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by Marty Davis

A Difficult Decision

Why did *Just Out* call for the mayor to resign?

The following post appeared on JustOut.com at 1:45 p.m. Jan. 21:

Headed by Publisher Marty Davis, *Just Out* newsmagazine is asking that Portland Mayor Sam Adams resign from office.

By his own admission, by committing the act of lying to the citizens of Portland, Adams has failed to show the principled character that this publication feels is a basic requirement for an elected official.

Just Out acknowledges that over his two decades as a public servant Adams has risen to become one of Oregon's most revered openly gay leaders. This publication has long admired Adams' vision, his intelligence and his tenacity. Ultimately we have concluded that these qualities cannot overcome the weakness revealed in Adams' recent admission.

Adams' apology of yesterday, including specific reference to the gay community, while sincere, is not enough. The bond of trust and confidence has been broken. Adams has previously stated his hope that gay and lesbian youth might one day look to him as a role model and example. His own actions have now rendered this implausible.

Reaction to the posting was immediate. Many people expressed frustration and anger with the decision. Most commonly expressed was the belief that *Just Out* acted too soon. It was repeatedly stated that *Just Out* should have waited for an investigation to be completed and that who Adams had sex with was no one's business. Consistently readers stated their belief that all politicians lie, so what's the big deal anyway?

Why did *Just Out* make such a quick decision in calling for the mayor to resign?

Because, following Adams' press conference Jan. 20, it was evident that he had been caught in his own complex and calculated series of lies. Let's be clear: These were not "Who ate the last cookie?" type of lies. These were manipulative lies intended to deceive every citizen of Portland. The desire to be elected mayor was so great that Adams was willing to compromise his integrity and his values in the pursuit of the goal.

In September 2007, after allegations that Adams had engaged in a sexual relationship with a minor, a tight-lipped and chilly Adams called me and *Just Out* news staff into his office for an interview. We sat there for 30 minutes, questioning the steely jawed commissioner as he clenched in righteous indignation over the "lies" that were being spread about his character and moral fiber. We listened, we believed, we trusted. We came back to this publication and wrote our words of support for Adams and encouraged our community to rally around our gay icon. Adams deliberately duped this publication into

spreading his falsehoods. Now it might be asked, "Is there now a feeling of anger toward Adams causing *Just Out* to react in retribution by asking for the resignation?"

No, that is not the case. It's a matter of clarity of conviction, of seeing the actions then and the results now.

The bonds of trust between Adams and Portland have been broken. You cannot lead those who no longer have the will to follow. Portland is a city in need of leadership and in need of it now. Our economy is broken, and our infrastructure is falling apart. We don't have the time to rehabilitate a fallen, chastened leader. This is work Adams will need to do on his own.

Readers objecting to our stance also expressed frustration that *Just Out* jumped the gun, not waiting for the results of an investigation. What difference would this make? Adams, after cornered by *Willamette Week*, had no recourse but to admit he lied. There's no new information coming forward to salvage this truth. There are no investigation results that can come along to make this situation any better. It is what it is.

There are many who view this as a matter of privacy and the right for everyone, including Adams, to have a personal and private sex life. Everyone does have this right. And Adams had the right to make that clear in September 2007 when called into accountability. He chose a different path. The path chosen led him to where he is today.

There are those who have complained that we are holding our politicians—and Adams, as a gay man—to a higher standard than we hold others. My belief is that when it comes to the truth, there should be only one standard. And we should all hold ourselves, and each other, accountable to this standard.

Comments on our Web site, and others, consistently threw out statements like: "Politicians lie, they all lie. Get over it, *Just Out*." So, folks, when did that become acceptable? When did we become people who tolerate or accept being lied to? What's wrong with this picture, Portland?

Making the decision to call for Adams' resignation was difficult for all of us. It may have appeared hasty, but it was well thought out. We brought to our decision-making table the knowledge that came from having sat in a room with Commissioner Adams the day he chose to back himself into a corner. A corner that ultimately allowed him no escape.

Sam Adams is a gifted and talented public servant. His years of hard work earned him many loyal supporters. It's unfortunate that he chose to let them all down. I personally gave Sam Adams my vote, my support, my friendship and my money. In return, he took my trust. 19

reflections

15 Years Ago In *Just Out*... volume 11 number 6, January 21, 1994

• Longtime Portland performer Misty Waters Shanklin, known by many simply as Misty Waters, died Dec. 15 of complications due to AIDS. She was 36 years old. Born as Sullivan Johnson, he served honorably in the U.S. Marines for three years. Later in life he underwent the physical transformation to become a woman. As Misty Waters, Johnson was crowned Miss Oregon and Princess XI during her career as a stage entertainer. Her brother, Woody Johnson, also known as Lady Elaine Peacock, died in October of complications from AIDS.

• San Franciscans recently honored the memory of Harvey Milk, the first openly gay member of the city's Board of Supervisors. Former policeman Dan White assassinated Milk 15 years ago on Nov. 27. A plaque was unveiled in front of the store where Milk once owned a camera

shop in the city's Castro District. It contained the inscription "You Gotta Give 'Em Hope."

• Barney, PBS-TV's purple dinosaur popular with preschoolers, is being advertised by a minister in Charlotte, N.C., as a "new age demon" who promotes "homosexuality."

• Leila Wrathall and Don Powell are the new co-chairs of the Right to Privacy Political Action Committee. Right to Privacy PAC is a separate organization from Right to Privacy Inc.

• Republicans for Individual Freedoms, an organization of gay Republicans, is planning to start a chapter in Oregon. The group has more than 200 members nationwide, with about a dozen living in Oregon.

• After more than two years of planning and thought, organizers of a Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community Center are moving ahead to the next stages of development. Writing articles of incorporation and bylaws, forming task-specific committees and gaining nonprofit status are the next goals of the center organizers. A rented or donated location still has to be established.



justout

NEWMAGAZINE

VOL. 26 NO. 6 JANUARY 23, 2009



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