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Minh Tran and Gary Nelson

You may know Minh Tran as the celebrated Portland dancer and choreographer, but do you know him as Minh Tran, the homebody? Tran has lived with his partner, Gary Nelson, for 17 years and married him March 8. They say marriage didn't really change the dynamic in their relationship, but it has enhanced it.

Getting married "felt just right," says Tran.

Nelson adds: "It's validating. I feel we have been elevated to a new level."

The presence of teamwork is clear between Nelson and Tran, who give their ages as 30-something (Tran) and 50-something (Nelson). Even in conversation they trade off remarks and reinforce each other. They met through mutual friends when Tran was a student at Portland State University and both men were coming out. Tran had recently immigrated from Vietnam, where homosexuality is a huge "no-no." Tran says the official line is, "There are no gay people in Vietnam."

Nelson says: "We have a left-brain, right-brain thing going. Minh is bright. He has four degrees." Nelson ticks the degrees off on his

fingers—including accounting and fine arts—then says, "A good talent mixture."

Tran sits on the couch grinning and shrugs his shoulders, implying "accidents happen."

Nelson, a robust, burly man continues, "I'm more physical—clever with my hands." The remodeled rooms and deck in their home back up his claim. Nelson is a self-employed landlord and owns various properties in the Portland area.

Being a mixed-race couple has not been a problem, they say. Nor has their 20-year age difference. "People thought that age would be a problem when we got together," says Nelson.

"But it hasn't been."

Tran says, "When I wanted to get a master's in fine arts at the University of Washington in Seattle, it was a hard time." It was his first experience of living alone and being independent.

Nelson adds: "When you love someone, you don't put

them in a box. You set them free and hope they will come back. It strengthened our relationship in the long run. We don't take ourselves too seriously."

—RL

"When you love someone, you don't put them in a box"

—Gary Nelson

Scott Vogel

Portland Monthly editor in chief Scott Vogel has Rosie O'Donnell to thank for his child.



Gary Nelson and Minh Tran

Four years ago, while living in Queens, he was assigned to pen an article for *The New York Times* about the lesbian talk show host. Twelve minutes into his allotted 15 with the Queen of Nice, he ran out of questions, so he told her how much he admired her work on behalf of gay adoptions. He also told her about how he and his partner, Mark Vogel, had been unsuccessful in adopting.

Suddenly, she announced, "I have a girl who would be perfect for you." The girl belonged to a 29-year-old single mother from Kansas who had written to O'Donnell (as hundreds did during the run of her show) asking for help in placing her baby. It seems that three other couples had rejected the unborn child because, while its mother was white, the race of the father was unknown.

Within weeks, O'Donnell arranged for the couple to meet the woman, and the adoption was set. "Ironically," Vogel laughs, "a few short months later, a very Aryan-looking, blue-eyed, blond-haired Spencer Vogel was born."

The addition of Spencer to the Vogel household prompted the couple to leave New York. After a short stint in Honolulu, two years ago they landed in Portland, where Vogel and sister Nicole founded *Portland Monthly* because "Portland was the only major city in the country without its own magazine." (Mark is an associate editor.) The high-quality, glossy publication showcases Portland's people and events in a manner that Vogel intends to be "engaging, penetrating and unflinching."

"Humor is a big part of the gay experience," the 41-year-old explains. "But [humor] is one thing that you never find in print media here. We felt there was room for something a little more fun and whimsical."

—Floyd Sklover

Ruth Gundle

Don't let her modesty fool you. This 57-year-old lesbian and stalwart of women's publishing has been blazing trails in Portland for more than 30 years.

With a degree in law and a dedication to the revolutionary ideals of the time, Ruth Gundle got her professional start in 1976 by co-founding the Community Law Project. "We represented the Trojan [nuclear power plant] protesters and renters who were evicted, and every possible kind of person who

couldn't get anybody else to represent them," she says.

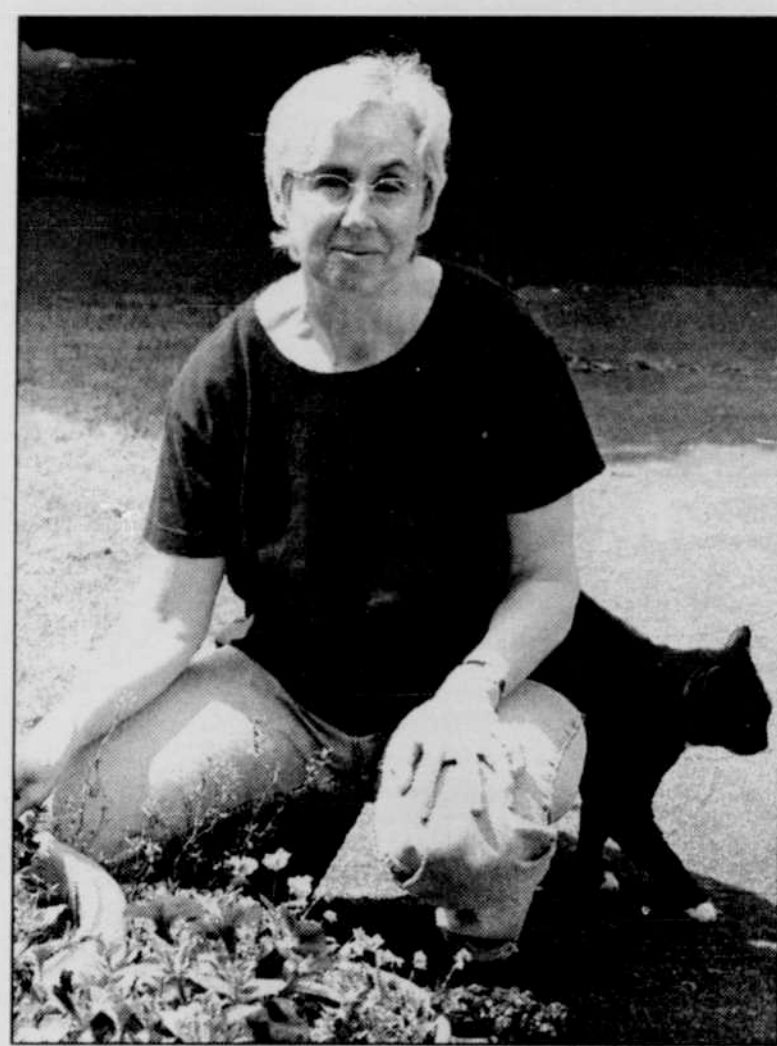
In 1979, Gundle was almost hired to head the Portland State University women's studies department. "I was approved all the way up the line, and then the president [of PSU] refused to appoint me," she says. The word on the street was that university prez Joseph Blumel didn't want a feisty out lesbian in the position.

Judith Barrington, a writer and teacher at PSU who Gundle knew only casually, staged a huge protest on behalf of Gundle, which included delegations of PSU faculty and Portland City Council members. The effort failed. But love was born between Gundle and Barrington!

Gundle then took a position with Oregon Legal Services. She successfully fought an important reproductive rights case against the state of Oregon. She also won a nationally watched case that was the first to require police to arrest in domestic violence situations. Meanwhile, back at the office, she fought for partner health insurance coverage for Barrington.

After several years, Gundle began to reassess her career. "I decided I didn't want to spend my whole life arguing," she says. On a whim, she took a class in letterpress printing. This led to Gundle to printing Barrington's first book of poems in 1985. She gave her press a name—and Eighth Mountain Press was born.

Since that time, she has published dozens of



Ruth Gundle

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