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by. They would give her roses, and some would come over and give her kisses and big hugs.

"I don't know of any political leader in Oregon or Portland who has done more for the LGBTQ community than Vera Katz—both in the state Legislature and as mayor—in her policy-making life and personal life," says Adams.

"We have been lucky to have her," he adds. "She did it in a way that brought along the straight community, and that is a special talent."

Through her years in the Legislature and then as mayor, Katz has watched the gay rights

movement grow in number and sophistication. Fund-raisers for political candidates have come a long way since the days of the \$5-a-plate spaghetti feed.

"The movement has been able to pick up additional people who support it with money and with their love and commitment," says Katz. "It is a huge credit to the leadership from the Portland Town Council to Basic Rights Oregon and every other group that is out there now."

"The community keeps thanking me and showing their gratitude and their love, and I say to them, 'You know, this is easy,'" says



First day of domestic partnership registrations in Multnomah County, 2000



Vera Katz, 2002

Katz. "The worst things in society are poverty and the inability of people to feel like they are full citizens of this community. The discrimination of anyone in the community is something that we have to be vigilant about and fight to eliminate, because it could happen to any one of us."

Katz notes that she posed a series of questions to herself throughout her political career: Where are the inequalities? Where are people being treated differently? Where is the discrimination? What do we need to do? "And that's the way I approach it," she says.

Her work in supporting equal rights for the

sexual minorities community has been personally rewarding because in doing so she sent a message to Portlanders "who felt they were second-class citizens that they are not second-class in this community," says Katz. "They are very important to us as friends and family members. And the city of Portland will not tolerate discrimination."

"So, to me, it was easy," she says. "I never had heartburn over it. I never had second thoughts." ■

PAT YOUNG is a Portland free-lance writer and gay and lesbian historian.

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