



PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

Lowe attends the Oregonians Against Discrimination Luncheon on April 10

ELLEN LOWE
by Heather Hybarger

Ellen Lowe received death threats and nearly was run off the road while serving as the spokeswoman for 1992's No on 9 Campaign.

She knew she was doing the right thing, though, and continued to be the voice of reason in the struggle for human equality that year. She donated her time again when the Oregon Citizens Alliance pushed 1994's Measure 13.

Lowe, 71, is now a public policy consultant. She chooses her contracts carefully, always striving for ways to make her vision of Oregon a reality.

She has been an advocate for the poor and for the environment. She also has worked for the faith community as an Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon board member.

When she joined No on 9 in '92, Lowe says she just was beginning to understand the weight of the issues against the queer community.

"I had some knowledge of the difficulty that the sexual minorities were faced with when it came to inheritance, custody of children—the legal impediments," she says. "I was just beginning to understand what it really meant in terms of stability."

Lowe was discouraged to discover discrimination affected retirement benefits as well as the rights, responsibilities and protections of a legal marriage.

"That really awakened me to the existing injustices," she says. "It seemed so unfair to me. Things I took for granted, to deny people who had the same kind of commitment that my husband and I had. It went against my sense of fairness."

Lowe took a lot of flak from the faith community for her stance on the issues. "People questioned how I could call myself a Christian and still believe in basic human rights for everybody," she says.

She learned from her parents and passed on to her children the importance of human equal-

ity. She saw her mother and father being politically active in their community, and in turn her kids saw her being a force for change in Oregon.

Lowe says she always had the support of her family. But people made assumptions about them when she became vocal on queer issues.

"I remember during the first [Measure 9], the assumption of many people was that I had a child that was [gay] or a brother or sister," she says. "They kept saying, 'You must have someone in your family,' and I would answer, 'Not that I'm aware of.' They had a hard time transferring what I was doing as promoting the equality of basic human rights."

Her philosophy rests on the principle of the slippery slope.

"I think once you begin to erode rights of any particular group you endanger the rights of everyone"

—Ellen Lowe

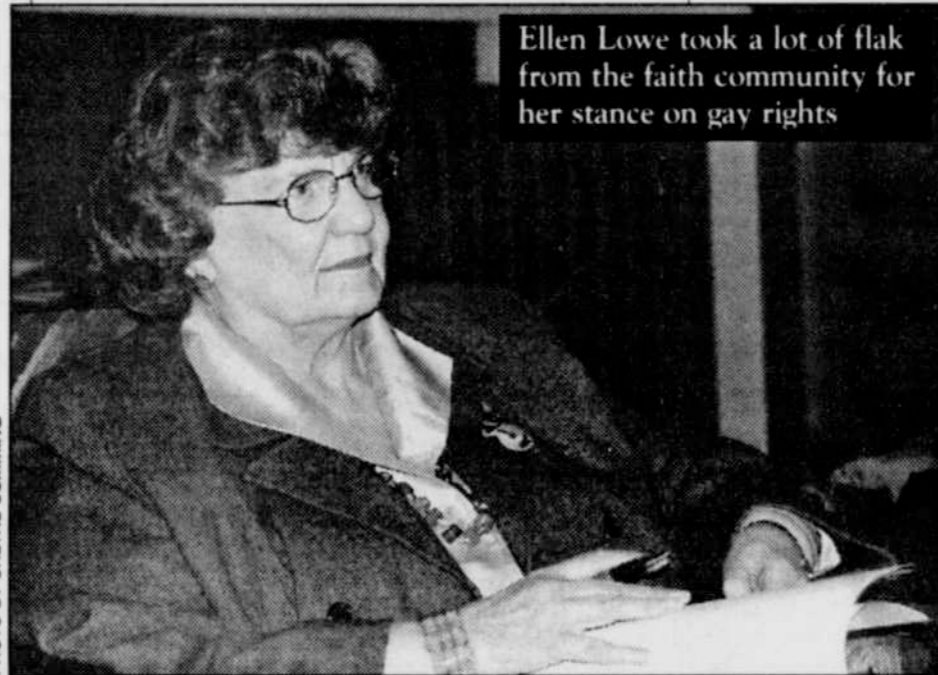


PHOTO BY CHEYNE CUMMING

Ellen Lowe took a lot of flak from the faith community for her stance on gay rights

"I think once you begin to erode rights of any particular group you endanger the rights of everyone," says Lowe, who sits on the Basic Rights Oregon board of directors. "It is my firm conviction that once you peel back the Bill of Rights you establish a dangerous precedent."

Despite her influence and impressive résumé in Salem, Lowe remains modest about her own importance. "I'm just an ordinary person who's been at the right place in the right time." □

OPEN HOUSE Ai The Art Institute of Portland®

PROGRAMS

- Apparel Design
- Graphic Design
- Interior Design
- Media Arts & Animation
- Multimedia & Web Design

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 12 NOON — 3 PM, 2020 SW 4TH, PARKSIDE CENTER BUILDING

You want to make an informed decision about your educational future. You need answers to questions about financial aid, career possibilities, and housing. You can get those answers and more by attending The Art Institute of Portland Open House.



R . S . V . P . or for more information, contact The Art Institute of Portland
503-228-6528
1-888-228-6528
aipdadm@aii.edu

ACTIVITIES
Talk to Ai Faculty
Portfolio Session
Program Information
Student / Graduate work

THE ART INSTITUTE OF PORTLAND
2000 SW 5th Avenue
Portland, OR 97201-4972
1-503-228-6528
1-888-228-6528
www.aipd.artinstitutes.edu