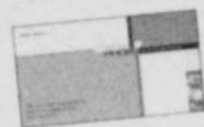


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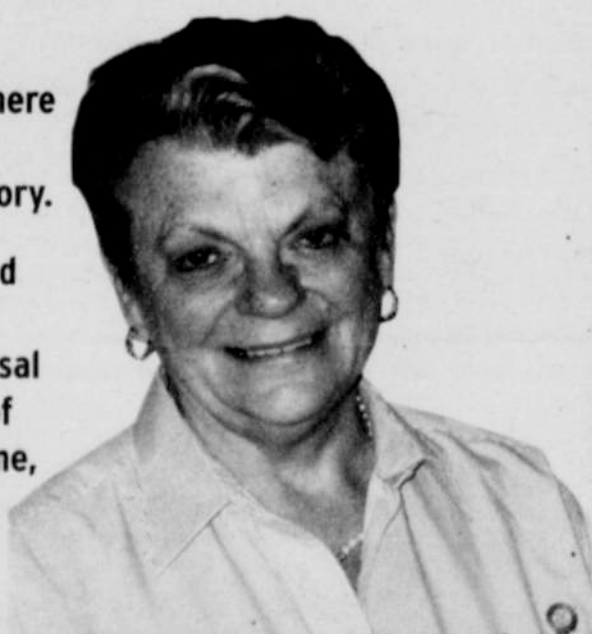
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national**CALIFORNIA****Governator Weak
on Marriage Equality**

Gay rights activists fired back at California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger after he said Feb. 15 that he would not sign legislation to allow marriage equality for same-sex couples.

Responding to a question from a high school student at a Sacramento youth conference, Schwarzenegger said the people of California, not the governor or the Legislature, should decide if same-sex couples can marry.

"Not often do leaders get a second opportunity to make the right choice, but Schwarzenegger will when the California marriage bill arrives on his desk," said Davina Kotulski, Marriage Equality USA executive director. "Then the governor can decide his place in history; he can be remembered with the likes of George Wallace, who tried to prevent school desegregation, or Thurgood Marshall, who stood up for it."

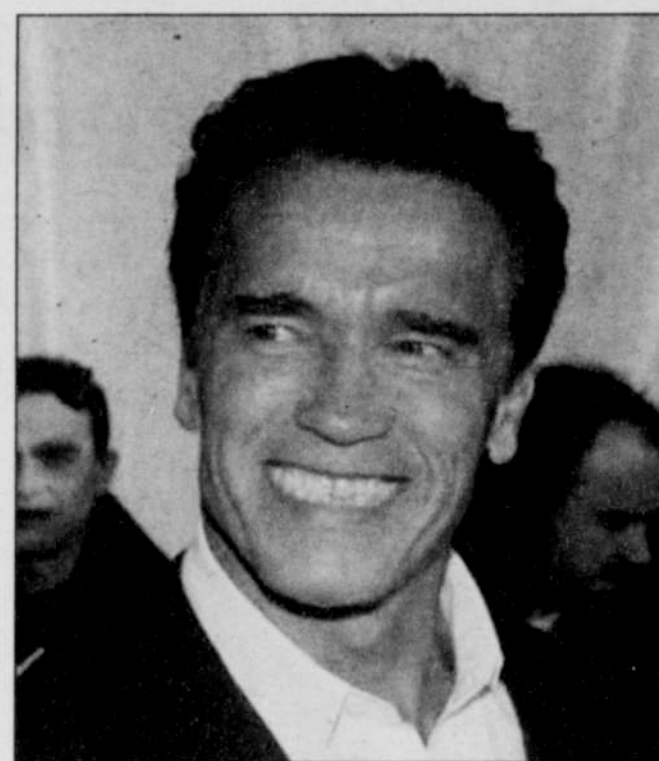
The bill, Assembly Bill 43, would give same-sex couples the freedom to marry in California.

Lesbian Legal Team Expands

The National Center for Lesbian Rights announced that it is adding three attorneys to its legal team Feb. 14. Two will be based in the San Francisco national office, and the third will join the organization's expanding Southern Regional Office in St. Petersburg, Fla. Celebrating its 13th anniversary, the group is poised to expand and improve its legal services to queers and their families.

"This is a critical time for the LGBT community, as we face unprecedented legal challenges and opportunities across a tremendous array of issues from marriage to immigration and asylum," said executive director Kate Kendell. "Since our founding in 1977, NCLR has played an increasingly visible national role in pioneering new legal strategies and policy initiatives to advocate for the most vulnerable members of our community. The addition of these new attorneys will enable NCLR to expand our leadership role."

The new attorneys are Vanessa H. Eisemann, who comes from a law firm that fights for civil rights in Pasadena, Calif.; Melanie Rowen, who was previously a cooperating attorney with the organization and operated out of San Francisco; and Shelbi Day, who spent the past two years with the

**California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger will not sign a marriage equality bill.**

Florida-based civil rights law firm Southern Legal Counsel.

"We are delighted to welcome Vanessa, Melanie and Shelbi as the newest members of NCLR's devoted legal team," said legal director Shannon Minter. "All three bring an impressive breadth of skills and experiences. The demand for NCLR's services is increasing at a breakneck pace. This expansion of NCLR's legal team assures that we keep pace with the growing legal needs of our community."

**Donors Endow
Sexual Orientation Law Position**

The Williams Institute for Sexual Orientation Law & Public Policy announced Feb. 21 the endowment of the first academic chair ever dedicated to sexual orientation law and public policy. Philanthropists John McDonald and Rob Wright donated more than \$1 million to endow the position at UCLA School of Law.

The McDonald/Wright chair of law will be held by a member of the faculty of UCLA Law and the Williams Institute who has distinguished herself or himself in, and demonstrated a dedicated commitment to, research related to sexual orientation law and public policy or a field that advances the understanding of sexual orientation law and public policy.

"The McDonald/Wright chair is the first academic chair in the country focusing on sexual orientation law and public policy," said Brad Sears, executive director of the Williams Institute. "The chair will attract new scholars to the Williams Institute and will encourage younger faculty members to pursue their academic interests in sexual orientation issues."

Wright and McDonald were honored at a cocktail party after the Williams Institute's sixth annual Update on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy. The conference, held Feb. 23 at UCLA School of Law, featured an impressive array of experts in the field of sexual orientation law.

NEW JERSEY**Civil Unions Extend
to Married Couples**

According to the New Jersey attorney general Feb. 16, gay couples who legally married in other states will have all the rights of married people in New Jersey, but they can't call themselves married. The state instead will consider those couples to be in civil unions, which became available Feb. 19 in New Jersey.

**Steven Goldstein (left) and Daniel Gross were the first couple in Vermont to be joined in a civil union.**