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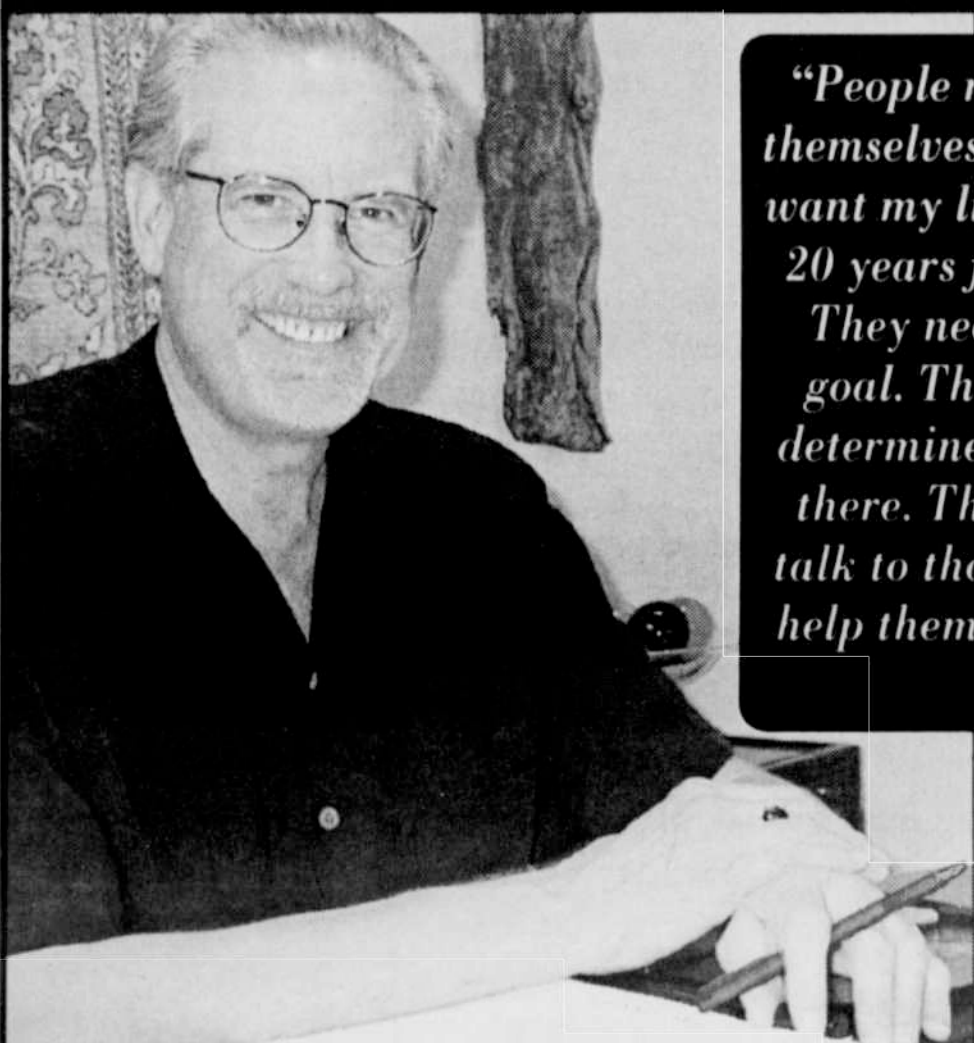
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NATIONAL news

Continued from Page 21

election to lead one of the largest mental health organizations in the world is so important. As the first openly gay man elected to such a position, I represent a final and total repudiation of that past."

Pope describes himself as a "poor, gay, Cherokee boy from rural southeast Missouri." He was one of the petitioners in the landmark Supreme Court decision *Gay Lib vs. University of Missouri*, which established the right of queer student groups to exist on college campuses across the nation.

Writing in the Sept. 8 issue of *Navy Times*, Michael Rankin, a retired captain and Vietnam combat veteran, calls continued justifications for the military's gay ban "insulting to our service men and women." He was responding to an Aug. 4 op-ed in the same paper by retired Capt. R.A. Bowling, who called on advocates for lifting the military's gay ban to pursue such matters through Congress rather than the court system.

In his rebuttal, Rankin points to the 1993 Senate hearings on gays in the military, noting that they "were among the most biased in recent memory." The resulting ban on service by gay, lesbian and bi U.S. citizens is, he writes, "an injustice that cannot stand forever as a permanent stain on our national life and character. We are too great a people to be bound by old myths and prejudices. Sooner or later, whether by court ruling or congressional mandate, this discrimination will end. On that day, America once again will have lived up to its promise—and we will all be the better for it."

The Supreme Court's July decision overturning state sodomy laws has provided new opportunity for challenging the military's gay ban in court. Rankin writes: "Perhaps...Lawrence vs. Texas, which assured Americans they have the right to privacy in their most intimate relationships, will be the vehicle for allowing homosexuals to serve openly. If so, I have no doubt that all branches of the military will adapt to this new challenge as they have adapted to similar challenges in the past."

GEORGIA

At the conclusion of a hearing Sept. 11 in Augusta, a state judge granted a Richmond County male-to-female trans woman's request to legally change her name to reflect her gender.

"This is a happy ending to a common barrier that many transgendered people experi-

ence," said Greg Nevins of Lambda Legal, which represents Vickie Gatliff. "Now, Vickie will be able to write a check, use a credit card and fly on an airplane—all things the rest of us take for granted—without the ordeal she previously faced because she couldn't get identification that matched her gender and her appearance."



Vickie Gatliff

When Gatliff first requested a name change, a judge denied her application, saying she first needed to undergo complete sex reassignment surgery. Established medical guidelines say that people seeking sex reassignment surgery should live fully as a member of the gender to which they are transitioning. The law allows people to change their names unless there's a reason to suspect that the name change is being requested to commit criminal fraud, according to Nevins.

"There's no legal basis for denying name changes like this," he said. "When state judges deny these name changes, transgendered people are put in a double bind—judges say they must have surgery before being granted name changes, and doctors say they have to change names before having surgery."

Last month Lambda Legal won a similar battle in Syracuse, N.Y., on behalf of a trans woman named Frances Fisher, ending her two-year struggle to obtain accurate identification.

NEW YORK

Fred Phelps of Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., and his daughters and grandchildren protested Sept. 8 outside Sirius Satellite Radio's building in New York City. They were demonstrating against Sirius OutQ, the first and only 24/7 national radio station for queers.

More than 100 counterprotesters and passers-by booed and shouted back at the 10 homophobes. Afterward, in the interest of free expression, the Phelps were invited to appear on Sirius OutQ's McMullen & Johnson show, where they condemned Jews, Catholics and queers.

"These protesters are the same people who picketed the funerals of Bob Hope and Matthew Shepard," program director John McMullen said. "We believe that their message is hateful, spiteful, cruel and rabidly homophobic."

CALIFORNIA

Following intervention by the American Civil Liberties Union, parents and students who sued the Novato School District over a



Fred Phelps and his family protest a queer radio station Sept. 8 in New York City