

on set or in front of the press—it does more than create a hostile environment for his castmates and the crew of *Grey's Anatomy*,” said Neil G. Giuliano, president of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. “It also feeds a climate of hatred and intolerance that contributes to putting our community in harm’s way.”

After criticism from GLAAD and ABC, Washington issued an apology.

First Trans Judge in State Sworn In

Transgender Law Center board member and longtime civil rights advocate Victoria Kolakowski was sworn in as the state’s first openly transgender administrative law judge Jan. 19.

She was one of eight administrative law judges to be sworn in by Angela K. Minkin, chief administrative law judge of the California Public Utilities Commission. Despite many gains in transgender civil rights during the past five years, Kolakowski’s selection will make her the only openly transgender judicial or quasi-judicial officer in the state.

“I am very honored to serve the people of California in this new role,” said Kolakowski. “I hope that my appointment is a small step toward the day when the selection or election of a transgender person to any position in state government is considered ordinary.”



Victoria Kolakowski was sworn in as California’s first openly transgender administrative law judge.

with the ex-gay leader. While in Virginia, Besen was shown a video of a man who looked eerily similar to Johnston having unprotected sex with several men. Hamar’s client signed an affidavit swearing the man was Johnston.

Johnston resigned from his ministry in disgrace and fled to a sex addiction facility in Kentucky, Pure Life Ministries, where he sought counseling.

Despite publicly admitting that Johnston had failed in his efforts at heterosexuality, LaBarbera is now selling the specious *It’s Not Gay* video and portraying Johnston to unsuspecting viewers as a “former homosexual.”

ILLINOIS

Complaint Filed Against Ex-Gays

A Chicago-based gay rights organization, Truth Wins Out, filed a complaint Jan. 18 with Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan against the Naperville, Ill.-based nonprofit organization Americans for Truth and its president, Peter LaBarbera, for selling a misleading video on its Web site titled *It’s Not Gay*. In a letter to Madigan, a Truth Wins Out spokesperson urged her to expeditiously pull this fraudulent video from the marketplace, asked for a written apology from LaBarbera and demanded that refunds be offered to dissatisfied consumers.

“This organization is undeniably peddling false hope to vulnerable and desperate people and bilking them out of their hard-earned money,” wrote Truth Wins Out’s executive director, Wayne Besen. “In doing so, Americans for Truth is unscrupulously capitalizing on the sincere and heartfelt religious convictions of its followers and exploiting them for the organization’s financial gain.”

The primary spokesperson featured in *It’s Not Gay* is Michael Johnston, an HIV-positive “ex-gay” leader who offers testimony claiming he became heterosexual in 1998 “through the power of Jesus Christ.” He went on to collaborate with the American Family Association, Coral Ridge Ministries and the Rev. Jerry Falwell.

In August 2003, Johnston’s claims at sexual conversion collapsed in an embarrassing scandal. Michael Hamar, a Virginia attorney, called Besen to say he had a client who had been having an affair with Johnston, not realizing, at first, Johnston’s true identity as a prominent ex-gay figure. Besen was also introduced to another young man who claimed to have had unprotected sex

NEW YORK

More Newspapers Acknowledge Gay Unions

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation relaunched and expanded its “Announcing Equality” campaign Jan. 16, citing a dramatic 584 percent increase in the number of newspapers that accept same-sex wedding announcements since the project’s launch in 2002.

“In cities and small towns all over the country, communities are seeing the lives of their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender family members, friends and neighbors reflected in their media outlets,” said GLAAD president Neil G. Giuliano. “The presence of these stories humanizes and personalizes the experiences of our community. The fact that these announcements for celebrations of gay and lesbian couples appear alongside announcements for their straight neighbors has the power to spur the kinds of everyday conversations that will change hearts and minds.”

Five years after persuading *The New York Times* to open its weddings and celebrations pages to same-sex couples and launching the “Announcing Equality” campaign, GLAAD reported that 883 newspapers—nearly 60 percent of all daily newspapers in the United States—now accept wedding or commitment ceremony announcements for gay and lesbian couples. Prior to the campaign in 2002, only 129 newspapers said they would print such announcements. 10

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