



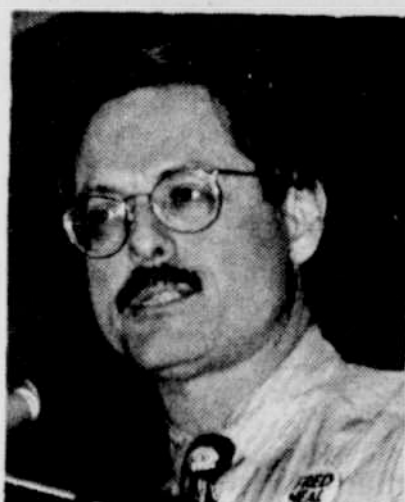
Chuck Carpenter
Openly gay Republican legislator;
Fought for Employment
Nondiscrimination Act



Cindy Cumfer
Lesbian Community Project;
Community Law Project;
Lesbian/gay adoption rights



Scot Nakagawa
Coalition for Human Dignity;
No on 9 Campaign;
Nat'l Gay & Lesbian Task Force



Fred Neal
No on 8 Campaign;
Right to Privacy board;
Openly HIV+ candidate
for Portland City Council



Barry Pack
Theater major;
No on 9 press team;
Executive director,
Right to Pride

Five queer rabble-rousers on our recent past

by Pat Young

They represented us in the Legislature, they paved the way for adoption rights, they defeated the infamous Measure 9.

Where did the queer leaders on the street, in the courtroom and at the state Capitol in the 1980s and '90s go after their successes? We talked to five prominent figures from the No on 9 era and before to learn where their activism has taken them.

One of the people we spoke to, former National Gay and Lesbian Task Force representative Scot Nakagawa, said our interview caused him "to remember that my work has never been about one organization or issue but instead about my interest in helping to build a broad movement addressing a wide array of related issues." He sees himself not as "a guy with a job" but rather as "a person with a vocation—a calling."

Nakagawa's path mirrors those of the other leaders interviewed here. Each has made a significant contribution to queer rights in Oregon. Though their areas of interest may have widened, they continue to show the importance of queers being involved in local, state and regional communities at large.

Barry Pack

"I was a theater major at Lewis & Clark, and I think that was great preparation for politics," says Barry Pack as he reflects on his political activism in Oregon. "You learn in acting training to be astute observers of human relationships. You have to understand motivations and learn to read between the lines, and that's very important in politics."

Pack graduated from college in 1992—right in the middle of the emotional campaign to defeat the Oregon Citizens Alliance's anti-gay Ballot Measure 9. He had some time



Barry Pack is a consultant on strategic development in public policy

on his hands and wasn't sure what he wanted to do with his life, so he volunteered for the No on 9 Campaign. He began as a grunt for the press team, clipping and photocopying newspaper articles. Soon he was helping write press releases and talking points. He refers to his time there as getting his feet wet and learning the business.

Three years later, after doing fund raising, lobbying and public policy work for the YWCA, Pack landed a job as executive director for Right to Privacy (later renamed Right to Pride). Under his leadership, RTP played a key role in getting the Oregon House to pass 1997's Employment Nondiscrimination Act, which banned bias in the workplace based on sexual orientation.

Activists had been trying to get a gay rights bill passed in Oregon since the early 1970s, so this was a major victory. Getting the legislation approved required quite a bit of behind-the-scenes work. Pack is quick to point out that it was a major team effort, and he's grateful for the work that state Reps. Chuck Carpenter and George Eighmey did to shore up votes in their areas—especially Carpenter, who was the only openly gay Republican in the Legislature.

In those days, 31 representatives were Republicans and 29 were Democrats. "We got all 29 Democrats and 11 Republicans, which is just astounding to me because, at that time, the Republican Party was moving so far to the right," Pack says.

Standing in the gallery of the House of Representatives looking down at politicians on the floor and watching them vote was a proud moment for Pack. It had been a long haul to get that far. "I thought we would get 36 or 37 votes,

and then when we got to 40, it was just so exciting. I felt so very proud of the work that everyone did, and I can't possibly claim a lot of credit for it," Pack says. "There were just so many supporters around me, it was wonderful."

Unfortunately, the bill died in the Senate. Pack helped make sure that the senator who kept the bill in committee until it died was not re-elected. "I made it my business to fire her for her opposition," he says.

When Right to Pride merged with Basic Rights Oregon, it was time for Pack to move on. Even though he enjoyed working for RTP, he was getting tired of a single issue. "We weren't talking about marriage. We weren't talking about adoption. We were focused on employment," Pack recalls. "And you can only spend so much time talking about one thing."

Pack began work with the state Democratic Party and later at the Senate. He was field director for the Democratic Coordinated Campaign,