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Pioneering Lawmaker Gives Boost to Young Activists

As Gail Shibley looks back on her career as the first lesbian member of the Oregon Legislature and the state's youngest lawmaker, she recalls what a difference spare change would have made back then.

At 50, Shibley has created a fund through Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays Oregon State Council in her father's name to benefit women much like her.

"This is intended to give a leg up at a time in people's lives when they're striking out on their own and filled with energy, enthusiasm and ideals," she said. "It would be nice to provide them a little additional support to help make the world a better place for all of us."

The endowment is intended for lesbian Oregonians between the ages of 18 and 30 with an emphasis on those living in Coos, Clatsop, Linn and Lane counties. Recipients are expected to show unprecedented civic leadership; be a powerful, positive public role model; and have a long-lasting impact on equal rights and opportunities for queers statewide.

Recipients will be awarded no less than \$10,000. An annual award called the Gail Shibley Pioneer Leadership Award will accompany the dollars.

PFLAG's role is to spread the word and hold the fund.

Shibley said she chose to name the fund after her father, Lyle, who quietly supported gay causes. "We never talked about me being out and gay, but several years ago as he was dying, he asked me to get his papers in order. Imagine how touched I was when I saw just before my 40th birthday that he wrote a membership check to Human Rights Campaign. He also made a contribution to PFLAG."

Teri Noble, state coordinator for PFLAG Oregon State Council, called the fund "forward-looking for the youth and a really lovely way to memorialize her dad."

Shibley said although she wants the award to start as soon as possible, a portion of her estate funds the grant, which will be left at the time of her death. "I probably could have used it very well many times over to making sure I could actually focus on political efforts instead of wondering how am I going to pay the bills next month. Just being



MARTY DAVIS

Reid Vanderburgh will honor successful trans people at the Trans Remembrance Day vigil.

able to take a little of that out of off the pressure pile lets people focus on getting voters registered or supporting or opposing a candidate. All of those things take time, energy, focus, dedication. Each of those is sapped when we feel constrained by the fiscal realities of life."

Donations can be made to the Lyle D. Shibley Fund, PFLAG Oregon Council, Attn: Lonnie Read, CPA, Read & Bose, 215 S.E. Dorian Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.

Trans Remembrance Day Is Nov. 20

Members of Portland's transgender community and their allies are observing Trans Awareness Day.

The Queer Resource Center at Portland State University has planned a candlelight vigil from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Nov. 20 at Southwest Park Avenue and Montgomery Street to remember those who died in hate crimes because of their gender expression.

According to transgender therapist Reid Vanderburgh, Trans Awareness Day is observed "to retain awareness of the reason why we need a day like this and work towards a day that we don't."

Three Oregonians who were killed in hate crimes because of their gender expression are Jacqueline Anderson, 29, murdered in February 1998; Loni Kai Okaruru, 28, murdered in August 2001; and Todd Alexander Asay, 25, murdered in December 1999.

Vanderburgh, who will speak at the vigil, will focus on transgender people's accomplishments. "I'm going to focus on remembering the things trans people have done that have been success stories so people don't feel like they're targets," he said. "On a day of remembrance, we honor and remember those who have died. It's also important to remember the people who haven't."

Political activist and transgender lesbian Laura Calvo will also speak at the vigil.

"I will speak in regards to the somber memory of all those who have been brutally murdered and how we can honor those who have been victimized around the world by continuing to live our lives in the light of day," she said.

Trans actor Scott Turner Schofield will perform from 8 to 9 p.m. Nov. 20 in Room 355 at PSU's Smith Center Ballroom, 1825 S.W. Broadway.

A discussion titled "Beyond the Binary" will be held at 12:30 p.m. Nov. 12 in Room 298 of the Smith Memorial Student Union.

The Queer Resource Center will show films with trans themes from 4 to 6 p.m. every Friday this month in Room 401 at Smith.

For more information visit www.qrc.pdx.edu or www.rememberingourdead.org.



MARTY DAVIS

Gail Shibley created a fund through PFLAG to benefit young lesbian activists.