

JUSTOUT at 25

KNOW YOUR FOES

What would Oregon be without our beloved coterie of anti-gay activists? More humane, tolerant or progressive, perhaps, but the opposite could just as well be true: Most pro-equality leaders from the '80s and '90s praise the people below as saviors for helping rally the queer and allied troops against their nasty efforts.

So here they are: nine of our favorite anti-gay foes from the past 25 years, with their most potent years of activism in parentheses.

Lon Mabon (1986-2002): Loony Lon founded the Oregon Citizens Alliance in 1986, and for nearly a decade, the group hijacked the state's ballot measure system to advance an agenda most politely described as severe. Mabon served jail time for contempt of court related to a civil case against a *Just Out* staffer (see below), then re-emerged broke and in shame, his beloved organization a sad shell of past glories. Now he hunkers down at home in Salem, half-heartedly filing anti-gay initiative petitions with no hope of passing, just to pass the time.

Priscilla Martin (1987-92): Infamous *Just Out* paper snatcher and convicted felon, caught with ink on her hands unloading boxes of our fine publication into the trunk of, what else, a stolen vehicle.

Marilyn Shannon (1995-present): One of our paper's true sweethearts, Shannon is a disgraced former state senator from Brookings who counted Mabon, Karen Minnis and David Crowe as some of her best buds, and tried (and failed) repeatedly to get Oregon's 2007 queer civil rights laws overturned, or at least sent to the ballot. Give up the ghost already, Marilyn.

Scott Lively (1991-1998): Oregon Citizens Alliance's teddy-bear-cuddly communications director. After the group imploded and lost a civil lawsuit to *Just Out* photographer Catherine Stauffer for his physical assault on her at an OCA event, he hit the road, touring Russia and the states to sprinkle his vitriolic lunacy on eager followers. These days he's involved in a new anti-gay collective called Watchmen on the Walls and has relocated, again, from California to Springfield, Mass.

David Crowe (1988-2008): Crowe was an early Mabon protégé who went his own way by founding the ultra-conservative Restore America group. He briefly led the new Concerned Oregonians political action committee, which failed with a series of anti-gay initiative petitions in 2007 and 2008. Now he's based in Tennessee.

Karen Minnis (1998-2006): Karen "the Menace" ruled the Oregon House rooster for several years as a representative of Wood Village, blocking pro-equality legislation at every turn. Her reign of terror ended in 2006 with the Democratic takeover of the state Senate.

Tim Nashif (1996-2006): Nashif is political director for the powerhouse conservative Oregon Family Council and a major machinator behind its successful multimillion-dollar 2004 Yes on 36 campaign, which enshrined discrimination in the Oregon Constitution. For now, anyway.

Gary George (1996-2008): Shut up! The state senator from McMinnville made national headlines when he told *Just Out* this year that, in the face of violence and discrimination, gays should keep their traps shut about their orientation—"Just don't talk about it," he told us. *Oh no he di-in't!*

Craig Myers (2006-present): Inheritor of the state's anti-gay mantle as new executive director of Concerned Oregonians, Myers has promised renewed attention on putting rights-stripping ballot measures before voters in 2010. We'll see just how far he gets.

—Stephen Marc Beaudoin



Lon Mabon, captain of the anti-queer agenda, in handcuffs.

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the documentary *Queens of Heart*, some type of strange and wonderful community therapist. Even in the tres gay 21st century, Cole believes his drag shows help dispel backward-looking myths about queer folk. "So many of our gay friends come in, and they bring their parents," he says. What do the parents learn about queer folk from the shows? "That we don't have two heads and aren't masturbating onstage."

MARY LI

Stepping into (and out of) the spotlight

Claim to Fame: One-third of Oregon's 2004 "same-sex marriage poster family."

So They Say: "It would not be appropriate for me, as an Asian woman, to go to a group of Asian men and talk about safer sex. I've done it, and I was mortified, and they were mortified." (January 1989)

Who's Next: Amy Santos-Lines of Western States Center and Pam Phan of the city of Portland.

If Mary Li hadn't answered the door, none of this might have happened.

But a fateful visit from a family friend, begging to "talk about something important," ending up turning into one of the most axis-shifting decisions of her life: She and her partner, Becky Kennedy, joined Oregon's marriage equality fight as a "model couple."

As they said their wedding vows in March 2004 to kick off Multnomah County's same-sex marriages, photos and stories of the couple—with their newborn daughter—raced across international television and print media. Gay marriage was the law of the land in Multnomah County, and the celebrations began. The family became celebrities overnight.

Celebrity status is out of character for Li, an

eloquent but soft-spoken division manager for Multnomah County's office of School and Community Partnerships. Her career up until 2004 was distinguished, to be sure—in leadership roles with Portland Women's Crisis Line, Bradley-Angle House and Oregon Minority AIDS Coalition, among others—but it was hardly under the public's harsh glare.

Li says she and her family are still approached by strangers on the street, offering handshakes and hugs of congratulations for their bravery.

Since then? "My life has gone incredibly insular," Li says, "to my kids." In spite of the flurry of flashbulbs surrounding her family's very public marriage in 2004, and the state's revoking of those same-sex marriage licenses only months later, she doesn't regret her decision.

"The incredible power of putting a face on something that's unfamiliar to people, and how transformative that was," she says, is one of the strongest ways gays can make their case for marriage equality. "I see your family," she remembers someone telling her in 2004. "I get it now."

DAVID MARTINEZ

Man of firsts

Claim to Fame: Co-founder of Portland Latino Gay Pride.

So They Say: "Being Latino and gay gives me such a rich history and a sense of pride." (April 21, 2006)

Who's Next: Melanie Davis and Enrique Andrade.

David Martinez is about firsts: first in his rural Oregon migrant farmworker family of seven to finish high school and attend college; among the first board members of Portland's Q Center; senior staff member for one of Multnomah County's first Latina commissioners; and, in 2006,



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