

Jamison Green returns to Portland a new man. This month the former president of FTM International will be back in the city where he once lived to give the keynote address at Pride.

Regarded by many as an inspirational speaker and leader in the trans movement, Green is sometimes called an activist. But he says, "I don't consider myself an activist because I'm not the kind of person who goes out and does protests...I prefer to do my political work in a more educational way in meetings, building alliances and doing trainings."

Pride Magazine 2001 called him the elder statesman of the trans community. In 1999 *The Advocate* named him one of top 25 best and brightest political activists. Green also was the first woman cable splicer in Oregon for Pacific Northwest Bell in 1973.

He looks forward to visiting Portland, where he spent 5 1/2 years in the 1970s. He received undergraduate and graduate degrees in English from University of Oregon.

Green says he spent 22 years trying to be a lesbian, many of those in Oregon. "I think Portland is a lovely city. I think on the whole Portland is a city that, like much of Oregon, embraces individuality, combined with a kind of social consciousness that is necessary to preserve the environment."

Green began his transition from female to male in 1988 at the age of 40. "I cannot say that I was a man trapped in a female body. I can only say that I was a male spirit alive in a female body, and I chose to bring that body in line with my spirit and to live the rest of my life as a man."

He hopes his speech will be educational and inspirational. "Pride is an opportunity to be proud. I think still there's a lot of people who

Homecoming king

Keynote speaker Jamison Green puts in a good word for Portland

BY KATHY BELGE

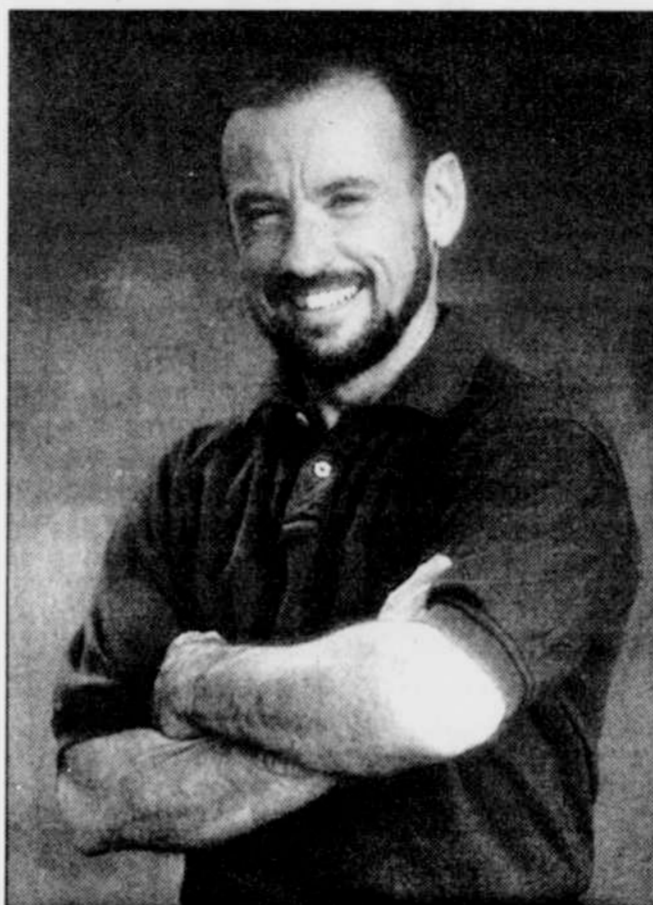
don't understand who trans people are and why we should be proud of them. Although Pride is a happy occasion, we have to be aware about why it's important to come together and take a stand for who we are. Because if we don't, we just get more and more oppressed."

Green travels around the country speaking at conferences, corporations, colleges, community organizations and police bureaus. He has appeared in a half-dozen documentaries and on television programs in Columbia, Turkey, Australia and the United States. He also wrote the 1994 landmark report *Discrimination Against Transgendered People* for the San Francisco Human Rights Commission.

"To me it's all about human dignity," he says. "I don't care what someone's sexual orientation is; that is not the issue. I do not care what they look like or if they fit into some idea I might have about a gender role; that is not the issue. The issue is that we're all human beings and we should be free to express ourselves as long as we're not hurting someone else."

Green is also an accomplished author. His day job is as a technical writer for a large corporation. He has a master's degree in creative writing and has published numerous articles of creative nonfiction.

Green's recently completed book *Becoming*



Jamison Green has been called the elder statesman of the trans community

a Visible Man will be released early next year by Vanderbilt University Press. An overview of the development of the FTM movement based on his own experience, it will be mar-

keted as a textbook and an information source for the general public.

Despite some setbacks, like the Human Rights Campaign's refusal to amend the Employment Nondiscrimination Act to include gender identity, Green says people's awareness of trans issues is growing. "The trans movement is really building at a phenomenal pace considering the political climate right now. We passed more protective ordinances in more cities in the last couple of years, in places where people would have thought it impossible like New York City, Chicago, counties in Kentucky and in Georgia and Florida."

When he's not trying to change the world, Green makes time for his other passions, music and voice acting. In the '70s he was part of a duo with a partner ("they called us the Sonny & Cher of the lesbian community") and played Portland clubs when he was still female-bodied.

"When she left me, I was so devastated, I couldn't even listen to music. It was just too painful," he says. "As I started to heal emotionally from the breakup...my voice changed and I couldn't sing the same way and I wanted to train my voice."

He took up voice acting and has worked on many voice-overs, including a children's arcade game. He also drums to satisfy his musical creativity.

Green's heart appears to be on the mend as well, as he's engaged to be married in October. **JB**

JAMISON GREEN will speak 2:40 p.m. June 15 at the Unity Stage. For more information visit www.jamisongreen.com.

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