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# QNotes

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## Indigo Girl

Emily Saliers talks about music, politics and a tour that kicks off in Asheville

by David Moore . Q-Notes staff

### exQlusive

Emily Saliers is half of the legendary acoustic duo known as the Indigo Girls. Saliers and the band's other half — Amy Ray — met while both were students at an elementary school just outside of Atlanta.

Although they had played together during high school as B-Band and Saliers and Ray, it was 1985 when they first emerged on the Atlanta music scene as the Indigo Girls.

Over the next few years the Indigos would offer up a handful of independent releases before they would eventually sign with Epic Records in 1988.

With the release of the self-titled "Indigo Girls" in 1989, they rocketed to success with their first hit single, "Closer to Fine." In 1990, they won a Grammy for Best Contemporary Folk recording.

More acclaim and hits would follow (among them "Galileo" and "Hammer and a Nail") before they would eventually leave Epic and sign with the Walt Disney-owned label Hollywood Records.

The girls were back in the spotlight before the Sept. 19 release of their debut Hollywood CD, "Despite Our Differences," when they teamed up with rocker Pink for her controversial "Dear Mr. President."

Speaking exclusively with Q-Notes from her home in Decatur, Ga., Saliers is sitting on a beige sofa in her living room wearing a pair of athletic shorts and a T-shirt with the name Mary J. Blige emblazoned across the front.

Starting her day off with a potato, egg and cheese breakfast burrito (Saliers is a bit of a foodie — she co-founded the Flying Biscuit Café in Atlanta and she's the owner of Watershed restaurant in Decatur), she's been hard at work throughout the morning promoting "Despite Our Differences" with a handful of phone interviews.

Across from her is a massive big screen TV that she professes is primarily used for watching football. On the adjacent wall is a brooding tapestry by Atlanta artist Todd Murphy.

After letting her mixed-breed pups Molly and Phoebe out to romp in the backyard, she settles in to talk about touring, the new CD, life and politics.

"Our tour kicks off in Asheville Sept. 30th," says Saliers.

"We've played Asheville a bunch and just love it. It's a beautiful town. We wanted the shows in the South to be full stride, but not high pressure."

"Despite Our Differences" is a bit of a departure for the Indigo Girls — both with the label switch and in the sound and production — mostly attributed to a new recording style done live in a California studio with longtime producer Mitchell Froom.

They've re-teamed with Pink for another single — this time on their release — "Rock and Role Heaven's Gate."

"Amy wrote that song," says Saliers. "After one of her favorite bands broke up — she was really disappointed."

The twosome are known for writing their own material and Saliers is quick to point out that it's generally easier for her to talk about the material that she writes.

"I love the stuff Amy does, of course," she explains. "But when you wanna talk about an Amy song it's better to talk to Amy."

Among the songs on the 13-track "Differences," three by Saliers are stand outs.



Photo: Jeremy Cowart

Emily Saliers is psyched about the Indigo Girls' latest CD 'Despite Our Differences' and looking forward to an upcoming tour.

"I wrote 'I Believe in Love' on a ukelele," she says with a chuckle. "It's the first song that I ever completely composed on a ukelele. It's all about the complexity of love and how love is a powerful benevolent force that keeps it all together."

Although the music the Indigo Girls record could hardly be described as country, Saliers admits a fondness

for the style. That fondness steps out of the shadows in "Last Tears."

"That is a country song," she offers. "It's a song about a person who comes to a point of hurt and says that's it. I have no regrets and it's time to stop crying and move on."

In "Pendulum Swinger" she addresses the topic of politics — something the group's not known for shying away from.

"It's about this country," says Saliers. "We can't keep being the bully of the world. It also talks about the patriarchy of the church and how women need a stronger voice. It's a very

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## Lawrence v. Texas plaintiff dies

Tyrone Garner co-defendant in case that overturned nation's sodomy laws

by Mark Smith

HOUSTON, Texas — Tyrone Garner, a co-defendant along with John Geddes Lawrence in the landmark *Lawrence v. Texas* case that overturned sodomy laws across the nation, has died.

According to a representative of the Harris County Coroner's office in Houston,



Happier times: An elated Tyrone Garner (left) with John Lawrence following the Supreme Court's ruling against sodomy on June 26, 2003.

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## 'Open and Affirming' churches programming director stepping down

UCC's Ann Davis spent over 20 years on the project

J. Bennett Guess

CLEVELAND, Ohio — The Rev. Ann B. Day, a United Church of Christ (UCC) minister who has aided more than 600 UCC churches in the process of becoming "Open and Affirming" (ONA) of LGBT people, has announced that she will step down as coordinator of the UCC's ONA program.

Day and her partner, Donna Enberg, who has served as the program's administrative assistant, will complete their work at the close of the denomination's next national General Synod in June

2007. They have served the grassroots movement since 1987.

"Quite frankly, there would not be an open and affirming movement were it not for the commitment, vision and tireless work of the Rev. Ann B. Day," said the Rev. William R. Johnson, who in 1972 became the first openly gay man ordained in the United States.

Since 1985, the self-created ONA program — operated by the independent UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns — has maintained the listings of ONA set-

tings and encouraged UCC churches, campus ministries, seminaries, etc., to engage members in an intentional study process on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, and then to declare publicly their full welcome and inclusion of LGBT people.

Many point to the ONA process as one of the most significant, attitudes-altering movements in the struggle for LGBT inclusion in the church — a campaign that has infused acceptance and heightened visibility for LGBT people throughout the 1.2-million-member UCC and one that has

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The Rev. Ann B. Day has aided more than 600 UCC churches in the process of becoming 'Open and Affirming.'

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