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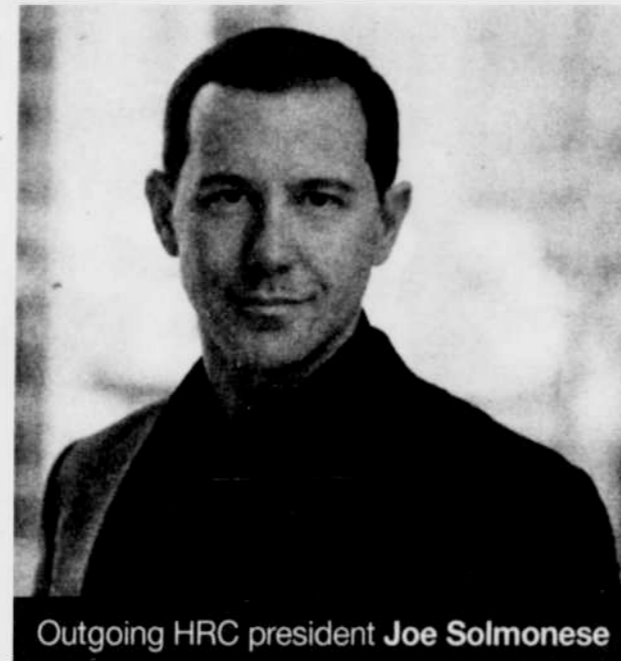
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Outgoing HRC president Joe Solmonese

**HRC President Announces 2012 Departure**

Human Rights Campaign president Joe Solmonese will leave the organization when his contract expires at the end of March 2012, the co-chairs of the HRC board of directors and foundation board announced August 27.

"We've made more accomplishments [during Solmonese's tenure] than any time in our history nationally," said HRC board member Terry Bean. "We've been very lucky at HRC. We've been able to get the perfect person at the perfect time. He had the leadership and political smarts to get [pro-equality] legislation through and stop bad legislation."

Since Solmonese began at HRC in 2005, the organization has celebrated major victories for LGBT equality including the legalization of marriage equality in six states and the District of Columbia, the passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, the repeal of "Don't ask, don't tell" and the reversal of the HIV travel ban.

The HRC also credits Solmonese with increasing the organization's supporter base by 250,000 and expanding its public education and outreach programs in areas such as health care, religion and faith, corporate equality, bullying and adoption.

"HRC has never been stronger and after nearly seven years, this is the right moment for me to move on," Solmonese said in a release. "As I explore new professional possibilities, I plan on continuing to pour my heart and soul into improving the lives of members of our community—from battling proposed marriage amendments to creating more equitable workplaces to ensuring ... President Obama is reelected for a second term."

Still, Solmonese's tenure has not been without criticism. Most notable was the HRC's decision to support a version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act that did not include protections for transgender people. The HRC has since clarified its position, and now only supports an inclusive ENDA.

Some have expressed hope that Solmonese's departure will spark an organizational shift.

"The challenges for a new leader are clear: HRC remains insular, not open to new approaches or ideas," Richard Socarides, former senior White House adviser to President Bill Clinton on gay rights, told *The Advocate* following the announcement.

"They are so tied to the established order in Washington that they sometimes seem mostly focused on not rocking the boat. Hopefully that can change."

The HRC board chairs said they will work with a search committee as well as a firm to identify Solmonese's successor.

—ERIN ROOK

**LGBTQ Advocate and Retired Ugandan Bishop to Speak in Portland**

Christopher Senyonjo, a retired Anglican bishop from Uganda, makes his way to Portland September 6-13. The gay rights advocate and founder of St. Paul's Reconciliation and Equality Centre for LGBTQ/Straight Alliance will give a public talk at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral (147 NW 19th Ave.) September 12 at 7 p.m.

Bishop Senyonjo retired from his ministerial career in 1998, leaving behind a legacy of LGBTQ advocacy that continues today, specifically on behalf of LGBTQ Ugandans. His counseling services for LGBTQ people began in 2001, nine years prior to the founding of St. Paul's Reconciliation and Equality Centre for LGBTQ/Straight Alliance. In 2010, Bishop Senyonjo was a keynote speaker during two United Nations international human rights conferences, and he has been recognized by the California State Assembly for his leadership on LGBTQ issues. He was also named one of the *Huffington Post's* 10 Most Influential Religious Leaders for 2010.

Bishop Senyonjo and his wife, Mary, will be in the United States through October 24.

For more information on Bishop Senyonjo's tour, call the Rev. Canon Albert Ogle at 949-338-8830, or email aogle@stpaulsfoundation.com.

—RYAN J. PRADO

**BRO Encourages LGBTQ Oregonians to Share Their Stories**

As Basic Rights Oregon prepares to make a decision on moving forward with a 2012 marriage equality ballot measure, the organization is encouraging LGBT Oregonians and their allies to share their stories about why marriage matters.

"Research shows that people who've talked to LGBT folks and straight allies about marriage are twice as likely to support the freedom to marry," said BRO executive director Jeana Frazzini.

At an August 24 marriage strategy session, BRO field organizer Kyle White explained that while a near majority of Oregonians support full or partial rights for same-sex couples (whether or not they want to call it "marriage"), about 100,000 hearts and minds need to be changed to reach the 50 percent mark.

That's why, in addition to hitting the streets this summer and reaching out to 20,000 Oregonians via phone banks this fall, BRO is asking LGBTQ folks and their allies to share their personal stories with