



Trans activist Terrienne Summers (left) protests at Winn-Dixie corporate offices Jan. 5 in Jacksonville, Fla.

FLORIDA

Equality Florida and other organizations have called on law enforcement agencies to investigate fully the possibility that the Dec. 12 murder of trans activist Terrienne Summers was a hate crime. The 51-year-old reportedly was shot to death in the back of the head after parking in the driveway of her Jacksonville home.

Police suspect it was an attempted robbery, but Summers' purse was not taken from the car. Authorities have not identified any suspects.

"As a leader of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, when someone is an open transgender activist, I have to wonder about the possibility of it being a hate crime," Cindy Watson, Jacksonville Area Minority Youth Network executive director. "We know transgender people are targeted more than any other group in the gay, lesbian and bisexual community."

A retired Navy lieutenant commander with 22 years of service, Summers was a leader in the trans community and active in the fight for human rights with several organizations. She is survived by a wife and two children.

"Terrienne was always quick with a smile and eager to help others," said fellow trans activist and friend Jessica Archer, Equality Florida media and outreach director. "She showed tremendous courage to be out and active in a part of the state where transgender people are highly misunderstood and are gen-

erally afraid of being visible."

Monica Helms, director of the Atlanta-based advocacy group Trans=Action, told the *Florida Times-Union* that Summers organized a protest against Winn-Dixie in January. The supermarket chain had fired employee Peter Oiler for off-duty cross-dressing.

"Terrienne's family, friends and the Jacksonville community deserve to know if this crime is being investigated in a thorough and technically proficient manner," Archer said. "The Justice for Terrienne Coalition is calling upon the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office to investigate the murder of Terrienne in a vigorous and professional manner and to maintain open and clear lines of communication with community representatives."

MICHIGAN

An arbitrator has ordered a school district to apologize for misconduct against two gay teachers whose gay history month displays promoted safety and respect, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund said Dec. 4.

Paul E. Glendon found Plymouth-Canton Community Schools had violated its union contract as well as one instructor's constitutional right of free speech. In addition, he determined the district discriminated against the teachers because of their sexual orientation and subjected them to unwarranted public harassment.

Instructors Mike Chiumento and Tom Salbenblatt challenged an order that they dismantle school displays commemorating the historical role of gay men and lesbians and addressing harassment. The displays were in keeping with Plymouth-Salem High's theme of respect and dignity for all.

Similar gay history month displays had been created by a staff member who is not gay. When Chiumento and Salbenblatt created displays at their schools in 1999, however, the interim superintendent and members of the board of education attacked them for supposedly "promoting" their personal "lifestyles."

Salbenblatt decided to create the display when the parent of one gay student came to him, asking what he could do to help create a safer, more welcoming environment. The parent later said the display positively affected the child by showing contributions gay people have made throughout history. However, when the district ordered removal of the display, the student began noticing more anti-gay slurs and harassment at school.

"For a school to have a campaign of 'respect and dignity for all' that excludes lesbian and gay



Plymouth-Salem High School alum Bree Pastaleniec (left, with friend Becky Murray) says the controversy "really makes us look bad"

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