

# QNotes

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## A new wind of progress for South Carolina

Q-Notes interviews new SCEC Executive Director Ray Drew

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

### exQlusive

COLUMBIA — The past year in South Carolina has been tough. Ask any LGBT citizen and they'll tell you it hasn't been an easy ride. The South Carolina Equality Coalition (SCEC) gained steam leading into the 2006 fight to defeat an anti-gay, anti-marriage constitutional amendment.

The organization received national and regional attention and support, but after their crushing defeat — and the victory for anti-family, religious advocates — the organization faced some real questions on how to

best continue organizing in an atmosphere that had become undeniably hostile, complete with every legal and constitutional trimming the state could provide.

While there have been challenges, the South Carolina



Ray Drew brings a fresh perspective to SCEC.

LGBT community has remained strong and visible. After the horrifying gay bashing of Sean Kennedy in May, the community had even more reason to remain strong.

SCEC is taking yet another step toward regrouping for the future. For the past six months the group has searched for an executive director with the knowledge, experience and ability to lead the group in the state's new political and social reality.

At the end of November, that search became complete with the announcement that Marion County, S.C. native Ray Drew would become the organization's new leader.

Returning to his home state after 21 years, Drew enters his new position with more than enough political, fundraising and organizing experience. He is a longtime leader in national

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## Emmy-winning Kathy Najimy to appear at HRC Gala

Thirteenth annual event follows record-breaking crowds in 2007

by Bert Woodard  
Special to Q-Notes



CHARLOTTE — The Human Rights Campaign Carolinas Gala committee has announced that television and movie actress Kathy Najimy will deliver the keynote address at the 13th-annual HRC Carolinas Gala on Saturday, Feb. 16, 2008 at the Charlotte Convention Center.

In the CBS drama "Numb3rs," Najimy portrays the saucy, brilliant head of the university, Millie Finch. Najimy's work includes more than 20 films, including starring roles in "Hocus Pocus" with Bette Midler, "RatRace" and "Say Uncle." She has also appeared in "It's Pat," "The Wedding Planner" with Jennifer Lopez and HBO's "If These Walls Could Talk 2" with Ellen DeGeneres.

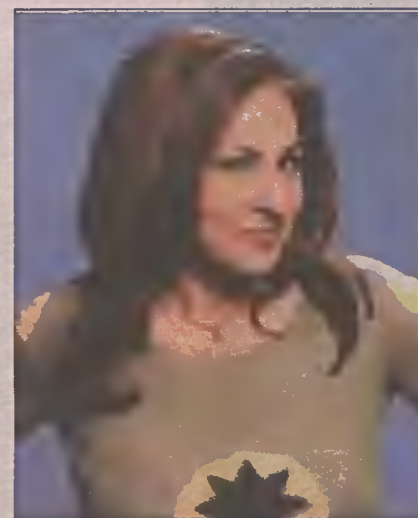
In more recent work, Najimy has provided the voice of Peggy Hill for 12 seasons on the Emmy Award-winning Fox hit "King of the Hill," for which she received an Annie and WIN Award. In her most important

role of activist, she was named Ms. Magazine's Woman of the Year 2005.

Najimy is internationally known for her portrayal of Sister Mary Patrick in the blockbuster hits "Sister Act I" and its sequel, "Sister Act II," which starred Whoopi Goldberg. Those performances won her an American Comedy Award for Funniest Supporting Actress and a nomination by the Hollywood Women's Press club for female Discovery of the Year.

For her more than 18 years of AIDS activism, Najimy has been honored with the Los Angeles Shanti's Founder award as well as the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center's Distinguished Achievement award. She is an enthusiastic supporter of AIDS, Choice, Arabic pride, women's and animal rights and frequently travels around the country to speak on these issues. Najimy has lent her support to a

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Acclaimed actress Kathy Najimy of "Sister Act" fame will deliver the Gala's keynote address.

## The final four

Q-Notes examines the candidates —  
The last of a four-part series  
by David Stout . Q-Notes staff

Over several issues we're spotlighting the Democratic presidential candidates in preparation for primary season. (Our installments on the three best-polling candidates, Sen. Hillary Clinton, Sen. Barack Obama and former Sen. John Edwards, can be read online at [www.q-notes.com](http://www.q-notes.com).) The first Democratic primary occurs in Iowa on Jan. 3. South Carolina holds the earliest in the South on Jan. 26. The North Carolina Democratic primary takes place May 6.

We have made an editorial decision to limit our coverage to the Democrats because, vis-à-vis LGBT issues, the leading Republican candidates range from woefully lacking to openly hostile, or they're Rudy Giuliani, an Iraq war hawk. Either way, the GOP slate is a disappointment and not worthy of consideration in our opinion.

Q-Notes' series on the hopefuls for the

Democratic presidential nomination ends with mini-profiles of the four men trailing the Big Three in the polls. (Due to space limitations, we are not including candidate

Mike Gravel, the former Alaska Senator who is polling around one percent.)

The quartet spotlighted here includes the candidate who supports full gay marriage rights, the candidate with arguably the most

foreign policy experience, the candidate who was part of an historic wave of American liberalism and the candidate who thinks homosexuality is a choi... wait, what? no, scratch that! it's not, it's really not! I misunderstood the question...

Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr. is the senior Senator from Delaware, currently in his sixth term. This is his second run for the Democratic nomination for president. His 1988

attempt ended over a tempest-in-a-teapot plagiarism scandal that was later debunked.

Biden was born in Pennsylvania in 1942. When he was 10, his family moved to Delaware, where he would remain through graduation from the University of Delaware in 1965. Remarkably, at this time he was only six

years from the U.S. Senate. Biden graduated from Syracuse University College of Law in '68, passed the Delaware Bar exam in '69 and was elected to the Senate in '72. He was 30 — the fifth-youngest U.S. Senator in history.

Biden has been a member of two powerful Senate committees since his arrival on Capitol Hill: the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on the Judiciary. In January, he began his second

non-consecutive stint as chair of the former;

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