

PFLAG gets high-powered legal help

Hogan & Hartson LLP, a prominent District of Columbia law firm, has agreed to provide Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays pro bono legal assistance in PFLAG's battle with Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network.

Hogan and Hartson attorneys will deal with First Amendment issues raised by CBN's legal threats against television stations that air ads from PFLAG's "Project Open Mind," a national and grass-roots outreach campaign to fight the spread of homophobic hate speech and activities. The campaign was launched in November in Washington, D.C., Houston, Atlanta and Tulsa. The first television ads featured anti-gay statements by Robertson, Jerry Falwell and Sen. Jesse Helms paired with images of gay-bashing and gay-related teen suicide.

Robertson and CBN threatened legal action to prevent the ads from airing. Television stations have refused to run the ads in the wake of CBN's legal threats.

Kristine Chatwood

Supreme Court asked to review job bias case

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund filed a petition in December asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review a decision by a Pennsylvania state court in a dispute concerning the terms of an employment contract.

Daniel Miller, a certified public accountant, was employed by Demuth Management Consultants for five years. He was fired in 1990 when his employer, Donald L. Demuth, discovered Miller is gay. Years earlier, Miller had signed an employment contract with Demuth which included a clause that stated "homosexuality" was "cause" for discharge. Another clause in the contract provided for hefty penalties if any of Demuth's clients took their business to Miller after his termination.

After the firing, Miller started his own business. Demuth subsequently sued Miller to invoke the latter clause. The judgment found in favor of Demuth. Miller was subjected to a penalty of more than \$100,000.

Pennsylvania law does not prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Kristine Chatwood

Frank introduces medical marijuana bill

A bill to regulate the medical use of marijuana was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on Nov. 10 by Barney Frank (D-Mass.). HR 2816 is being co-sponsored by four other Democratic members of Congress.

The bill would reclassify marijuana from a Schedule I "no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States" medicine to a tightly controlled Schedule II medicine under the Controlled Substance Act.

"It is cruel to deny a proven, safe and helpful remedy to people who are seriously ill," Frank said. "More addictive, expensive and less-efficient narcotics are regularly prescribed by physicians, and the ban on allowing marijuana to be included in the list has no reasonable basis."

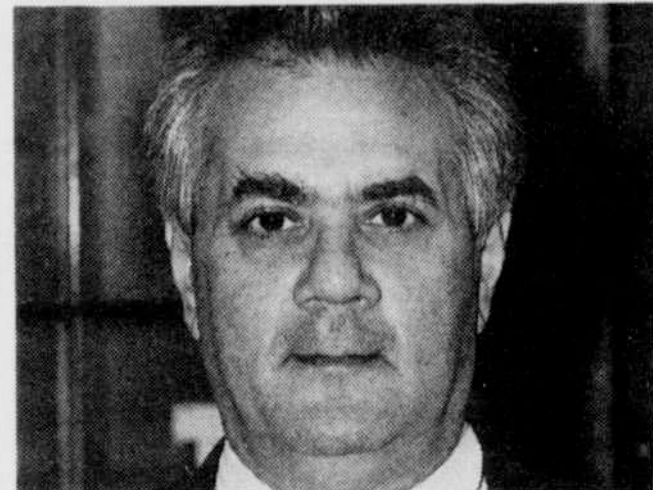
Advocates claim that marijuana is equal or superior to other treatment options—in terms of effectiveness, dosage control and cost—for alleviating a variety of medical conditions. Most important to the lesbian and gay community is its use as an appetite stimulant to treat AIDS wasting syndrome and to combat the effects of nausea associated with radiation- or chemotherapy used in treating Kaposi's sarcoma, breast and other forms of cancer.

The bill is modeled after one first introduced in 1981 by Rep. Stuart McKinney (R-Conn.) and then co-sponsored by many other Republicans, includ-

ing Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.). No one yet has asked Gingrich to co-sponsor this version. The most significant change is to add AIDS wasting syndrome and spastic conditions to the list of diseases approved for use.

Log Cabin Republicans spokesman David Greer said "the medicinal purposes have been validated." He urged Republicans to support the bill.

Robert Kampia, director of government relations for the Marijuana Policy Project, is "excited" by introduction of the bill. But he admits "it is going to be tough to make this a priority for any committee to hold hearings because there are so many other things going on." He hopes hearings will take place next year.



Barney Frank

He sees the Judiciary Committee as a favorable venue. Frank is a member of that committee, and its chair, Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), "understood that marijuana did have some medical benefits and he seemed to think it was not an outrageous idea to make it medically available," said Kampia. Subcommittee Chair Bill McCollum (R-Fla.) co-sponsored the original bill in 1981.

Frank, in a keynote address to the National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws in September 1994, called this "probably the most important undiscussed issue that we have. The fear to talk about this is so great that even when you do talk about it, people don't pay much attention."

"Medical marijuana is one of the easiest public-policy issues I've ever heard," Frank said. "For the government of the United States to deny a doctor's right to prescribe what he thinks is best for that patient is wholly at variance with most of the principles my colleagues profess."

He vowed "to continue to try to shame my colleagues into changing this policy."

Bob Roehr

Ithaca denies gay marriage license request

The city of Ithaca, N.Y., spent several months considering the request by two gay men for a marriage license before finally deciding it just wasn't ready to make the commitment. In a legal memorandum, City Attorney Charles Guttman passed the buck to the New York State Health Department, which oversees licensing, when he noted that the Health Department had stated that "city clerks should not issue a marriage license to persons of the same sex."

Phillip G. and Toshav Storrs, the couple that applied for the license, called Guttman's statement a "cop-out." They are considering a lawsuit to compel the granting of a license, reports the *New York Times* News Service.

The mayor, the city attorney and the Ithaca Common Council all supported issuing the license. Although the city decided it did not have the authority to issue the license, Guttman wrote, "Denying same-sex couples an equal right to choose a marital partner renders their unions legally invisible and deprives them of the panoply of practical day-to-day rights, duties and benefits that are linked, often exclusively, to official marital status. Interference with their right to marry also means that society as a whole is deprived of a way of stabilizing and reinforcing their valuable family unions."

Kristine Chatwood

SERIOUS INJURY & DEATH CLAIMS resulting from:

- Auto accidents
- Medical Malpractice
- Unsafe Products

Free Consultation

No Attorney Fee Unless You Recover

295-1940

621 SW Morrison, #1218



Hala Gores
Attorney at Law

I AM COMMITTED TO MAXIMIZING YOUR RECOVERY

Problems with your dream house?

We can help!

Arts & Crafts Construction

*specializing in repair & remodeling
of period houses*

call Steve at
648 6968 or 1 800 684 9038

licensed/bonded/insured CCB # 107844



Sometimes
you just
want
to be
left
alone.

But having HIV isn't one of those times. It's when you could use some help. If you or someone you know has HIV, call us. We can get you medical care and caring people to talk to. We can help with housing, food and medicine. You don't have to have money or insurance. You don't even have to tell us your name to find what's here for you. Just call us.

Oregon AIDS Hotline

1-800-777-2437

Partnership Project

295-0211

you don't
have to
do this
alone.