

PROP 8 TRIAL

The Courage Campaign Prop 8 Trial Tracker

The US Supreme Court has ruled there will be no video coverage of this ground-breaking Civil Rights trial. However, thanks to the Courage Campaign, you can follow the latest developments. Just go to prop8trialtracker.com.

The Prop 8 Trial Tracker has attracted coverage from New Yorker, the New York Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, the Atlantic Online's Andrew Sullivan, and various other media outlets.

Statement by Attorney for the Plaintiff, Ted Olsen

Following is the end of the opening statement by Ted Olsen, arguing against Proposition 8:

"At the end of the day, whatever the motives of its Proponents, Proposition 8 enacted an utterly irrational regime to govern entitlement to the fundamental right to marry, consisting now of at least four separate and distinct classes of citizens: (1) heterosexuals, including convicted criminals, substance abusers and sex offenders, who are permitted to marry; (2) 18,000 same-sex couples married between June and November of 2008, who are allowed to remain married but may not remarry if they divorce or are widowed; (3) thousands of same-sex couples who were married in certain other states prior to November of 2008, whose marriages are now valid and recognized in California; and, finally (4) all other same-sex couples in California who, like the Plaintiffs, are prohibited from marrying by Proposition 8.

"There is no rational justification for this unique pattern of discrimination. Proposition 8, and the irrational pattern of California's regulation of marriage which it promulgates, advances no legitimate state interest. All it does is label gay and lesbian persons as different, inferior, unequal, and disfavored. And it brands their relationships as not the same, and less-approved than those enjoyed by opposite sex couples. It stigmatizes gays and lesbians, classifies them as outcasts, and causes needless pain, isolation and humiliation.

"It is unconstitutional."

Read the full text of Ted Olsen's opening statement at: <http://tinyurl.com/ykurh5a>

PROFILE Kirk DeCoste

New Mason elected Senior Warden

Our own "Captain" Kirk has been honored as the Senior Warden of his Masonic Lodge. Below are details of his new responsibilities.

- The 'Senior Warden' (sometimes known as First Warden) sits in the West and represents the column of strength which is representative of Jachin, the right hand pillar which stood at door to King Solomon's Temple.
- The Senior Warden's jewel of office is the level, a Masonic symbol of equality.
- The Senior Warden is the second of the three principal officers of a Masonic lodge, and is the Master's principal deputy (the Junior Warden being the second deputy). If the Worshipful Master is absent, the Senior Warden presides over the Lodge with all the powers of the Master.
- The Senior Warden may act for the Master in all matters of lodge business, and represents the Master at other Masonic functions. The Senior Warden serves as chairman of a Lodge's principle committees.
- While in Lodge, the Senior Warden takes precedence above all Mason's except the Master.
- In lodges across the United States, it is presumed that the Senior Warden will become the next Worshipful Master.

Congratulations Kirk! •



Student awarded first Louis Crompton Scholarship

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Office of Student Involvement and the LGBTQA Resource Center announced that Jason Lucht of Gretna, Neb., is the first recipient of the Louis Crompton Scholarship. The scholarship fund was established in 2009 as a tribute to Louis Crompton, a longtime English professor at UNL and an early leader in gay and lesbian studies.

To support the Louis Crompton Scholarship Fund, tax deductible contributions may be made online at nufoundation.org/crompton. Gifts may also be made payable to the University of Nebraska Foundation and sent to: University of Nebraska Foundation, 1010 Lincoln Mall Ste 300, Lincoln, NE 68508.

For more information about contributing, contact Lori Thomas at the University of Nebraska Foundation at 402-458-1156 or at lthomas@nufoundation.org. •

PLYMOUTH PRIDE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY: *Just Desserts!*

MARCH: Ryan Sallans

APRIL: Panel: LGBTQ issues

MAY: Panel: Foster Parenting & Adoption

NEW LGBT Bible Study

For the LGBTQA community, the Bible has all too often been used as a weapon of derision and not as a beacon of hope. If you want to share in the Good News of scripture for all people, but particularly focused on the LGBTQA community, please join us for a Bible Study after the 11:59 service in Calvert Parlor (just past Pilgrim Hall on the west side of the church). Each week the group will look at a particular passage and relate it to real life experience. *Please come and bring a friend.*

IN FOCUS: New GLBT Program at Parallels

The GLBT program at Parallels has the goal of offering a safe place for gay, lesbian, transgendered, bisexual and questioning clients to deal with adjustment issues, mental health issues and substance abuse issues. This gives GLBT clients an open forum to also discuss relationships and other life issues without fear of group members judging them. The goal of the group is to help clients adjust to their own sexuality and/or learn ways to handle other issues in a setting that promotes safety and change. Confidentiality is another primary focus of this group.

GLBT Treatment Group:

Monday night from 7 – 8:30 p.m.
For more information, call: 489-9792
Parallels is a mental health practice and is licensed by the State of Nebraska as an outpatient alcohol and drug agency.

UPDATE: Nebraska Licensed Mental Health Provider Code of Ethics

As many of you know, revised language governing Licensed Mental Health Practitioners (LMHP) is being rewritten at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Our community has had terrific support from the Nebraska Board of Mental Health Practice (MHP), but unfortunately, there has been resistance to including protections for LGBT Nebraskans from both Dr. Joann Schaefer, Chief Medical Officer of NDHHS, and the Nebraska Catholic Conference. A word of “Thanks” goes to all who have made their voices heard last year in hearings and correspondence to public officials.

The following is a timeline of events (provided by Tyler Richard). *Please note: protection for Transgender Nebraskans is omitted in the language submitted by Dr. Joann Schaefer.*

- ▶ **2007/2008:** The Nebraska Board of Mental Health Practice (MHP) is charged with developing a uniform code of ethics for all licensed mental health providers (LMHP), regardless of their association with a national agency, such as Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapist or Professional Counselors.
- ▶ **Summer 2008:** The MHP Board held a public hearing for their proposed code of ethics in which the Nebraska Catholic Conference protested the inclusion of a non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation. This language is in alignment with national licensing organizations' codes of ethics. The MHP Board moves the regulations forward. They are also advanced by the Board of Health. *Dr. Joann Schaefer, Chief Medical Officer for the State of Nebraska, chooses not to advance these regulations.*
- ▶ **June 2009:** The MHP Board held a public hearing for a revised code of ethics that included a providers conscience regulation aimed at preventing an LMHP from being required to provide or refer for services that they find objectionable. The MHP Board received a significant amount of public disapproval with the providers conscience clause.
- ▶ **July 2009:** The MHP Board votes to advance a non-discrimination policy that includes both sexual orientation and gender identity that also clearly allows for a referral when a provider is unable or unwilling to work with a client. (Included below)
- ▶ **Sept 2009:** Dr. Joann Schaefer meets with the MHP Board, Licensed Psychologist Board and the Drug Counselors Board (who are also trying to move forward a code of ethics) and the Nebraska Catholic Conference. An additional meeting was held that also included the professional association representatives. The stated goal is to gain an understanding of the concerns of each entity and find a compromise. *Dr. Joann Schaefer states a refusal to move the trans-inclusive nondiscrimination policy forward as written.*
- ▶ **Fall/Winter 2009:** Dr. Schaefer's office drafts new language and provides it to the Nebraska Catholic Conference for feedback. The Catholic conference expressed approval. Dr. Schaefer's office does not provide the draft language to the professional associations in advance. No action has been taken yet by the MHP Board on this language. (Included below)

“This (refusing to provide homosexuals equal protection) has been the direction of the state. It is not anything new,”

—Dr. Joann Schaefer, CEO DHHS

JULY 2009 LANGUAGE APPROVED BY MHP BOARD (Not Advanced)

Credential holders must provide professional assistance to patients/clients without discrimination on the basis of race, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, health status, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity or if uncomfortable doing so due to a moral or religious conviction, credential holders must refer such patients/clients to another professional for assistance.

LATEST LANGUAGE DRAFTED BY DHHS (No formal action taken)

Credential holders must provide professional assistance to clients/patients without discrimination on the basis of race, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, health status, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

If during the treatment of the presenting problem, the client/patient seeks treatment from the credential holder for a newly identified problem and the credential holder is unable to provide the treatment for any reason, the credential holder may refer the client/patient for the initial presenting problem. If such a referral is not made, the credential holder must provide treatment in a competent and non-discriminatory manner.