

NORTHWEST news

to handle it when I walk into prom with a guy?" So he asked the director of Edison if he could bring a male date—a friend who attends another Portland school—but was told Jesuit wouldn't allow it.

"I had never wanted to go to the dances...because I never wanted to give girls the wrong idea, because it wasn't who I was," he says. "I felt like I would be cheating them, and I felt like I would be misleading them. So by the time

I came out I was just like, 'You know, this is my last chance to do it, and I want to take a guy.' And now that there's actually a dance that I want to go to, I'm not invited. And it's quite upsetting."

Adding to Wright's frustration is the fact that only one Jesuit administrator, dean of students Gary Rombach, would agree to meet with him. "Basically he told me, 'Prom is not the stage for homosexual couples.'"

According to Wright, Rombach believes gay students must wait until college—even though many already are legal adults. "He said, 'High schoolers aren't mature enough to understand about sexuality.'"

Wright then directed Rombach to Jesuit's student handbook, which includes language that seems to support his argument. According to a section on human rights, the school's goals

are "to build a harmonious community that respects the diversity of that community" and "to understand that one's sexuality is an integral part of one's personality."

That's your interpretation of the language, Rombach responded. Wright was informed he absolutely could not attend the prom with another male student—in other words, he could go if he agreed to hide his sexuality.

"I told him no," he says. "I told him the reason I came out was that I'm proud of myself, and I'm proud of who I am, and I'm not going to stop being me."



Wright wore this homemade T-shirt to school but says administrators wouldn't let him bring it near Jesuit

When contacted to discuss the matter, Jesuit president Richard Gedrose cut the conversation short before he even found out what the subject was. "I will not comment to *Just Out*," he said.

After Wright graduates June 12, he plans to study interior design and fashion management at Portland Community College. However, he doesn't want to forget what happened to him at Jesuit.

"I want to keep going on...fighting for human rights," he says. "I hate to see people in the position that I was put in. I know how much it hurts." □

OTHER PROM BATTLES

Canadian teen victorious, Louisiana students barred by Jim Radosta

A stunning court victory allowed a gay Canadian student to attend the prom at his Catholic high school, 365Gay.com reported. Marc Hall, 17, and his boyfriend, Jean-Paul Dumond, 21, went to the dance May 11.

"It was fun," he said. "Most people were supportive. There wasn't any negative attitude or anything."

About 300 people swarmed the couple when they visited Toronto's gay village afterward, but Hall remained modest. "I was just a gay 17-year-old who wanted to go to his prom and stand up for his rights."

The Durham Catholic School District was ordered by a court injunction May 10 to allow

the couple to attend the prom. The board vowed to appeal the decision.

Meanwhile, a Louisiana school recently prevented two young men from attending their prom, Gay.com reported. Even though Cy Scott, 18, and his date, Paul Alexander, already had paid for their tickets, they were stopped at the door of Robert E. Lee High near Baton Rouge and informed of an unwritten rule banning same-sex couples.

Since then, the East Baton Rouge Parish school system has sent correspondence to principals urging them to sell tickets to all couples, gay or straight. The letter cited "potential legal problems" and "alleged discrimination" as the reasons for the policy switch. □



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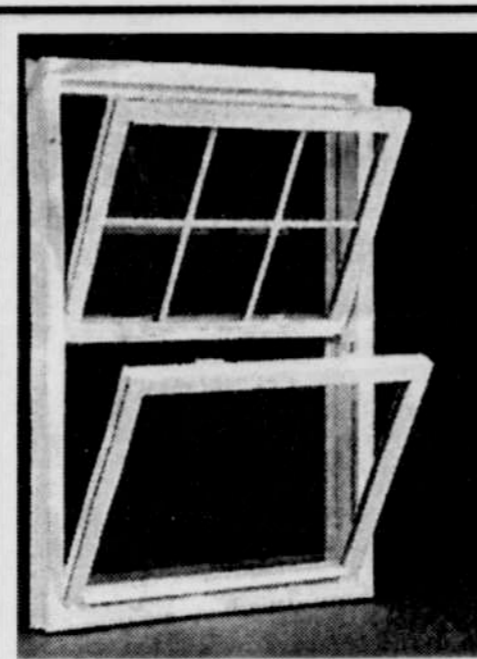
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