

our community. They care about the infrastructure that we manage. I think the queer community needs to look at all of that when making a decision.

JRC: Why didn't you run for the chair position instead of supporting Linn's opponent?

MRS: Mostly it's my family. I have two grandchildren, and they're 13 and 10. They are more important to me than just about anything, and I want to be able to give my time to them. I don't want a job to get in my way. I like my current job a lot. I like the pace. I love representing the district

also gone through supporting gay marriage. I was fighting for my life, for my personal campaign. I had to campaign right after we did that in March, and I was up for re-election in May. Within days I had five people run against me, and they ran against me about gay marriage. I'm in the midst of a really tough campaign, and so for Diane to apologize and tell the press before she told me...it's not about the fact that she apologized. It's the way that it happened and the fact that she had no regard that I was fighting for my life. She said: "It's no big deal. You'll get re-elected anyway." That's why I



From left, commission staff Matthew Lashua, April Fernandes, David Martinez and Maria Rojo de Steffey gather in the Multnomah Building.

I represent, the inner east side. This job allows me to focus on specific issues, and personally I think I can get more done that way.

JRC: What caused your lack of confidence in Chair Linn?

MR: It was a lack of communication. The rest of the commissioners, like myself, we're not window dressing here. We make policy decisions along with the chair. We need to be communicated with. That has been a major critique around Diane Linn.

JRC: Some perceive the feud between Chair Linn and the other commissioners as affecting county business. How are you working around it?

MR: Most days I don't think about Diane Linn. I think, What's on my desk today, and what do I have to deal with? It's when I read about it in the newspaper that it becomes an issue for me.

What interferes with the job that we're doing is the press around this issue. *The Oregonian* and some of the press do it because we're women. City Council members have their issues, and *The Oregonian* never attacks them the way they're attacking us. We continue to do good work. [Commissioners] Lisa [Naito], Serena [Cruz] and I work together very well and continue to do the work of the county. We seem to disagree with [Linn]. A lot of her actions right now are political and not in the best interests of the county.

JRC: Chair Linn told me the rift between her and the commissioners stems from a public apology she made about the process surrounding same-sex marriage. From your perspective, what caused this rift?

MR: People need to understand that I don't have an issue with people apologizing. How I learned about Diane's apology is from the newspaper. It's that same lack of communication. I had just

was pissed, when she makes light of it. I accept her apology, but I don't accept the disregard that she had for me personally.

JRC: How will the commission function if Linn is re-elected?

MR: I will just keep doing my job. I can't answer how it will function. I don't know.

JRC: You have been instrumental in supporting queer rights throughout your career. Now some are saying your support for Wheeler is dividing sexual minority voters. How do you respond?

MR: I don't expect because I have stood up for gay rights for a very long time that I'm going to be supported by every queer person in our county. I expect they're going to look at all of my record, everything I've done and yeah, I have been supportive of gay and lesbian issues, but if you've got a gay person who is really concerned about a particular service or issue and I'm totally opposed to it, I don't expect loyalty. If people think the queer community should support us because of this one issue, that's saying they're not made of anything else, that the gay community's issue is only [marriage equality]. That's not the case. Queer people—some are businesspeople who are conservative, some work in social services, some could care less about any of it—are part of the whole community, so I just don't buy it, that we're separating the community.

JRC: What are your future in plans?

MR: I love this county and this job. I'd like to be here for an additional term. Then I'm going to spend more time riding horses and spending time with my family. But that's a long way away. I really am prepared to run again. 10

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