



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"I have a dream ..."

Celebrating the triumphant sacred African-American journey 21

March 4 . Celebrate the life of Alan Rosenberg 4

"Inauthentic."

The Pope brands our families



12



MCC's Rev. Troy Perry in Wilmington Feb. 21-23 19

ONLINE
Q.POLL
www.q-notes.com

Do main LGBT groups reflect the diversity of our population?

Yes . No

Doing Better

Need to try harder

Q.POLL RESULTS: 22 . 24

Bringing "invisible" Black history into the light

Candace Gingrich interviews JCSU student activist, Jonathan Perry in celebration of Black History Month

Last April, Q-Notes published an article about the first-ever LGBT student forum held on the historically black college campus of Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte. The event was supported by activists at every level: national, regional and local — among them, LGBT rights leader Mandy Carter, Brandon Baud of the Human Rights Campaign and Reverend Tonya Rawls pastor of the Unity Fellowship Church.

Jonathan Perry, founder of the LGBT student group A-3, (African-American Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Education) set up to change the school's 135-year history — to end discrimination and harassment by having JCSU acknowledge and protect its LGBT students, start a faculty-student dialogue, and sensitize students by steeping them in diversity education. He has fought hard and out loud against threats, intimidation, ignorance. He has shown, said and written that he will not be ignored and he will not go away. Jonathan Perry is riding on Rustin's shoulders as he makes new history — his own.

And we are not the only ones who noticed.

Candace Gingrich, HRC National Coming Out Project Manager, chose the twenty-six year old JCSU Junior, to interview for Black History Month. Jonathan Perry talked about being an African-American gay male coming out in church and on campus. Here is the interview, featured on HRC's website.

Candace Gingrich: First, would you share your coming out story?

Jonathan: I came out in my first year of college. I was majoring in sacred music at an Assembly of God college in Florida and was in the praise and worship choir rehearsal. Out of the blue, the choir director began discussing how one could not worship God with sin in their lives, and specifically mentioned homosexuality, which hit me really hard. After rehearsal, I disclosed to him that I was gay and explained that I would give up anything to worship God. He offered to get me help, but that help would come in the form of a letter of suspension for what he called my immoral ways. The only way he said I could return to college was to be counseled by an accredited Assembly of God psychologist. Needless to say, I did not return.

CG: Where did you go from there?

JP: I went home to North Carolina and came out to my grandmother. She reacted



Jonathan Perry during 2002 JCSU diversity forum and today

with unconditional love. I also returned to my old church where the pastor had graduated from the same college. He must have received word from the administration of my sexual orientation because one Sunday he called me a faggot from the pulpit. The following Wednesday, I was not allowed to attend church services. My grandmother and I met with the pastor and two elders of the church and we were told I was no longer welcomed there. Traumatic as it was, I came out of it a very content gay black man blessed by God. The best part of my coming out was the unconditional love and support from my grandmother and my God.

CG: How did you end up at Johnson C. Smith University?

JP: I was in the military for a year, then worked some odd jobs for a year, then enrolled at another school in the Historically Black College and University system. While there I attended an away basketball game against Johnson C. Smith University and just fell in love with the campus. I wrote a letter to the dean of students for entrance and was accepted. During my first semester in August 2000, I began my calling, advocating for human rights for all.

CG: It takes dedication to carry a full course load and change the world! What form did your advocacy take?

JP: One of my first actions was to put together a forum on diversity and sexual minorities, a first for Johnson C. Smith. The forum was based on what I had witnessed and heard about the needs on the campus. There were so many people on the down low [someone who is not open about being gay, lesbian or bisexual]. I had heard stories of attempted suicide because of difficulty coming out. Under the circumstances, I would have been happy had a dozen people shown up. What I got was nearly a hundred!

see JONATHAN on 3

Centered under the rainbow ...

Charlotte Community Center has grand public opening

by Lainey Millen

I moved to Charlotte in June 1979. The extent of the social scene was — Oleens, The Odyssey, The Brass Rail, Scorpio and "Dignity" a group that met at Park Road Baptist Church.

A few weeks after moving here, I set off for a Dignity meeting. I spent two and a half hours trying to find the church, amidst the nightmare maze of Park Drive, Park Avenue, Park Road, Queens Road and Queens Road West.

Finally, I arrived at a meeting mostly of men and one woman, Billie Stickle, who made me feel very welcome.

The Dignity family chose to break from its Catholic Church affiliation and changed its name to Acceptance. From the hearts and minds of this Acceptance group was born the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard of Charlotte.

After working to help build and jumpstart the Switchboard for two years, I left my volunteer position there to explore other venues. Still, there was no home for the LGBT populace to congregate. No place to hold meetings, socialize, get support, have fun. No place to house a vast array of organizations. No place to call home!

see CENTER on 8

Reyes found, guilty

Former LGBT, Democratic, Latino leader pleads to 19 bank fraud counts; and turns state's evidence for tax evasion scheme

CHARLOTTE, NC — In Federal Court, Andrew Reyes pled



guilty to stealing millions from his former employer, the late Doug King of New Hampshire. King's estate is suing Reyes, two former partners and Reyes' numerous companies created with the ill-gotten money.

The suit asks for more than \$10 million, and names Wachovia and First Union as defendants for aiding in diverting funds to Reyes' personal accounts. The lawsuit was filed in Mecklenburg Superior Court in Charlotte, where Reyes is currently being held.

According to an Associated Press report, "These actions are part

see REYES on 3