

Guest Commentary

by Frank Benedetti and Gary Trowbridge

We are just as deserving

Last month *The Winston-Salem Journal* ran a survey on same-gender marriage, which was opposed by 66 percent of the participants — mostly on a “religious” basis. This negative backlash is not unusual. After the U.S.

Supreme Court overturned laws against interracial marriage (*Loving v. Virginia*) a Gallup Poll showed 72 percent against the decision.

Recently, two senators introduced a federal constitutional amendment not only limiting the definition of marriage to one man and one woman, but also wiping out any benefits same-sex couples have that might be found in legal marriages.

It is interesting to note that the senators are Larry Craig, who was arrested in an airport bathroom sting, and David Vinter, recently identified as a client of a prostitution ring — neither one a moral authority on marriage.

I am trying to understand how my partner of 44 years and I are hurting the sanctity of marriage by legalizing our relationship at City Hall.

Religions still have their constitutional ability to discriminate. If marriage is currently in trouble, why are we being blamed and how has this become our problem?

It isn't as if we would exhaust a finite number of licenses. And, if procreation, rather than loving companionship, is the purpose of marriage, will childless couples then lose their licenses? Lastly, how is marriage strengthened by making it available to fewer people?

It seems to me that if marriage is in trouble, the causes are a 50 percent divorce rate, unlimited serial marriages, spousal abuse

including murder, absentee fathers, cheating spouses, and drive thru Las Vegas weddings — not same gender loving couples.

With regard to absentee fathers, a recent *Parade* magazine article indicated that a Denver Broncos tailback fathered nine children from 9 women while BB King

fathered 15 children by 15 women.

I also read the Bible and note in that time marriages were financial contracts between families dealing with children who often didn't even know each other. Women were regarded as “property” — first owned by their fathers and then their husbands. Multiple

wives and concubines were common with Solomon having 1,000 of them.

Also, in contrast to the handful of disputed verses concerning homosexuality, there are many more endorsing slavery. Homosexuality isn't in the Ten Commandments or any of the Gospels. Jesus never mentions it, but he does talk against divorce. We ignore countless other prohibitions, so why seize on this particular issue to sanctify prejudices?

Marriage used to be defined as a union of two people, but only of the same religion and the same race. Wives were the subservient property of the husbands who maintained all property rights. Marital rape was acceptable and procreation was not voluntary. It has evolved through the years to reflect an equality of individuals.

I feel that we are God's children, human beings and American citizens — and we are just as deserving and capable of love as anyone else. ▀



Frank Benedetti and Gary Trowbridge at their 40th anniversary re-commitment ceremony in Winston-Salem, N.C.

John Amaechi to visit Charlotte

Openly gay former NBA player to speak at conference

compiled by Q-Notes staff

On Sept. 11, openly gay former NBA player and author John Amaechi will be a featured speaker at the Executive Leadership Summit of the National Organization for Diversity in Sales and Marketing, an organization founded in 2003 to foster effective, diverse sales and marketing strategies within corporate America, as well as within the small business community.

Amaechi is a *New York Times* best-selling author with his autobiography “Man in the Middle.” In February 2007, Amaechi became the official spokesperson for the Human Rights Campaign's Coming Out Project, a program designed to help LGBT people come out and live openly.

The conference will be held Sept. 10-12 at the Hilton Center City. Wachovia is the pre-

sending sponsor. More information regarding registration and accommodation costs can be found online at

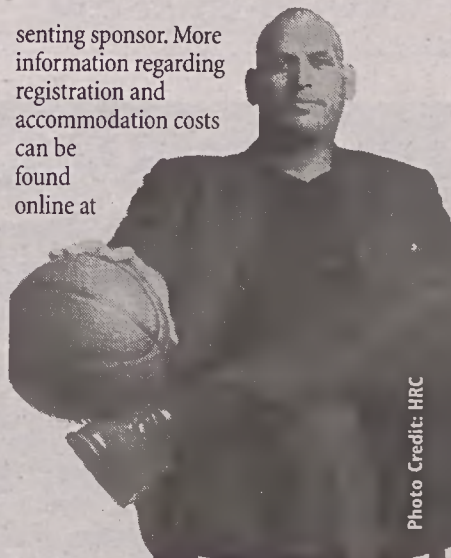


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www.minoritymarketshare.com. More information about Amaechi's work with HRC can be found at www.hrc.org/amaechi/. ▀



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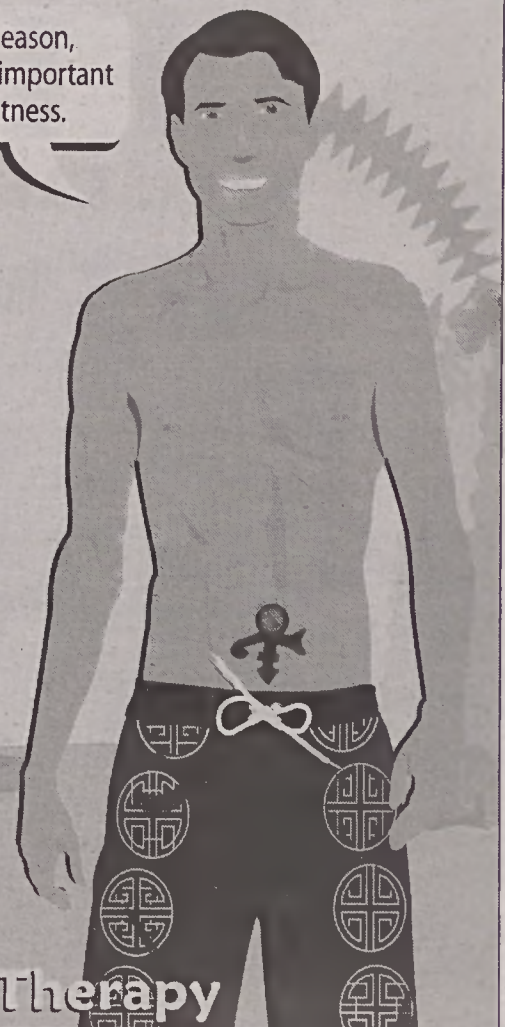
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