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national

NATIONAL NGLTF Leader Steps Down

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, will step down in April to lead the Gay & Lesbian Program at the Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund. Foreman has led NGLTF for five years.

The Haas Jr. Fund, located in San Francisco, provides more grant support to sexual minority organizations than any nongay-identified foundation in the nation.

"During his tenure, our staff grew to 54 full-time positions and our budget more than doubled to nearly \$10 million," said Mark Sexton, NGLTF board co-chairman. "Our programming expanded strategically, our public profile increased dramatically, we've granted nearly \$5 million to state and local partners. And most importantly, the task force has played an essential role in building our community's grassroots strength."

Foreman called working for NGLTF "the greatest honor of my life."

A spokesman said a national search would begin to find Foreman's successor.

NGLTF's programmatic priorities for next year include building congressional support to pass an inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act in 2009, defeating an expected anti-marriage constitutional amendment in California and launching the organization's Academy for Leadership and Action, designed to support skills and leadership development for state and local activists.

Roey Thorpe, director of state services at Equality Federation and former executive director of Basic Rights Oregon, said: "Matt has been in the trenches, working for change on every level from local to national, and his leadership reflects that. He understands the power of grassroots organizing as few others do."

Foreman has the distinction of serving as the executive director of a local, statewide and national queer organization—the New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, the Empire State Pride Agenda and NGLTF. When he steps down, he will have served as NGLTF executive director longer than any prior leader.



The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has begun the search for a new executive director since Matt Foreman announced his resignation Jan. 23.

court clerk of the 12th Judicial Circuit in Will County to assist in allowing Daunn Turner, a low-income, disabled transgender woman, to continue the process to legally change her name.

Under Illinois law, all low-income people who cannot afford court fees are entitled to a waiver of fees associated with legal proceedings. Turner's request for a waiver was rejected, however, because Will County court officials determined that changing her legal name was unnecessary and unimportant.

"All poor people—including poor transgender people—are entitled to equal access to the courts," said Christopher Clark, senior staff attorney in Lambda Legal's Midwest Regional Office in Chicago. "By refusing to give appropriate consideration to Ms. Turner's financial circumstances, the Will County court has shut her out of the judicial process."

Turner is a 52-year-old transgender woman. She is disabled and receives benefits from the Social Security Disability Insurance Program. Turner wants to legally change her name to Daunn so that her name will better reflect her female identity and so that she can avoid the harassment and discrimination that often results when people learn that her current legal name—a stereotypically male name—is at odds with how she appears.

On July 6, 2007, Turner submitted a petition to the Will County Court to begin the process of changing her legal name. Included with her petition was a request for a waiver of the court fees associated with the petition based on her status as a low-income, disabled person. The circuit clerk declined to file her papers and did not open an official court record.


Instead, Turner was directed to submit her paperwork to the offices of the chief judge. Weeks later, the chief judge rejected her petition in a telephone call, telling her that he would not spend county money on her request. He said that a name change was "something she wanted" rather than "something she needed." When asked to consider Turner's disability and financial situation, the chief judge refused, telling her that she should ask for money from her friends on her upcoming birthday to help fund her name change.

ILLINOIS

Trans Woman Fights for Name Change

In papers to be filed Jan. 17 at the Illinois Supreme Court, Lambda Legal asked the state high court to compel the chief judge and the circuit

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