

GUEST COMMENTARY

BY BARBARA ROBERTS, TERRY BEAN AND ROEY THORPE

Re-elect Diane Linn

Multnomah County chair passes the true test of leadership

From every corner of the country, gay rights advocates and those who would deny equal rights to the GLBT community are going to be watching an important race in Oregon next year. As chair of Multnomah County, Diane Linn has become a target for those who oppose GLBT rights, and we are hoping that all of us who care passionately about equality will stand up and support her, as she had done for this community.

It is a rare honor to endorse a candidate who has so courageously demonstrated a commitment to equality and put those values into real action. All three of us—Gov. Barbara Roberts, Terry Bean and Roey Thorpe (on behalf of Basic Rights Oregon)—are proud to announce our endorsement of Diane Linn for Multnomah County chair. Diane has our support because we believe no one is better prepared and qualified to lead Multnomah County forward.

Serving in public office is not easy during the best of times; the true test of leadership is when times get tough and hard choices have to be made. We have observed Diane's performance as Multnomah County chair, and we strongly believe she has produced results and made significant improvements for county government and our citizens during her time in office.

Diane not only takes the right stand on all the important progressive issues, she takes action as well. She has always made it clear that she believes Multnomah County is a place for all citizens and has embraced the GLBT community in all of her work. During her first term as chair, the county added a nondiscrimination ordinance that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

When same-sex couples in the community demanded to be treated equally under the protection of the Oregon Constitution, Diane had the vision and commitment to allow them to marry. In doing so, she forever changed the lives of Oregon same-sex couples and their families for the better and helped to move the cause of fairness for all Oregonians immeasurably toward justice. Some have said this move was too bold and too risky, but we don't think so.

The criticism she received for this decision was harsh and unrelenting, and it continues to this day. Yet even in the face of vitriol that included threats on her life, she has continued to speak out proudly for

full equality for GLBT people. If this isn't leadership, we just don't know what is.

Diane's administration has also taken the lead when it comes to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, offering cutting-edge delivery of primary care medical services to people with HIV and AIDS. The county has reinvigorated its HIV prevention efforts, targeting people with the highest risk of infection. It has worked closely with human service agencies to increase prevention efforts for sexual minority youth. Because of this, HIV infection rates in Multnomah County continue to be lower per capita than the national average.

Diane said recently: "It is important to me for all Multnomah County residents to be treated equally under the law. I will continue to provide leadership that shows real results for every Multnomah County family." With Diane Linn in leadership, there will never be a question about whether this includes GLBT families or people living with HIV/AIDS.

Diane Linn has delivered on her promises. She has certainly taken the heat for tough decisions and still is willing to serve. As people who care about equal rights and who have been involved in electoral politics for many years, we believe that people who stand up for equality deserve to have the community stand up for them in return. If we don't stand up for Diane, how can we assure other elected leaders that we will be there when the going gets rough for them? As Elizabeth Birch, former executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, said recently about this race: "I hope all Oregonians understand how incredibly important re-electing Diane Linn is, not just to the future of GLBT rights in Oregon, but to the entire nation. Around the country, people will be watching to see if we support those who put their political careers on the line to support us."

We urge you to join us in your vocal, proud support of Diane Linn. She deserves it. She has earned it. There are no challengers who would stand more strongly for equality than our current chair, Diane Linn. **JB**

BARBARA ROBERTS served as governor of Oregon from 1991 to 1995.
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REFLECTIONS 10 years ago in just out... volume 13 number 1, november 3, 1995

- Veterans for Human Rights will hold its third annual Sgt. Johnnie Phelps Awards Dinner on Nov. 11. "Forward, March!"—the dinner's theme—celebrates advances toward ending discrimination against gay men, lesbians and bisexuals who serve in the U.S. military.

- Our House of Portland, an AIDS hospice, and Jerry Weller, founding member of the Right to Privacy PAC, were among those recently honored by the Metropolitan Human Rights Commission.

- Gretchen Kafoury is retiring—in three years. The 53-year-old Portland city commissioner made the declaration in mid-October during Right to Privacy PAC's Lucille Hart Dinner, a major fundraiser for the statewide gay, lesbian and bisexual rights organization.

- Officials at Marshall High in Southeast Portland vow to change the wording of the public school's dance guidelines, which state that a student's date "must be of the opposite sex."

- It's the grand opening celebration for the new, improved space at It's My Pleasure. Great food and performances by talkapella poet Zoa Smith with keyboard artist B.J. Castleman, singer/songwriter Terri Grayum and Afro-Cuban percussion and song with Virginia López and members of the Mámbo Queens.

- Be in the studio audience at the taping of *The Snickers LaBarr Show* and receive your very own autographed photo of Snickers.

- Lesbian author Nicole Conn reads from her new novel, *Passion's Shadow*, and signs copies of the book at In Other Words. She wrote, directed and co-produced the 1993 film *Claire of the Moon*.

- Portland Center Stage has realized something that most progressive entertainment corporations are beginning to act upon: The gay and lesbian faction of our society is a powerfully influential one in relation to the amount of expendable income it chooses to spend on entertainment.

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