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NATIONAL news



D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams attended a vigil for two trans women Aug. 13

home, leases, bank accounts, credit cards, utility bills and homeowners insurance. It further states that a domestic partnership registry and "certification of a union celebrated overseas" are also acceptable.

NEW YORK

About 20 gay men and lesbians whose partners died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center will receive spousal benefits from insurance companies under a state law that took effect Aug. 21. Advocates and survivors praised the new law but said thousands of others remain without the "safety net" that is intended to protect all people whose committed partners die on the job.

"This is good for some of us, but we have to do more for all of us," said Larry Courtney, who lost his partner of nearly 14 years, Eugene Clark. "People whose partners died in other tragedies on the job are still fighting with insurance companies for the basic benefits that were intended for families in our situation."

NATIONAL

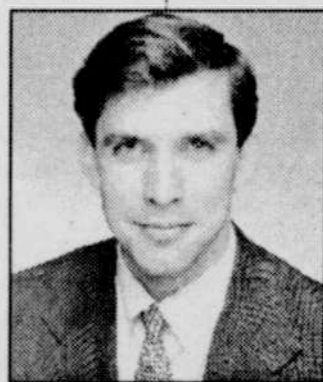
Two trans women were brutally gunned down Aug. 12 in Washington, D.C.

According to news reports, police found Ukia Davis, 18, and Stephanie Thomas, 19, in the front seat of Thomas' Toyota Camry in a southeastern part of the city, less than a block from her apartment. The pair, who became friends during their mid-teens when they met at an agency serving trans youth, were pronounced dead at the scene.

Investigators have not yet identified either suspects or a motive for the shootings. Sgt. Brett Parson, head of the Metropolitan Police Department's gay and lesbian liaison unit, said they "are still exploring all the possibilities."

However, the sheer ferocity of the attacks—each victim had at least 10 bullet wounds—is consistent with the brutality often associated with hate crimes. Additionally, friends and relatives of the victims say they frequently were harassed.

In response to the killings, a vigil was held Aug. 13 in the vicinity of the crime scene. Several community leaders spoke at the event, including Mayor Anthony Williams.



Gifford Miller

The New York City Council passed a bill Aug. 15 to recognize domestic partnerships, civil unions and same-sex marriages in other jurisdictions not recognized by the state.

The measure was approved overwhelmingly by a vote of 34-7-4. Mayor Mike Bloomberg is expected to sign it.

During debate, which became heated at times concerning inclusion of the word "marriage," Speaker Gifford Miller took the lead in supporting the measure. "I won't let fear of the future stop us from doing what is right," he said.

Only the Netherlands has legalized marriage between same-sex couples. Vermont is the only state that enables same-sex partners to enter into a civil union; however, at least eight states and more than 100 city and county governments provide some type of domestic partnership recognition and benefits.

NEVADA

A gay student who sued high school administrators in Reno for failing to stop anti-gay harassment signed a settlement agreement Aug. 28 that ends the lawsuit and offers broad new protections for gay and lesbian students nationwide. The agreement is the first in the country to recognize the constitutional right of gay and lesbian youth to be open about their sexual orientation in schools and to be protected from discrimination and harassment by other students.

As a result of the settlement, Derek Henkle will be paid \$451,000 in damages, the largest pretrial award of its kind in the nation. In addition, the Washoe County School District immediately will implement sweeping new policies to protect gay and lesbian students from discrimination, including training all staff on preventing and responding to sexual harassment and intimidation.

Henkle was a victim of violence, bullying and physical attacks at three different Reno high schools. At the first one, he was called

The American Red Cross has made permanent the guidelines it put in place for the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that provided gay domestic partners the same disaster relief assistance as spouses.

New York's Empire State Pride Agenda, which had lobbied for the change throughout the past year, was able to obtain a copy of a document sent Aug. 15 from national headquarters to all chapters titled "Guidance on 'Family' Definition and Verification." It lists those fitting the definition, including "regularly financially supported significant others, fiancés, housemates and/or other family members."

The bulletin also provides guidance on acceptable documentation that can be used to verify these relationships, then lists many of the criteria that were used for gay partners of Sept. 11 victims, such as joint ownership of a