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national news

Rainbow Endowment donates \$50,000

The Rainbow Endowment, the nonprofit organization that contributes funds collected from use of the Rainbow Card, the VISA credit card targeted to the gay and lesbian community, announced that it has donated over \$50,000 to six organizations serving that community. The announcement was made by Martina Navratilova, spokeswoman for the Rainbow Endowment.

The beneficiary organizations are the AIDS Information Network, Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation, the Community Research Initiative on AIDS, the National Breast Cancer Coalition, the National Lesbian and Gay Health Association and the National Center for Lesbian Rights. Each group received \$8,500.

"Initial cardholder support of the Rainbow Card has been tremendous," said Navratilova. "Each of us working on the Rainbow Card program are grateful for the overwhelming support that we've received from the lesbian and gay community and the opportunity to give back to our community in such a significant way. These early contributions are a tribute to all of the cardholders who have responded so enthusiastically to the Rainbow program and to the needs of the community."

Gantt challenges Helms again

Harvey Gantt, a North Carolina architect and the former mayor of Charlotte, announced in February that he will run for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Jesse Helms. Gantt lost his 1990 bid to unseat Helms; during that campaign Helms unleashed a racially charged ad campaign attack against Gantt.

Gantt, 52, is running on a platform of economic security, investment in job security, wages, education, health care and the reordering of priorities in an era of smaller government.

His first task this election year is to win the Democratic primary. He faces Charles Sanders, a physician and businessman who resigned last May as chairman of the pharmaceutical company Glaxo Inc., to run for the Senate. The North Carolina primary takes place May 12.

National lesbian PAC debuts

A group of lesbians meeting in Washington, D.C., in January launched the first national political action committee that seeks to involve more lesbians in politics and bring lesbian issues to the forefront of the political arena.

The National Lesbian Political Action Committee's immediate plans are to raise as much money as possible to contribute to candidates in the November election.

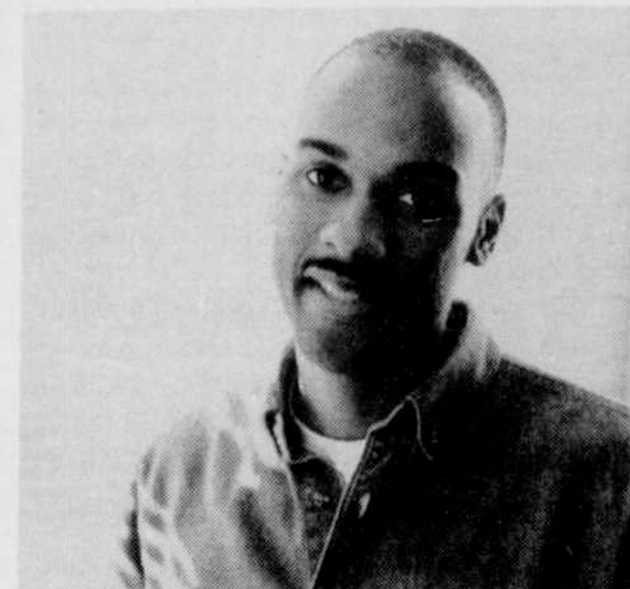
"I have big plans for this organization to become very, very large between now and November," Mindy Daniels, NLPAC's volunteer executive director, told *The Washington Blade*. "After the elections, we will evaluate our internal structure and [consider] branching out into other functions [such as] education and the training of new leadership. Ultimately we would like to have a board of directors that is representative nationally. But the main focus in an election year is raising money and getting it back out."

Black gay and lesbian conference held

The Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum hosted the ninth annual National Black Lesbian and Gay Conference in February in Dallas. Approximately 500 lesbians, gay men and bisexuals

attended the event.

Several honors were presented at the annual Awards Banquet. The late Essex Hemphill was posthumously awarded the James Baldwin Black Quill Award. The award for Organization of the Year was presented to the Lesbian Support Group of Washington, D.C. Bishop Carl Bean, founder of the Unity Fellowship Movement, received the first Carl Bean Spirituality Award.



Keith Boykin, executive director of the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum

Keynote speakers included Patricia Fleming, national AIDS policy director; Mandy Carter, political activist; and New York health activist Jacquie Bishop.

GLAMA calls for nominations

The Gay/Lesbian American Music Awards is soliciting nominations for its annual awards to be presented in October in New York City. Ten awards will be presented. Recordings by self-identified gay, lesbian or bisexual artists released for sale in the United States between June 1, 1995, and May 31, 1996, are eligible for nomination.

GLAMA was begun in 1995 by Michael Mitchell and Tom McCormack. It is the only national music awards program to honor the work of gay, lesbian and bisexual recording artists.

"Many artists have been overlooked by major labels and radio because they're gay or the content of their material is expressly queer. We want to bring this music to a larger audience," McCormack said.

The deadline for entries is May 31, 1996. Final nominees will be announced on Aug. 8.

To receive an entry application, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-sized envelope to GLAMA, 244 Fifth Ave., Suite 2049, New York, NY 10016, 1-800-956-5262 or (212) 592-4455.

SNL lays an egg

Saturday Night Live, the long-running television show that prides itself on pushing the limits of acceptable humor, crossed the line during its Feb. 24 show.

During the "Weekend Update" segment of that night's show, cast regular Norm MacDonald, commenting on the recent death sentence of John Lotter, who was convicted of murder in the death of Brandon Teena, a 20-year-old transsexual man and two of his friends, said, "In Nebraska, a man was sentenced for killing a female cross-dresser [sic] who had accused him of rape, and two of her friends. Excuse me if this sounds harsh, but in my mind, they all deserved to die."

Following the show, members of The Transsexual Menace-NYC contacted NBC, the network that broadcasts *Saturday Night Live*. Although several people at the network responded to the complaints, NBC declined to issue an apology or a retraction, stating that it is not network policy to do so.

Compiled by Kristine Chatwood

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