

PORTLAND GAY MEN'S CHORUS



Voices of Pride

Wednesday, June 12, 2002 @ 7:30 p.m.

Kaul Auditorium, Reed College

3rd Annual

Rainbow Ball

Friday, June 14, 2002

9 p.m.—2 a.m.

Crystal Ballroom
Dwntwn PDX

The Official kick off to the
Pride Northwest Weekend!

70's and 80's Retro Disco Inferno!

To Purchase Tickets Contact: PGMC 503-226-2588 or
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NATIONAL news

TEXAS

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund said April 18 it likely will go to the U.S. Supreme Court now that the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals refused to consider a case involving a Houston couple convicted of violating the "Homosexual Conduct" Law by having consensual sex in the privacy of one man's home.



Houston lawyer Mitchell Katine (center) is helping Tyron Garner (left) and John Lawrence fight the Texas "Homosexual Conduct" Law

They had petitioned the state's highest court on criminal cases after their constitutional challenge was rejected by the intermediate Court of Appeals. That court said "preserving public morality" justified the anti-gay law.

With this ruling, there is no other court in Texas where the men can appeal their convictions. In an earlier case, the Texas Supreme Court ruled that this high criminal court had jurisdiction over any challenge to the law.

Yet now that court also offers no hearing and no chance at justice on this subject. "It's shocking that neither of the supreme courts in Texas will even consider the serious constitutional problems with this law," said Ruth E. Harlow, Lambda legal director.

Houston attorney Mitchell Katine added: "This law greatly harms not just our clients but gay men and lesbians throughout the state. We now are left with no recourse but the U.S. Supreme Court."

The case began Sept. 17, 1998, when sheriff's deputies, responding to a false report of an armed intruder, entered a private Houston apartment where they found two men engaging in sex. Both were arrested and jailed overnight.

A county criminal court convicted and fined John Lawrence and Tyron Garner. Lambda appealed on their behalf to challenge the constitutionality of the law.

crashed Nov. 12 off Kennedy Airport, claiming the lives of all on board.

Both couples had executed various legal procedures to afford themselves protection. They had health care proxies and documents designating one another's partners as insurance, 401(k) and pension beneficiaries. Both couples also were registered as domestic partners with the city of New York.

"Just like married couples, Gene and I were a partnership in every way—emotionally, financially, legally and in our everyday lives," Courtney said. "Gene would want me to seek the protections we should have as a married couple because we always believed we were a married couple. I'm still wearing the ring to prove it."

Valentine added: "Joe was my spouse. It would be an insult to our relationship and Joe's memory if he were recognized as anything less. And that's why I'm bringing this claim: to honor the reality of what Joe and I and our families and friends all knew we had."

The two cases are the first brought by same-sex partners related to either tragedy. They are also the first to be brought by gay or lesbian partners seeking coverage under the state Workers' Compensation Law, which gives first priority to surviving spouses to receive benefits of up to \$400 a week for the rest of their life or until they remarry.

NEW YORK

Two Manhattan residents whose domestic partners died in separate tragedies last year held a news conference April 22 to announce legal action against the insurance companies denying them spousal benefits.

The survivors have filed claims with the New York State Workers' Compensation Board to receive spousal benefits. The insurance companies now are challenging their right to receive benefits, asserting that same-sex domestic partners do not qualify as spouses.

The administrative hearing for one of the survivors, Larry Courtney, took place April 23 in Manhattan. His partner of 14 years, Gene Clark, died Sept. 11 at the World Trade Center, where he was an administrative assistant at Aon Consulting.

The hearing of the other survivor, Bill Valentine, will take place in July. His partner of 21 years, Joe Lopes, was a steward on American Airlines Flight 587 when the plane



Bill Valentine (left) and Joe Lopes



Larry Courtney (left) and Gene Clark

Less than one week after the New York City Council voted 45-5 to extend civil rights protection to trans people, Republican Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed the bill into law April 30. The amendment takes immediate effect.

The ceremony made New York City the 42nd and the most populous jurisdiction in the country to provide basic protections to trans people in employment, housing, public accommodation and other areas of everyday life. As much as 75 percent of the state's trans population lives in the Big Apple.

The passage of this measure in New York City, with a population of just more than 8 million, dramatically increases at the national level the number of people covered by explicitly trans-inclusive anti-discrimination laws to