

## NORTHWEST newsbriefs

and protectors of traditional marriage tenets.

Lambda Legal and the Northwest Women's Law Center represented 38 gays and lesbians seeking the right to marry. Lawyers used the "civil rights" approach by deeming Washington's Defense of Marriage Act of 1998 a violation of the state's Equal Rights Amendment. They also say the ban violates the state constitution's prohibition against granting privileges to one group of citizens and not another.

tice at a California bakery owned by his grandmother, the federation's first female master pastry chef. After learning from her, Williamson studied with masters in the sweets industry. He worked for a slew of bakeries and restaurants as executive pastry chef. He creates pastries and other treats that are available nowhere else in the city. Bragging rights are earned for incredibly labor-intensive wedding cakes and one-of-a-kind cinnamon rolls that are moist, not sticky



Mike Oravetz (left) and Nick Williamson are life and business partners as co-owners of Mother Dear's Crown Jewel Bakery in Northeast Portland.

"Many of the justices clearly understand that same-sex couples are being discriminated against because they cannot marry and that this discrimination deserves their attention. This is clearly a moderate court that's looking very closely at the issues in front of it. Based on today's arguments, we have every reason to believe that the justices' minds are open and that they're taking this case very seriously," said Jennifer C. Pizer, senior counsel in Lambda Legal's Western Regional Office and one of the attorneys handling the case.

Attorneys defending the marriage law argued that the state has an interest in regulating marriages that produce children. Lawyers did not contest the legality of hetero marriages that do not result in offspring.

Court watchers are withholding predictions of the justices' outcomes. Rulings by this court usually take several months.

"We're hopeful because when judges appreciate the human dimensions of our cases, we often have good results. Once judges understand the human impact, they can fully determine what the state constitution's guarantees of liberty and equality require—and that's exactly what these justices are doing. The questions the justices asked today suggest that there is a range of legal issues they're struggling with that will likely take them some time to sort out. What matters is that they appreciate the human dimension of the case, and we saw today that a good number of them do," said Pizer.

### NEW TREATS, OLD DIGS

Mike Oravetz and Nick Williamson, partners in life and business, knew they were a couple of white boys moving into a black neighborhood when they bought Mother Dear's Crown Jewel Bakery on Northeast Killingsworth Street at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The business drew a steady stream of customers under the ownership of Anovia Hardy, better known as Mother Dear.

Their challenge was adding their unique gifts to the winning formula without shaking up tried-and-true favorites.

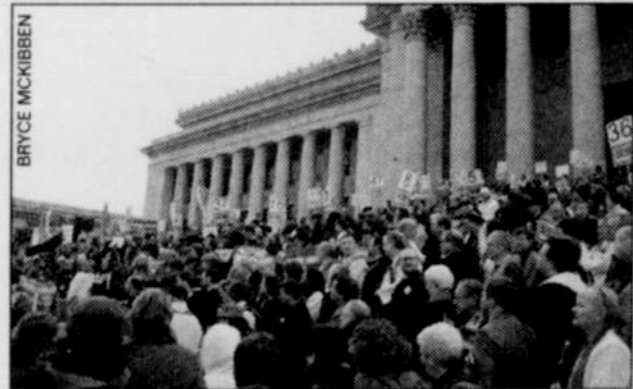
Williamson, 24, is the youngest certified executive pastry chef in the history of the American Culinary Federation. His career began at the age of 9, when he served as appren-

and spicy, but mellow. His creations have deep roots in European pastry traditions but with local flair in specialties such as peach pie and elaborate coffee cake.

Oravetz's former career was in the field of greens. He studied landscaping and floral design, managed nurseries and owned a landscape design company.

Business has picked up quickly since Oravetz and Williamson acquired keys to the bakery Feb. 20. They've been beefing up exposure for their soup, sandwich and box lunches and learning about the particular tastes of their mostly African-American clientele.

"We've been used to the world we live in for so long. We're now changing to fit the commu-



About 1,500 religious allies rally in Olympia against discrimination.

nity," said Oravetz, who primarily runs the deli with Anita Hardy, daughter-in-law to the original Mother Dear. He shares business operations with Williamson, who presides over the bakery with Mother Dear's other daughter-in-law, Rosa Hardy.

The owners' first lessons were that the sweet potato pie stays; lemon, strawberry and pecan flavors are popular; and raspberry and hazelnut are not.

"I can do things with sugar that no one can do anymore. It's incredibly gratifying to have someone try a pastry here and say, 'Wow, that's the best I've ever had,'" said Williamson.

Besides consulting with the community about the menu, flavors and décor, Oravetz and Williamson are dedicated to giving back with charitable events and donations.

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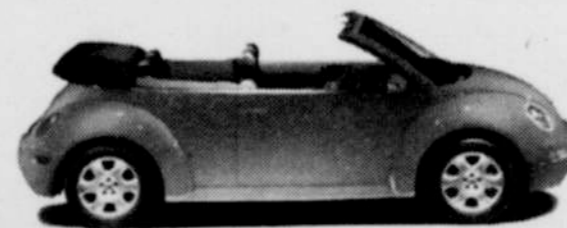
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