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Angels gets taken to task in Charlotte

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—After lying low for more than two years, arch-conservative Rev. Joe Chambers burst back into local politics — and media outlets — with a vengeance, to whip up controversy about the play *Angels In America*. As events unfolded around Chamber's attempts to have the play canceled, it became as compelling a drama as the Pulitzer Prize-winning show itself.

Angels In America, a complex, two-part, seven-hour opus which examines themes as diverse as homosexuality, the Reagan years, AIDS and Mormonism, had already been successfully staged in Greensboro and Durham before coming to Charlotte, but those performances were produced by the national touring company and encompassed only two nights in each city. The difference here was that the epic was being produced by a local company, Charlotte Repertory Theatre — one of just six regional theaters selected by playwright Tony Kushner to stage the drama — and included a four-week run.

Rev. Chambers, head of the right-wing group Concerned Charlotteans, set the stage for a showdown when he held a press conference on the morning of Monday, March 18 to denounce the play and assert his intentions of having it shut down over a nude scene and simulated homosexual sex acts which occur

in *Millennium Approaches*, Part I of *Angels*. "These kind (sic) of events should be an example to all traditional Americans of what the radical gay community and those who support them actually intend for this nation. It is clear that Tony Kushner is a sick man with a homosexual agenda."

Chambers said he would ask the City Council to stop the opening-night performance before it began Wednesday at 7:30pm. "The *Charlotte Observer* noted three ways that tax money was expended to support this play: 'The company receives government money through the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Arts & Science Council; Kushner has received National Endowment for the Arts money; and the Performing Arts Center is a city-owned facility.' To heap abuse on taxpayers in this fashion shows total disregard for their interest and convictions."

At a lively meeting that evening, the city's attorney informed council members that they had no jurisdiction in the matter and only the



Rev. Chambers outlines his plans to stop *Angels*

board of the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, the play's venue, could halt the production. Lawyers for the District Attorney's

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NC mothers oppose Helms

by Wynn Bone
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—A new organization has been formed by two determined mothers whose goal is to retire Senator Helms from office in November. Mothers Against Jesse In Congress (MAJIC) was conceived last fall by Patsy Clarke and Eloise Vaughn of Raleigh. Both women have lost sons to AIDS and are appalled by Helms' stance and rhetoric on AIDS issues.

"We are mothers," emphasized Vaughn, "who are against Helms. And as mothers, our presence is essential, especially since Jesse likes to talk so much about family values."

Clarke, a former Helms supporter, and Vaughn were quick to point out that family values such as compassion, understanding and love for others were inconsistent with bigotry and judgmentalism. "So, of course, we're offended by Jesse's judgmentalism, hatred and bigotry too," stated Vaughn.

The catalyst which provoked these two women into action was a news report stating

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Lesbian health advocacy group announces results

by Liza Rankow
Special to Q-Notes

DURHAM—Many readers may be familiar with Women's Health Access (WHA) through their participation in focus groups or the completion of their written survey about the health concerns of lesbians and other women with women partners. Thanks to the interest of women from across the state, close to 600 surveys were returned and the data is presently being analyzed. Based on the information shared through both the focus groups and the survey, two areas of action were identified: educating health care providers to do a better job in meeting lesbian health needs and providing accurate health information to the women in LGBT communities.

This past autumn, WHA designed and pilot-tested a training session for health care practitioners designed to increase their knowledge and sensitivity in serving lesbian and bisexual patients and clients. Close to 100 doctors, PAs, nurses, health educators and other clinic staff attended the sessions held at Lincoln Community Health Center, the VA Medical Center Women's Clinic (both in Durham) and Planned Parenthood of the Triangle and Triad. The information was well-received and evaluations suggest a successful achievement of their goals. The curriculum guide for this training, along with a handbook on lesbian health, will be reproduced for distribution through the National Lesbian and Gay Health Association so that health educators around the country may present similar programs in their areas.

Women filling out the survey were asked to identify the health issues of greatest importance to them and their friends. The message was clear. Women want more information about breast and cervical cancer, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and safer sex.

Other top issues included menopause, alcohol and drug use, diet and exercise, and finding sensitive medical care providers. The surveys said the best way to disseminate health information was through written brochures (distributed in a variety of ways) and through friends and women in the community who know about health issues. Many also suggested workshops, newspaper and magazine articles and the use of TV and radio.

WHA plans to hold a skills building workshop for women from across the state who are interested in serving as community educators on lesbian health issues. Many of these women will be on hand at NC Pride '96 festivities (June 8-9 in Winston-Salem) staffing the WHA health information table at both the Saturday exhibit hall and the Sunday rally site. Stop by for brochures on breast and cervical cancer, HIV/AIDS and safer sex. There will also be Women's Health Access t-shirts and free giveaways. Their Saturday workshop is titled "Lesbian Health: Hot Topics and Busting Myths."

Meanwhile, WHA is writing articles for the medical journals read by doctors and other health care professionals to educate them about our health needs and concerns, writing about lesbian health issues for the LGBT press, writing down the "recipes" for our community and professional education workshops so that others don't need to reinvent the wheel. WHA is also talking to friends, lovers, and communities about lesbian health, talking to health care practitioners and students, talking to national conferences of health professionals and other conferences of queer health activists, talking to state and federal agencies who set the policy, programs and funding for women's health so that they include lesbians. In addition, WHA is looking

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Suit challenges validity of racial, gay scholarships

by Eagle White
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—Two Republican candidates for state office are involved in the filing of a federal lawsuit which seeks to end racially-based scholarships in the University of North Carolina (UNC) system. The same suit seeks an injunction against the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Law for administering the Alan Berman Memorial Scholarship established in memory of gay attorney Alan Berman who died in 1992.

Jack W. Daly, the lead plaintiff in the case, is a Charlotte native and first-year law student at Chapel Hill. The Raleigh office of the State Board of Elections confirmed that Daly is a Republican candidate for State Auditor. Clemmons, NC attorney Nathanael K. "Nate" Pendley, who represents the plaintiffs in the suit, is a Republican candidate for Associate Justice of the State Supreme Court.

In the portion of the suit which challenges race-based scholarships, Daly is joined by seven other plaintiffs, all of whom are white males currently enrolled in a college in the UNC system. Defendants named in the suit include UNC President C. D. "Dick" Spangler, UNC Board of Governors chairman D. Samuel Neill, and the chancellors of UNC-Charlotte, Appalachian State, Western Carolina University, and UNC-Asheville. Jane Elizabeth Furr, Assistant Dean of Admissions for the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Law, is also named as a defendant.

The lawsuit was filed on March 11 in the United States District Court, Western District of North Carolina, Statesville Division. The plaintiffs allege that because they are Caucasian, they have been excluded from financial aid packages known as "Minority Presence Grants" (MPGs). Plaintiffs say this is a state-sanctioned violation of their US Constitutional rights under the fourteenth amendment which guarantees equal protection under law.

UNC's Dick Robinson, Assistant to the President for Legal Affairs, says the MPG

program is part of a package of grant programs approved in 1981 by the US District Court. The goal of the program was to bring black students to UNC schools which had predominantly white enrollments, and to bring white students to UNC campuses which had traditionally enrolled a majority of students who were African-American. Accordingly, the MPG program has helped bring racial diversity to all of the schools under the University of North Carolina system.

Federal courts have recently ruled against affirmative action grants in states such as Maryland and Texas. North Carolina's program appears to be unique in that grants are offered to both white and black students in an effort to desegregate all UNC campuses.

In addition to Daly and the seven other plaintiffs in the case, attorney Nate Pendley, who filed the suit on behalf of the plaintiffs, appears to have considerable troubles of his own, including racial issues. Pendley, a candidate for State Supreme Court, appeared in court last fall to answer criminal charges of voter fraud. At the court appearance, Pendley asked for a public defender, saying he was indigent. Pendley won a Superior Court judgeship in 1994, but was stripped of the seat after being accused of giving false information regarding his residency to the State Board of Elections. Although facing one count each of election registration-book fraud and voter qualification fraud, Pendley denied any wrongdoing and was quoted by the *Chapel Hill Herald* as saying that his candidacy for judgeship would have been fine, "if it had not been a left wing, black judge from the inner city of Greensboro making the decision." A spokesperson at the NC Attorney General's office in Raleigh declined comment to *Q-Notes* about Pendley's legal troubles, and Pendley could not be reached for comment.

In addition to the 14th Amendment claim of the suit, Daly alleges that the Alan Berman Memorial Scholarship at the UNC-Chapel

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