businesses that have discriminatory practices.

Second, the convention approved funds to conduct training programs for educators around the country on how to better serve and meet the needs of gay and lesbian youth.

And finally, the delegates adopted a motion calling for the association to develop and distribute a database of information dealing with gay and lesbian anti-discrimination policies and contract language used by school districts and higher education institutions.

Lesbians and gays sue

Case against University of Chicago has national importance

by Rex Wockner

A gay couple, represented by Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, sued the University of Chicago June 25 over its refusal to grant gay and lesbian couples spousal benefits.

The two men, who remain anonymous because of aggressive harassment of gays on the campus this year, demand spousal access to university library and recreation facilities for non-student domestic partners of U. of C. students.

The complaint was lodged with the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, charging violation of the city Human Rights Ordinance, which bans "public accommodations" from discriminating based on sexual orientation or marital status.

The university's own anti-discrimination policies also protect gays and lesbians from such treatment. But in response to written demands from Lambda, the university stated, "Given the

substantial costs and heavy usage of the libraries and athletic facilities by employees and students themselves, we believe the current policies are justified by circumstances and consistent with our legal obligations."

Lambda charged, however, that the university allows "patrons" and corporations to use its libraries and recreation facilities despite the fact that they have no other formal relationship with the institution.

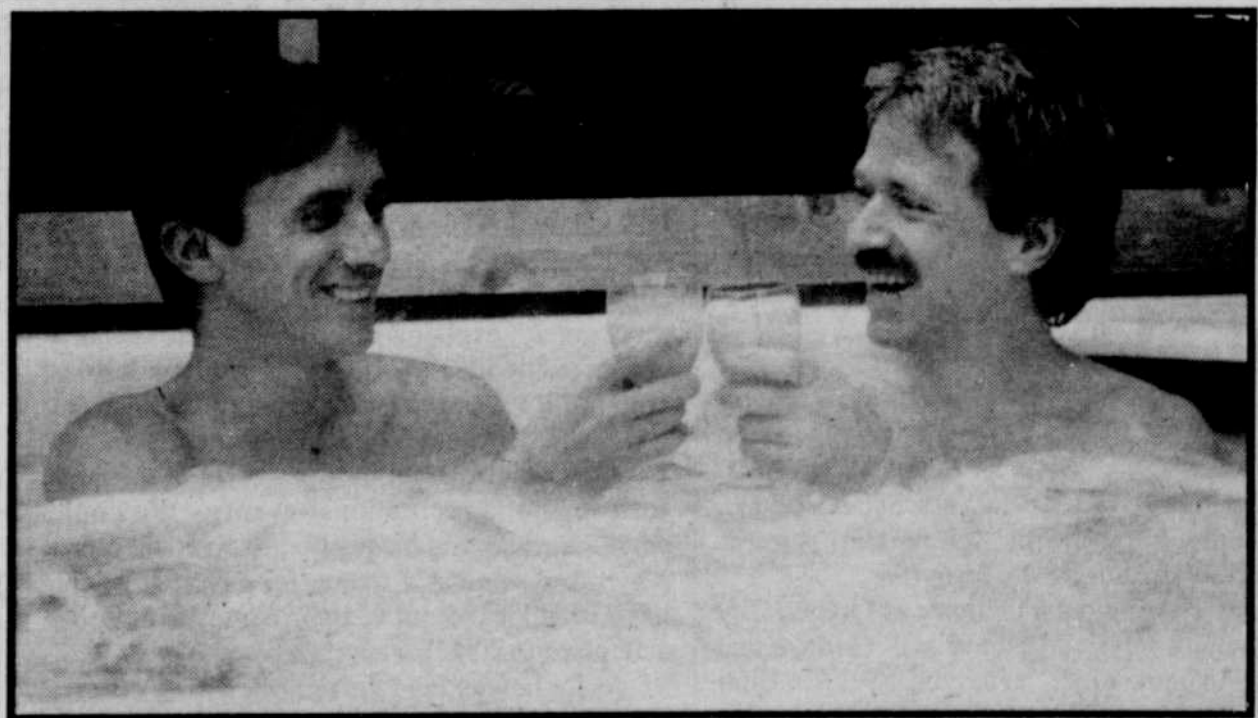
Lambda lawyer Paula Ettelbrick described the case as "part of a national effort to establish equality for unmarried domestic partners and, in particular, for lesbian and gay couples, who are not allowed to marry."

Among the universities that currently treat gay and lesbian partners as equal to unmarried heterosexuals are Stanford, Princeton and the New York University Law School.

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