

NATIONAL news

les, honoree Rosie O'Donnell pledged \$100,000 and encouraged other people of means to match her gift.

"As a person who is privileged to have access to a society in which too few get to speak, who has been benefited tremendously from the love of strangers, we need you to talk to your friends and we need you to talk to your family, but mostly what you need is money," she said.

"What does it take to raise a million dollars? Ten millionaires, who will never know the money is missing from their bank account, to stand up and give \$100,000, and tonight...I'm going to give the first \$100,000 and ask if there are nine other people who can, please do it."

KANSAS

Responding to the state's support of a 17-year prison sentence in the case of a bisexual teen-ager who had consensual oral sex with another male teen-ager, lawyers filed legal papers with a state appeals court Oct. 3. They dispute Kansas Attorney General Phill Kline's assertions that the state should be able to sentence gay and straight teen offenders differently.

"Contrary to Kline's statements to the media, we agree that the state can and should protect teen-agers. All we're asking is that Matthew Limon be treated fairly," said Dick Kurtenbach, American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas and Western Missouri executive director. "It's simply wrong for the state to put a gay teen-ager in prison for 15 years longer than a straight teen-ager who commits the same crime."

Limon is appealing a 206-month prison sentence he received shortly after turning 18 because while he was a resident at a private school for developmentally disabled youth he performed consensual oral sex on another teen-ager. He would have served a maximum of 15 months in jail under Kansas law had the other teen-ager been female. But because the "Romeo and Juliet" law applies only to heterosexuals, Limon was convicted under the much harsher state sodomy law.

In the state's brief to the court, Kline takes several nonsensical positions, among them that the state should be able to punish heterosexual teen-agers less harshly under the "Romeo and Juliet" law because doing so would encourage them to marry. He also asserts that the law is constitutional because it encourages unmarried teens to get pregnant.



Ed Gray

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston Herald sports writer Ed Gray came out of the closet in his Sept. 30 column.



Rosie O'Donnell accepts the NGLTF Leadership Award at a ceremony Sept. 28 in Los Angeles as her wife, Kelli, looks on

"I'm out because I can't come up with a single logical reason why I should have denied myself the right to live and work as openly and freely as everyone else," he wrote. "Nor should anyone find a reason why an openly gay athlete should be denied the right to play a team sport without fear of becoming a target of prejudice or physical harm."

The National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association issued a statement praising Gray "for being truthful and open in the field of sports journalism that often can be unwelcoming at best and hostile at worst for gays and lesbians on and off the athletic fields." His announcement coincided with National Coming Out Day, which is celebrated Oct. 11.

"Like every journalist...Gray expects to be judged by what he writes and reports and not who he is or whom he loves," NLGJA said. "The issue is homophobia in sports—rather than his life as a gay man writing about sports."

CONNECTICUT

A small band of intersex activists rallied Sept. 26 in front of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford to protest a gender revision surgical procedure scheduled for an unidentified infant. The "Total Urogenital Sinus Surgical Procedure" was to be observed by participants of a "Feminizing Genitoplasty and Total Urogenital Mobilization" seminar presented by the hospital.

When Betsy Driver, executive director and co-founder of Bodies Like Ours, was alerted to this event, she quickly gathered a group of supporters to draw attention to the presentation and associated surgery by Dr. Richard Rink of Indiana University School of Medicine. About two dozen people picketed the hospital in a peaceful effort to draw attention to what they perceive as nonconsensual genital mutilation.

Their efforts paid off. Not only did Rink cancel his appearance, the medical center has invited Bodies Like Ours to present a program on the perspective of adult survivors of early childhood surgery intended to assign an infant to one gender or the other.

Several of the protesters, including Driver, are intersexed people whose surgery as children resulted in assignment to the wrong gender. "This was a great opportunity for intersex activists to come together with our allies across a broad spectrum to publicly and visibly voice our collective outrage at what is occurring in hospitals around the country five times a day to nonconsenting children," she said. **jm**

Compiled by News Editor JIM RADOSTA, who can be reached at jim@justout.com.

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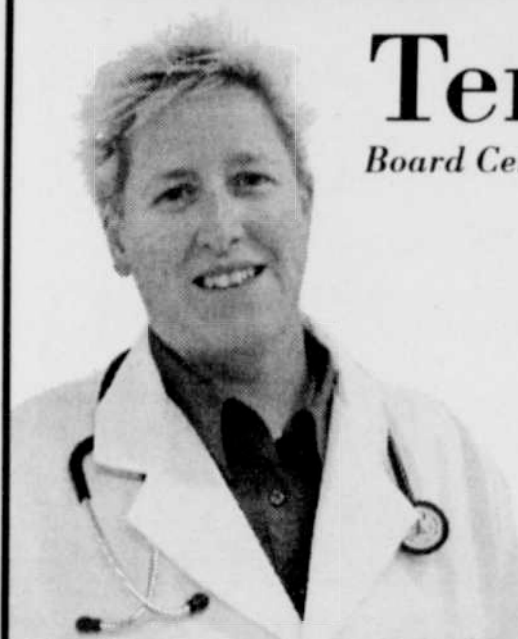
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