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## Tribune media extends domestic partnership benefits to employees

CHICAGO — Media giant Tribune Company has announced its decision to offer its employees domestic partner benefits beginning January 1, 2002. The decision extends the benefits already in place for employees of the former Times-Mirror Corporation following the recent merger of the two media companies. The new policy affects all 30,000 employees of the Tribune Co., which includes 11 daily newspapers and 22 television stations. The Tribune domestic partner coverage will include both same-sex partners and opposite sex, unmarried couples.

In addition to the extension of equal benefits, Tribune added sexual orientation to its company-wide nondiscrimination policy, following the Times-Mirror practice. Tribune Company employees active in the National Lesbian and Gay Journalist Association worked effectively with management before and following the merger to urge the adoption of equal benefits and to raise other con-

cerns of gay and lesbian employees in the

18 & over

Karen Bailis, an NLGJA board member and assistant news editor at *Newsday*, said, "Tribune has shown it values me and my gay and lesbian colleagues and all employees by offering these benefits. It's gratifying to know that our education efforts and the lobbying conducted by gay and non-gay employees has resulted in tangible success."

Robert Dodge, NLGJA President noted, "Equal pay for equal work — that's the principle behind domestic partner benefits for gay and lesbian workers. On average, benefits account for 39 percent of payroll, which means that gay and lesbian employees in committed, long term relationships are effectively being paid less than their married coworkers."

Dodge specifically cited as an example Tribune online journalist Christine Badowski, who revealed how this breakthrough affects herself, her partner and their son, Sam:

"For the first time, like any married couple, we have real choices about our family's future. My partner, Julie, now has the ability to stay home with Sam — and to work a couple different jobs for our friends who have their own businesses, but cannot offer her essential health benefits. And, who knows? We might even consider a second child if she's able to be home full-time."

The number of news media companies and associated unions offering domestic partner (DP) benefits has more than doubled (from 26 to 73) since 1997, according to a study conducted in 2000 by NLGJA. ▼

## Wolfson departs Lambda Legal to continue pursuit of marriage rights

by Peg Byron Special to Q-Notes

NEW YORK — Evan Wolfson, a pioneering lawyer for the nation's leading lesbian and gay legal organization, will leave Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund to explore new strategies for securing full equality for lesbians and gay men, including the freedom to marry.

After twelve years on staff, Wolfson's last day with the organization will be April 30, Lambda announced March 22.

Lambda Executive Director Kevin M.

Cathcart said, "For over a decade, Evan has personified Lambda's passion and vision for equality. From his pursuit of the freedom to marry to his argument before the United States Supreme Court against the Boy Scouts' anti-gay policy, his voice has rallied innumerable people, gay and non-gay, to the cause of justice."

"While we will miss Evan's enthusiastic presence in our daily work lives, we are very pleased that he will continue to work with us so closely as an independent force toward the goals we share," Cathcart said.

In addition to serving as director of Lambda's Marriage Project, Wolfson litigated cases ranging from one that drew protests from the Ku Klux Klan when he represented a Florida deputy sheriff fired for being gay to another that resulted in domestic partner benefits for New York City employees. In June 2000, the *National Law Journal* honored Wolfson by naming him one of the 100 most influential attorneys in America.

"Evan's dedication and strategic work have helped fuel this liberation movement and benefitted many people along the way. His exemplary commitment will continue now, and Lambda will continue to work with him, as he approaches the next stages of our civil rights movement as a broad thinker and leader," said Legal Director Ruth E. Harlow.

"With Evan at the helm, Lambda's Marriage Project put this cause on the political map. Moving forward, we will redouble our efforts to end discrimination in marriage, through public education, policy advocacy,

and litigation," Harlow said.

The new Marriage Project Coordinator will be Lambda attorney David Buckel.

"I am proud to have had the honor of working for an organization as visionary and solid as Lambda. I will continue to be a partner of this extraordinary, dedicated group as we move forward," Wolfson said, adding, "I am thankful for the many colleagues who have taught, inspired, and supported me, and done so much good. And I am excited that now I will have the chance to figure out how best to build on the work we have done, win the freedom

to marry, and enlarge possibilities for gay and non-gay people alike.

"I will now take this special opportunity to confer with diverse leaders and organizations around the country, seek out new strategies, resources, and voices, and, as Lincoln put it, 'think anew' about how best to advance the needed sustained campaign to secure the freedom to marry," Wolfson said.

Wolfson's tenure at Lambda spans dramatic changes in the legal and cultural position of lesbians

and gay men in America. Representing James Dale in his challenge to the Boy Scouts' discriminatory policy, Wolfson helped spark the present nationwide response against that discrimination. As director of Lambda's Marriage Project, Wolfson was co-counsel in the landmark Hawaii case which launched the ongoing national discussion about gay people's freedom to marry, and advanced crucial legal theories that courts around the country are beginning to heed. Wolfson also contributed his expertise to Baker v. Vermont, which led to the creation of "civil unions," a new legal marital status for same-sex couples in that state.

At Lambda, Wolfson championed diverse clients such as lesbian and gay military personnel seeking the right to serve; gay parents wishing to adopt children and preserve visitation rights; a man with AIDS fighting for life-saving medical treatment refused by his insurer; and a woman denied work as a Dallas police officer because of the state's anti-gay "Homosexual Conduct Law."



Evan Wolfson continues conquest for marriage rights.

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