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## letters

### Experience Means More than Sexuality

TO THE EDITOR:

Two gay/lesbian-identified judicial candidates are in contested races for seats on two state courts. It is not enough in this race to blindly vote for the queer candidate when there are other, equally or *more* qualified candidates who identify as heterosexual.

The Multnomah County Circuit Court has several exceedingly competent judges who are also gay or lesbian and who impartially decide a variety of issues. In this race, sexual orientation should not dictate the vote.

My vote on May 16 will be for Cheryl Albrecht. She has served as a judge pro tem for more than five years, with 10 years of prior trial experience. She is well-known in legal circles and in the courts to be fair and impartial in her rulings as well as exceedingly competent professionally in and around the courthouse. Albrecht, though identified as heterosexual, is a friend of the queer, arts and music communities. Her experience makes her the *most qualified* to deserve your vote. A litigant, criminal or civil, will get a fair shake if he or she appears before Albrecht.

Trung Tu, another candidate, does identify as gay. Curiously and sadly, his judicial race Web site omits his involvement and support for gay organizations that he has asked to endorse him in this race. These omissions weigh heavily against voting for a candidate based solely on his sexual orientation. Furthermore, Tu simply has insufficient experience relative to Albrecht and the other candidates to warrant a vote in this race. Voting for a gay candidate simply because he is gay, without giving due consideration to his experience, is a bad idea. Hopefully Tu will continue to run for judge in the future.

The Oregon Supreme Court is one of the few courts in the nation that does not have a single woman sitting on its bench. It is also the first court in the country to have an openly gay judge, Rives Kistler, who is on the bench and whose seat is not at issue in this race.

Two candidates for Oregon Supreme Court deserve your attention—for different reasons. One gay, one straight. One a woman from the metropolis. One a man from eastern Oregon.

In the current race, Virginia Linder, who is a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals, could change that. Linder is a lesbian. She has also expressed support for the death penalty, which causes some concern to even her strongest advocates. However, it is clear that she is a highly competent and thoughtful candidate, having proved her legal abilities over many years. Prior to her appointment to the Court of Appeals in 1998, Linder was at the attorney general's office. She has, throughout her career, been on the side of the government.

The only other excellent candidate, whom you should also consider when you vote for Supreme Court judge, is Gene Hallman. He has tried more than 300 cases and has handled more than 130 appeals. Thirty of these were in the Oregon Supreme Court. Hallman is endorsed by many liberal groups from around Oregon who represent the interests of individuals and the working class. He has experience in a wide variety of areas that genuinely affect individuals in Oregon. He would bring a perspective to the court that is now lacking. Many of the Oregon Supreme Court justices

have limited recent experience trying cases.

Both Hallman and Linder are excellent choices. The Supreme Court needs a voice from other parts of the state and the wisdom of a lawyer who tries cases on a regular basis. The court also lacks a woman on the bench. However, it has among its ranks one gay-identified judge.

Jack Roberts, the third candidate, will not get my vote—primarily because Hallman and Linder appear to be *more qualified* to decide crucial cases in Oregon. Roberts is a career politician who does not strike me as particularly liberal-minded on free speech issues and choice.

In this race, the gay card is not enough. Review the judges' Web sites, consider the importance of experience and the court makeup, and inform your vote.

Send questions about the race to me at lake@law-works.com.

LAKE PERRIGUEY  
Portland

### Trung Tu, a Decent Guy

TO THE EDITOR:

In the coming election, Trung Tu isn't the best candidate for Multnomah County Circuit Court judge because he is gay. He's not the best candidate because he is Asian.

Trung Tu is the best candidate because he's bright, driven, fair and one of the most decent men I know. Trung gives tirelessly to the community—whether it be pro bono legal services or mentoring students. Trung is motivated by equal access to the legal system for all.

Multnomah County needs a judge like Trung Tu.

JON AGEE  
Portland

### Stand by Diane

TO THE EDITOR:

I strongly urge you to commit one of the most important civil rights acts of your lives. By May 16, fill out your ballot and vote for Diane Linn. Vote to re-elect a government official who unquestioningly upheld the humanity, dignity and equality of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people by granting you the right to marry.

For almost a decade I have dedicated my life to the memory of my son Matthew by helping create a society free of hate—where everyone is treated as equal and diversity is not just tolerated but cherished. As long as our legal systems discriminate against the GLBT community, the rest of society will, too. Legal discrimination reinforces fear, bigotry, hate and violence.

Linn made national news by taking a courageous risk to grant GLBT people basic legal rights. As a result, she endured vicious criticism, political and media backlash and even death threats. Those who are threatened by our work for justice and equality have promoted a strong, negative campaign aimed at unseating Linn for her dedication to human rights.

Now more than ever, it is imperative that we stand together against the forces that seek to perpetuate hate and undermine equality. Linn has proven that she is a champion for GLBT rights. The GLBT community must now prove that we stand behind our champions and heroes and that their sacrifices are not made in vain.

You, the residents of Multnomah County, have been blessed with an opportunity—a chance to show the nation and the world that GLBT people and their friends and families will not back down. An opportunity to show that we stand unified in support of those who stand for us. And the ability to re-elect a true progressive who will continue to work for the advancement of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people regardless of the personal cost. Linn stood up for equality, and she stood up for you. Now it's your turn to stand up for Diane Linn.

JUDY SHEPARD  
Arlington, Va.

### Lesbians for Ted

TO THE EDITOR:

As members of the lesbian community, we want readers of *Just Out* to know how important the race for Multnomah County chair is. We urge them to vote for Ted Wheeler in the May 16 primary. We support Ted because he brings the experience, collaborative leadership and commitment to human services and public safety (two of the county's core missions) that we need at Multnomah County. We must have a new leader who will improve the low employee morale at the county, facilitate renewed collaboration among the board of commissioners and assure voters that county government can be accountable and serve our community and its residents well. The services of the county are too important to let poor leadership fail Multnomah County residents, particularly children, seniors and people with special needs.

Since both Wheeler and Chair Diane Linn support civil rights for the GLBT community and support same-sex marriage, members of our community should look beyond these issues to the skills and leadership the candidates bring to the position and elect Ted Wheeler. You can learn more about Wheeler at [www.wheelerforcountychair.com](http://www.wheelerforcountychair.com).

DEB FURRY  
HOLLY PRUETT  
CAROL FRENCH  
APRIL LEWIS  
Portland

### For the Record

TO THE EDITOR:

Reading *Just Out* recently, I noticed frustration with the decision by Basic Rights Oregon to not give Ted Wheeler a "green light" in his campaign for Multnomah County chair ["BRO Changed the Rules," April 7].

An endorsement was given to Diane Linn, and some Ted Wheeler supporters expected at least a "green light" recommendation for their candidate. BRO also didn't give a "red light" to Wheeler, which would have been a recommendation to not vote for him. I'm not familiar with the inner workings of how BRO determines its "light" system, but in this instance it seems to make perfectly good sense. The nonlight for Wheeler is simply a statement that his documented record, or lack of it in regards to GLBT issues, is still relatively unknown.

The facts show that Wheeler did not begin supporting BRO until October 2005 when he attended its annual dinner. He joined the Human Rights Campaign in January 2006. I'm sure both organizations now welcome his support. The facts also show that he has not donated money or time