

RTP re-dubbed

*The civil rights group will continue to fight the good fight—
but under a new name*

by Inga Sorenen

The year was 1981. Ronald Reagan was president. AIDS, more commonly known as the "gay plague," began to register, albeit just barely, as a blip on the cultural and clinical radar screens.

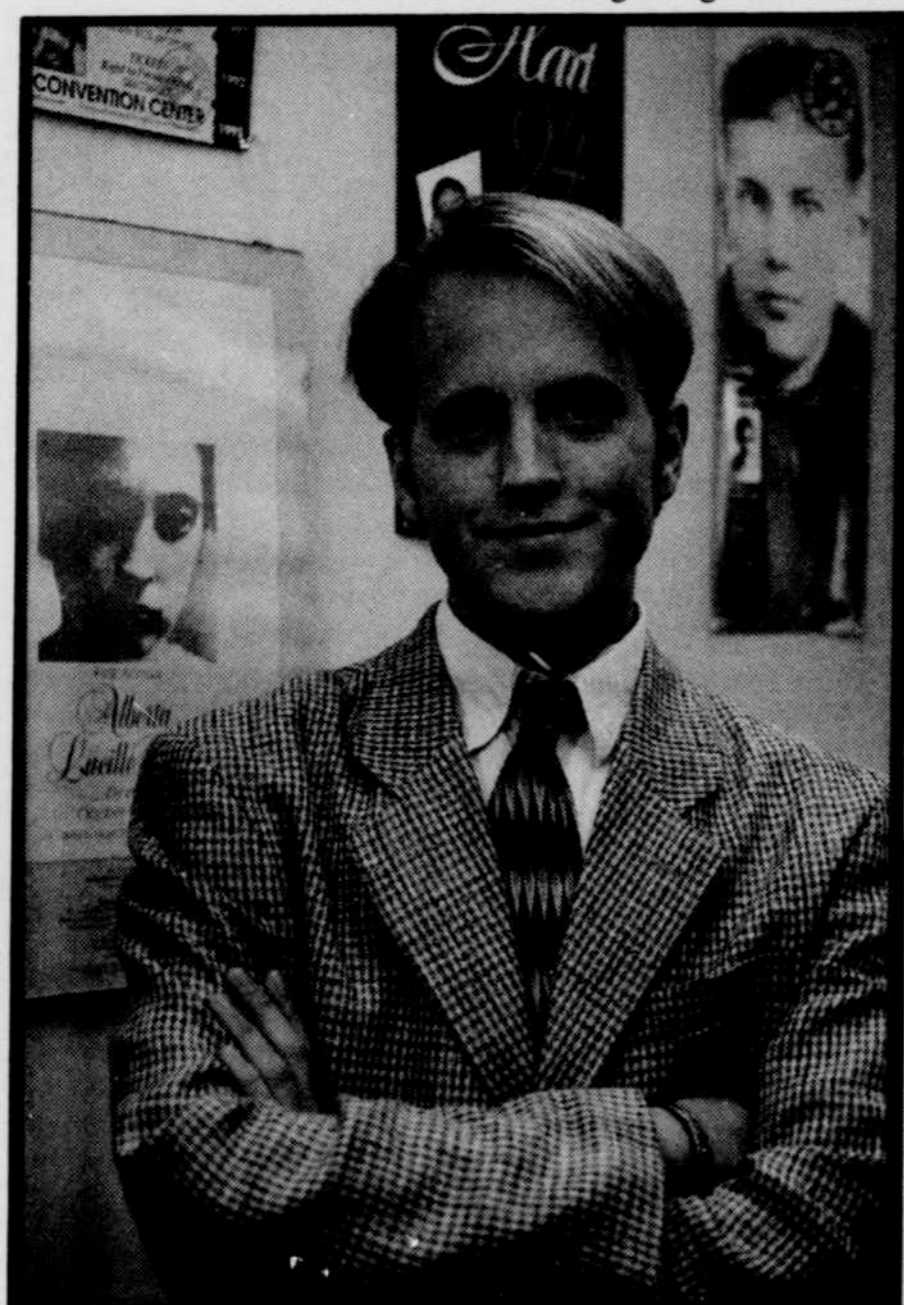
Openly gay and lesbian politicians were virtually nonexistent.

"Times were definitely different back then. We as a movement have come so far," says Barry Pack, executive director of what was formerly known as Right to Privacy, Oregon's largest gay, lesbian and bisexual political organization.

In order to reflect just how far gay men and lesbians have come, Right to Privacy has changed its name to Right to Pride and touts the new slogan: "Working for Full Equality in Oregon."

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RTP Executive Director Barry Pack

In fact, in recent years RTP has come under fire from critics who felt the group's name somehow connoted a community cowering behind closed doors.

"Many people of my generation have never been private. We came out and immediately got politically active," he says. "I think we're seeing a lot more of that in the gay and lesbian community."

According to Pack, RTP's board of directors last seriously considered a name change in 1991. Then came Ballot Measure 9.

"We put our time and energy into fighting anti-gay ballot initiatives," he says. "Everything else really had to be placed on hold."

This year—the first in four—there is no statewide initiative specifically targeting gay men and lesbians. Five openly gay, lesbian or bisexual lawmakers serve in the Oregon Legislature. Same-

sex marriage is a concept that is seriously discussed. Queer television and movie characters keep popping up.

"The time was simply right for this," says Pack, adding he hopes Right to Pride will attract a diverse volunteer base, one spanning generations.

That is critical, he says, given that RTP has had adjust to campaign finance reforms placing limits on how much money political action committees can hand out.

RTP's name change is the group's second recent notable alteration. A few months ago, RTP announced it was dropping the name of its long-time flagship fund-raiser, previously known as the Lucille Hart Dinner. Now the autumn event is known as the RTP Dinner. The switch came following criticisms from transsexual rights advocates.

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