

LEARN HOW TO ENGAGE IN MARRIAGE DIALOGUE

Love Makes a Family will present two training workshops on effective nonviolent communication and public speaking skills about same-sex marriage.

"Speaking Out for Same-Sex Marriage" will be held from 10 a.m. to noon July 10 at Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington County, 22785 N.W. Birch St. in Hillsboro, and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. July 17 at First Unitarian Church, 1011 S.W. 12th Ave. The public is invited to practice and review ways to engage in transformative dialogue by coming together with others, expressing differences and finding common ground.

"We recognize that marriage equality is a new and difficult subject for many people to talk about," said the Rev. Cecil Charles Prescod, coordinator of Love Makes a Family's Freedom to Marry Project. "We seek to engage all Oregonians in respectful community conversations about their families, values and community."

Love Makes a Family believes the anticipated ballot measure campaign to enshrine anti-gay bias in the Oregon Constitution will provide an opportunity for a dialogue about the role of family and faith in public life. According to executive director Bonnie Tinker, when people realize families face real economic and social hardships because of discriminatory laws, they become convinced of the necessity of allowing same-sex couples to get married.

"Love Makes a Family will continue to defend our families and to publicly declare our love, our marriages and our faith that democracy has room for a diversity of beliefs," she said. "Excluding any family from the legal rights, responsibilities and

protections of marriage diminishes all families. All parents should be able to provide their children the social protection they are entitled to through a legally recognized marriage."

The suggested sliding-scale registration fee is \$25-\$50. No one will be turned away for inability to pay.

For more information call 503-228-3892 or e-mail cecil@lmfamily.org.

WASHINGTON COURT URGED TO RULE IN FAVOR OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

An openly gay Washington state legislator filed a friend-of-the-court brief June 24 in support of same-sex marriage.

State Rep. Jim Moeller, D-Vancouver, joined five other lawmakers and a wide variety of religious organizations, civil rights groups and bar associations in urging the state court to rule in favor of treating all couples equally. Lambda Legal and the Northwest Women's Law Center filed the lawsuit in March.

"Today's filings show that we are not alone. Legislators, communities of faith and so many others see that as long as gay couples cannot marry, they are not being treated equally," attorney Jennifer C. Pizer said. "It's powerful for the court to hear from such a diverse array of supporters."

Arguing that the state law excluding same-sex couples from marriage should be struck down, six legislators—including one Republican, Fred Jarrett—filed a brief saying the "heterosexuals only" rule violates protections guaranteed by the Washington Constitution.

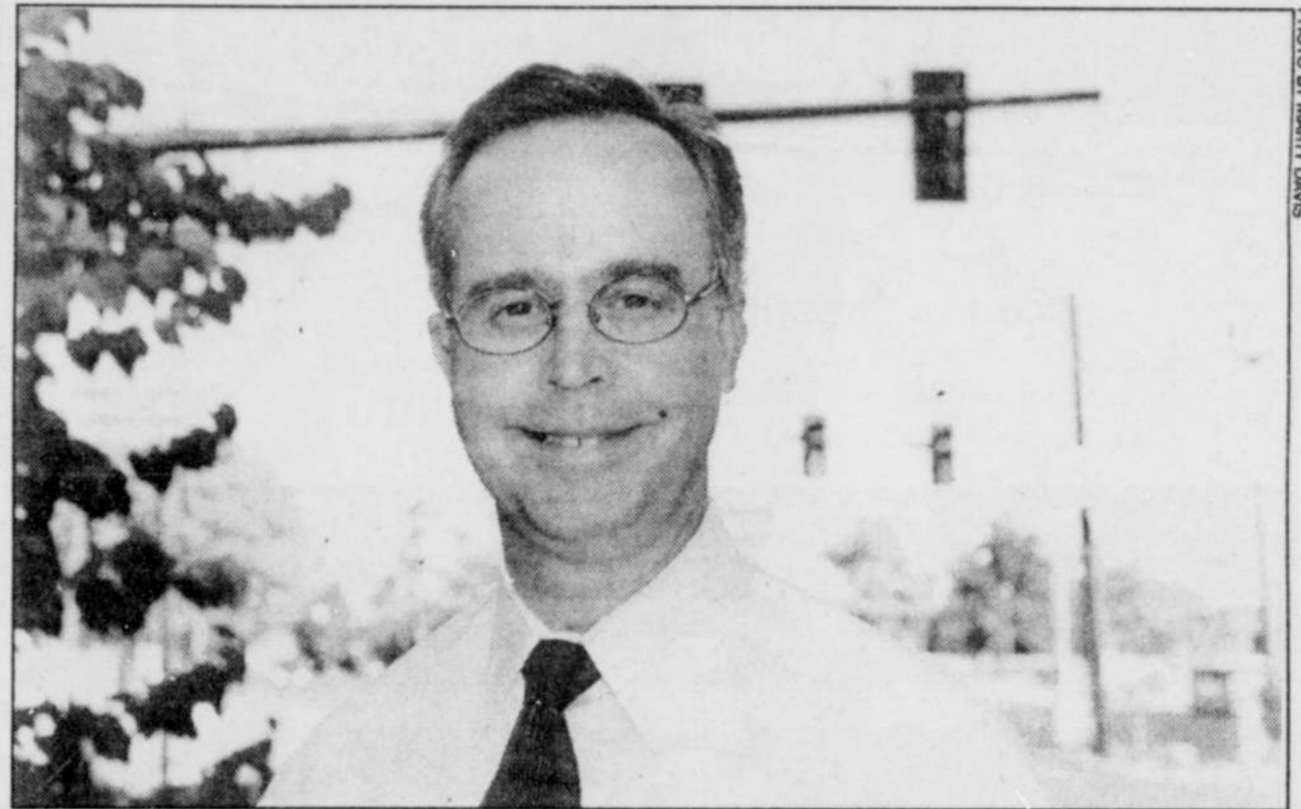


PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

State Rep. Jim Moeller, D-Vancouver, says the "heterosexuals only" marriage rule violates protections guaranteed by the Washington Constitution

Moeller; Jarrett; Democratic state Reps. Ed Murray and Sandra Romero; and Democratic state Sens. Debbie Regala and Pat Thibaudeau all signed onto the brief.

"Building families, expanding civil rights and limiting the government's reach into our private affairs are among my core beliefs as a Republican," Jarrett said. "All families should be encouraged and supported, and I cannot think of a better way to support all families than to allow loving, committed couples the right to marry, and that includes same-sex couples."

Multifaith Works, with numerous other religious organizations, argued in its brief that

the state should not adopt one definition of marriage and that religious freedom is not affected by recognizing the importance of civil marriage for same-sex couples. "Promoting 'moral and religious' grounds as the basis for the Legislature's adoption of [the state's Defense of Marriage Act] is not a legitimate government purpose—let alone a compelling state interest," the brief said.

Another brief was filed by a coalition of civil rights groups and bar associations, including Loren Miller Bar Association, a largely

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