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NATIONAL news

NATIONAL

The Rev. Troy D. Perry, founder and moderator of the predominantly gay Metropolitan Community Churches, announced July 24 his plan to challenge the U.S. courts to recognize his same-sex marriage.

The first openly gay member of the Los Angeles Human Relations Commission, he wed his partner of 18 years, Phillip Ray De Blieck, July 16 in Toronto, Ontario. They are the first Southern California couple to be married under a new Canadian law legalizing same-sex unions.

Now that he has returned to the States, Perry plans to call on U.S. courts to recognize his marriage. U.S. courts have traditionally recognized marriages that are valid where they are performed—a concept called "lex loci contractus."

The federal government has historically recognized marriages performed under Canadian law as legally valid in the United States. According to Perry, a decision not to recognize same-sex Canadian marriages might violate international treaty law and the equal protection clause of the Constitution's 14th Amendment.

"We are not seeking special treatment," he said. "We seek equal treatment. That is the only gay agenda—equality for everyone under the law. To not recognize my marriage and the marriages of thousands of other same-sex couples would be discrimination—and we will not stand for that any longer."

The July 23 *Washington Post* announced the wedding of nationally syndicated columnist Deb Price and her partner of 10 years, Joyce Murdoch—both former *Post* editors—who married June 27 in Toronto, Ontario. It marks the first time the newspaper's weddings section has printed the announcement of a same-sex couple.

"We're delighted to be able to share the joyful news of our marriage with all *The Washington Post*'s readers," Murdoch said. "We are lawfully married, thanks to Canada. And *The Washington Post* should be heartily applauded for recognizing that simple reality and for showing us exactly the same respect it has always given married couples."

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation met with the *Post* last year as a part of its Announcing Equality Project, which since August 2002 has helped increase the number of papers that accept and print same-sex union and wedding announcements from 69 to 209. The media watchdog group requested the newspaper change its existing policy, whereby announcements from gay men and lesbians are relegated to a separate "Celebrations" section on a separate day from straight couples.

"We are encouraged by *The Washington Post*'s decision to print Deb and Joyce's announcement in the weddings section," said Glennda Testone, GLAAD regional media director. "Our hope is that the *Post* will take this opportunity to also reconsider their policy of printing other legally recognized same-sex civil unions and domestic partnerships only on the 'Celebrations' page."

DontAmend.com outlined July 18 a broad plan to capitalize on the recent U.S. Supreme Court victory in Lawrence vs. Texas, organize to stop the anti-gay marriage constitutional amendment and push for full, equal marriage rights for all consenting adults in the United States. Working with local and national organizations such as Marriage Equality California and Marriage Equality USA, activists plan a two-pronged offensive:

- Campaigning to get people from all walks of life—public officials, religious figures and other community leaders—to sign public commitments opposing the Federal Marriage Amendment.
- Launching a proactive, pro-equal marriage campaign of local educational events, protests of anti-gay officials and other activities culminating in a nationwide day of rallies on Valentine's Day 2004.

"Using the Internet the way we did with the successful Stop Dr. Laura campaign, we will use the DontAmend.com Web site to keep people informed of the latest developments in the struggle and as a clearinghouse for local activities around the country," co-founder Robin Tyler said. "More than that, we will work to mobilize our community and allies in the national day of action to push back the anti-gay constitutional amendment and push on for equal marriage rights for all consenting adults."

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Campaign has launched MillionForMarriage.org, where visitors can sign a petition supporting the right of every U.S. citizen to marry. The American Family Association also is online with NoGayMarriage.com, which seeks to protect "the God-ordained building block of the family and bedrock of a civil society."

Deb Price and Joyce Murdoch

Price-Murdoch Nuptials in Canada

Deb Price and Joyce Murdoch were married at 10:30 a.m. on June 27th in Toronto City Hall's wedding chapel by Officiant George McConnachie.

A couple since 1985, Ms. Price and Ms. Murdoch met at The Washington Post, where they were both editors. In November 1993, they became the first registered domestic partners in their hometown of Takoma Park, MD. In May 1995, on the day of their 10th anniversary, they were denied a marriage license at the Montgomery County courthouse. On July 2, 2000, they were united in a civil union by Justice of the Peace Keith Goslant in Plainfield, VT.

Ms. Murdoch, a summa cum laude graduate of the University of Georgia, is the managing editor for politics at National Journal magazine. Ms. Price, a graduate of the National Cathedral School for Girls, received BA and MA degrees in literature from Stanford University. She is a nationally syndicated columnist on gay issues for The Detroit News, where she also covers Congress out of the Washington bureau. They are the co-authors of two award-winning books: "And Say Hi to Joyce: America's First Gay Column Comes Out" and "Courting Justice: Gay Men and Lesbians v. the Supreme Court."

Avid tennis players, world travelers and certified scuba divers, the newly-weds will celebrate their honeymoon in Hawaii later this year.

A White House political operative allegedly attempted to discredit a gay network television correspondent by highlighting his sexual orientation and Canadian nationality, according to Internet gossip Matt Drudge.

Jeffrey Kofman of ABC News had been filing reports covering the plunging morale of U.S. troops in Iraq. The National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association condemned July 21 all attempts to discredit journalists by using homophobia and nationalism.

Robin Tyler is the brains behind DontAmend.com, which is planning a nationwide day of rallies on Valentine's Day 2004