

BRO NAMES NEW DIRECTOR

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After finishing her four-year term, Thorpe decided not to seek re-election but instead to turn her attention back to grassroots activism. She accepted a position as field organizer for the Empire State Pride Agenda, which is New York's equivalent to BRO.

"I found making change from the outside to be a more dynamic and interesting process," she said. "I admire the people who are committed elected officials who actually do the voting on our issues, but I personally prefer making change from the other side of the aisle."

Among her accomplishments was a statewide hate crimes bill, which was approved last year. She then worked to draft and pass Ithaca's ordinance, which was New York's first piece of protective legislation to include transgendered people.

Thorpe also has more than 10 years of experience in nonprofit administration. Since 1995, she has served as executive director of Ithaca Community Childcare Center, which has a \$1.6 million budget and 70 staff members.

Her only previous visit to Oregon left a lasting impression. Last October, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force dispatched her to Portland for two weeks to assist with the No on 9 Campaign.

Thorpe trained phone-banking volunteers and organized a successful press conference for teachers. She immediately noticed the diverse coalition of support from both straight and gay Oregonians.

"There was a real blurring of the lines," she said. "The people who were not gay were just as committed and just as passionate about the cause."

Thorpe also found Oregonians' strong sense of identity compelling. Because Ithaca is a college town, many of its residents stay only for a short time.

However, she said, the state of New York as a whole has a striking similarity to Oregon: They both wrestle with the clash caused

when liberal cities are surrounded by small towns. "I'm very comfortable doing work in both the progressive urban centers and in the rural areas."

Thorpe is excited to hear that BRO is devoting renewed energy toward pro-gay legislation rather than just playing defense against homophobic attacks. "It's extremely important for a community to not always be under siege...so that you're not always defending your own turf but that you're actually able to envision moving forward."

Although the Oregon Citizens Alliance makes our state seem like a hotbed of constant



Roey Thorpe introduces herself during the Oregonians Against Discrimination Luncheon

controversy, she said New York is no different. "There's just as much nastiness...but it takes place in the Legislature. We don't have a ballot measure process."

Thorpe had little time to recover from the lively luncheon. A nonstop trail of well-wishers approached her afterward, and she said she wants to reconnect with them after she comes on board as executive director.

"Once I'm here for a period of time I'll really have the chance to sit down and spend time with people," she said. "I'm hoping to do a lot of listening in the first several months."

The next item on the agenda of Thorpe's whirlwind swing through Portland: apartment hunting for her and her cat, Jitterbug. Then it's back to Ithaca, where she said she'll be busy saying goodbye to dear friends, amazing activists and a supportive gay community. But she has no doubt she'll find similar allies here.

"I'm very excited about this," she said. "I know I'm going to meet great people here and do good work." ☐

2001: A RACE ODYSSEY

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must take a leadership role in maintaining and expanding civil rights protections. County residents must be protected in the areas of sexual orientation and gender identity for housing, employment and public accommodations.

2. I have taken a leadership role in defeating Measures 9, 13 and 9 again. I am an advocate for school health clinics. Students must have access to quality services without fear. They must also be allowed to form student clubs to help promote understanding and a stronger sense of community. I have long been a member of the National Education Association Gay and Lesbian Caucus advancing the agenda of civil rights and recognition for the contributions of all people.

3. Lon Mabon and his ilk are not going away. We must not let down our guard in the protection of our rights. Additionally, we must continue to expand access to affordable health care for the most vulnerable and work to enlighten our community to the value of all of our neighbors.

JOHN SWEENEY

1. Multnomah County can lead by example. That means fair treatment for all.

2. I have tried to treat all people fairly! During the Vietnam War I was in the Oregon Army National Guard. So I know what it's like to be on the short end.

3. They need to promote a better image to the general public. ☐



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