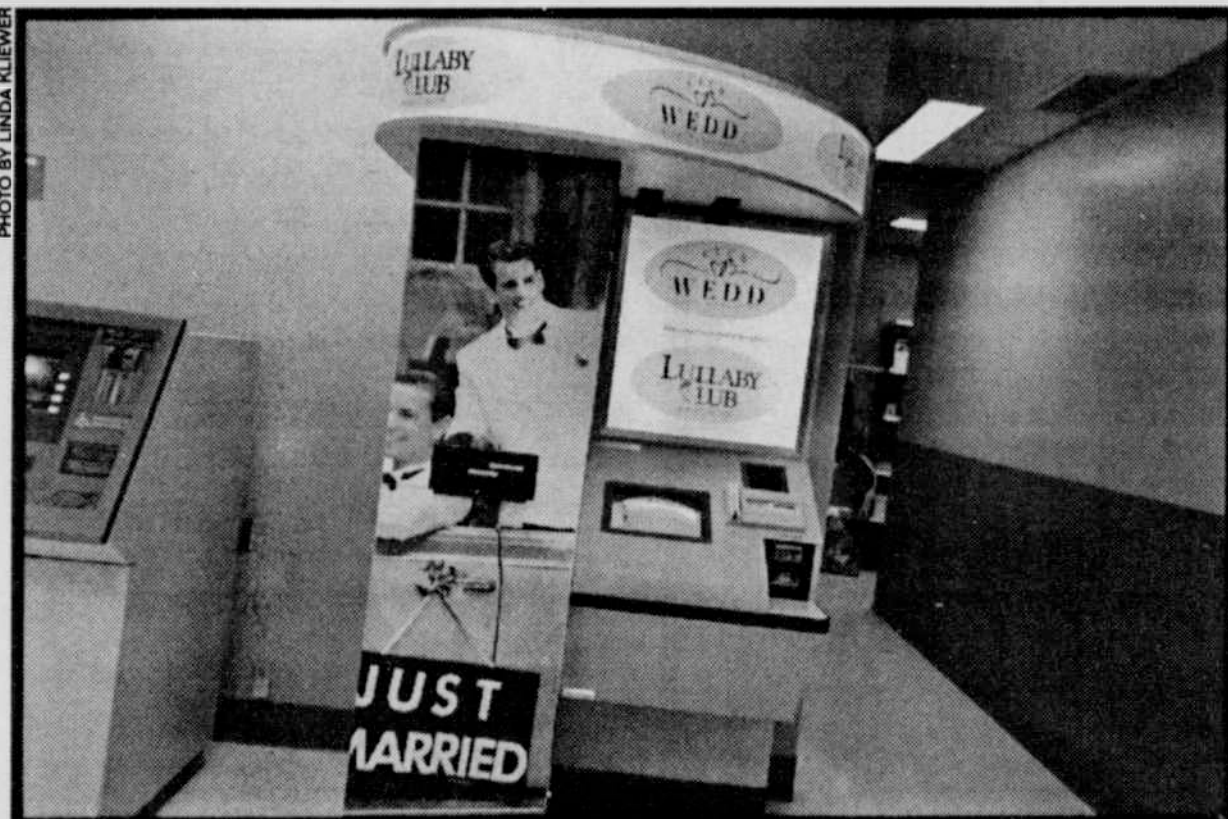


NATIONAL news

MART SMARTS

Discount store shopping this holiday season? Here are a few queer facts to consider before handing over the green by Gip Plaster



Target Stores Inc. clearly has more gay-friendly policies than its closest competitors, but the apparently just-married men advertising the wedding gift registry at Target in Clackamas, Ore., suggest the friendliness might go beyond mere policies

While some gay and lesbian people have caviar taste, they—and other queers—still shop discount. Unfortunately, there is no shining star among the top three discount store chains when it comes to gay-friendliness.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., is the No. 1 discount chain in sales. In fact, it is the largest retailer in the world. It's bigger than Sears, Kmart and J.C. Penney combined, and has more than 800,000 employees.

In 1992, President George Bush awarded a Presidential Medal of Freedom to Sam Walton, the now-famous, baseball-cap-wearing founder of Wal-Mart, who died that same year.

"We're all working together—that's the secret," Walton said as he accepted the medal. "And we'll lower the cost of living for everyone, not just in America, but we'll give the world an opportunity to see what it's like to save and have a better lifestyle, a better life for all."

Wal-Mart officials seemed reluctant, however, to respond to questions concerning any policies the company has to create a better work environment for lesbian and gay employees. After more than a week of attempts to contact the appropriate representative of the company, a spokesperson issued a statement that failed to specifically address any such questions. It did, however, confirm that Wal-Mart does not provide protection on the basis of sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination policy.

After spelling out the company's policy, the statement, attributed to Les Copeland, director of public relations, continued: "Our EEO policy mentions only those classifications (i.e., race, gender, etc.) which are specified in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination Act. However, it should be noted that Wal-Mart simply does not discriminate against anyone."

While Wal-Mart officials did answer a request for more information, they again refused to specifically answer questions about whether the company offers domestic partner benefits or provides a networking or support group for gay and lesbian employees. Other sources said the company does not provide those opportunities. The company did not answer an additional request for more information.

In 1962, the same year Walton began Wal-Mart, the S.S. Kresge Company, now Kmart Corp., opened the first Kmart.

Now, 80 percent of the U.S. public lives within 15 minutes of a Kmart store, according to the company's promotional materials. (In case someone asks, the promo info also claims Kmart sells enough paint each year to paint a foot-wide strip around the globe 35 times.)

Like Wal-Mart, Kmart does not include sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination policy nationwide, although company spokesperson Mary Lorentz says Kmart complies with all local laws barring sexual orientation discrimination.

The company does not provide domestic partner benefits or have a gay and lesbian employees group.

When asked if Kmart had any marketing programs specifically aimed at lesbian and gay customers, Lorentz offered: "Other than offering great products at great prices to everyone, the answer is no. But the answer is yes in the sense that we offer great products to everyone."

She adds, "Our marketing and advertising is national and general."

But Lorentz did concede Kmart has recently started targeting Hispanics and African Americans via some of its advertising.

Officials for Target Stores Inc., the No. 3 discount store chain, take pride in the fact that they were born of a department store, not a dime store. Consumers sometimes notice this subtle difference—the chain is known for offering somewhat more upscale products. Target accounts for about 75 percent of the sales of its parent company, Dayton Hudson, which also operates Mervyn's California.

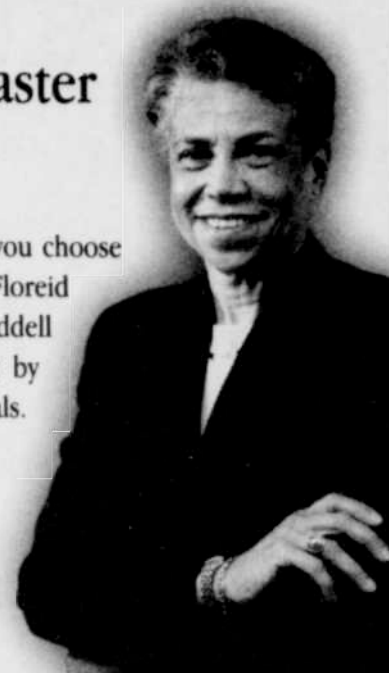
Target does not offer domestic partner benefits, but the phrase "sexual orientation" is included in the company's nondiscrimination policy.

Target also has a networking group for gay and lesbian employees at its headquarters in Minneapolis, but there is no program in place for gay and lesbian store employees, according to a company spokesperson.

So it appears that while the top two discount store chains offer no policies to protect gay and lesbian employees or enhance the work environment, the No. 3 chain is, shall we say, slightly more on target.

What Helps Money Grow Faster Than Anything? Trust.

The only thing more important than the investments you choose is the financial advisor with whom you choose to work. Floreid Walker has over 12 years of experience and is one of Waddell & Reed's top senior advisors. She'll earn your trust by listening and evaluating your financial needs and goals. Call for a consultation today.



FLOREID WALKER
Senior Financial Advisor
503.238.6036
800.487.6626
Voicemail: 503.291.7713
www.waddell.com

Waddell & Reed
FINANCIAL SERVICES

Let us show you what a Roth IRA can mean to you!

Is a Roth IRA right for you? Find out if it fits into your retirement planning strategy. Call your personal financial advisor from **Waddell & Reed** and we'll explain:

- Contribution limits
- Withdrawal provisions
- Converting your old IRA into a Roth IRA

Waddell & Reed

FINANCIAL SERVICES

The people with a plan for you.

www.waddell.com

FLOREID WALKER
Senior Financial Advisor

503.238.6036
800.487.6626
Voicemail: 503.291.7713
500 N.E. Multnomah, Suite 278
Portland, OR 97232

Member SIPC



FREE voice personals

premiering Jan. 8!

See page 42 for more information.

NEW USERS WELCOME

GET THE LATEST
News, Sports, Summer Events & 50K

Internet Access

SpiritOne
www.SpiritOne.com

UNLIMITED ACCESS
\$19⁹⁵/MO • \$99⁰⁰/6 MOS

NO START UP FEES • CALL TODAY

503-240-8200
E-mail: info@SpiritOne.com
7302 N Richmond Ave • Portland OR 97203
fax 503-240-8205

LOCALLY OWNED • SERVING PORTLAND & VANCOUVER

See my Exclusive Listings on our webpage

<http://www.pru-nw.com>

JEWEL A. ROBINSON
Multimillion \$ Producer

Prudential
Northwest Properties

OFFICE
(503) 281-4040

VOICE MAIL
(503) 301-4283

E-MAIL
Jewel2U@teleport.com

1730 N.E. 10th Avenue
Portland, OR 97212