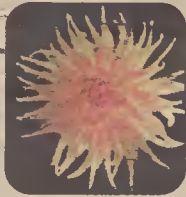


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Q Notes

Noted . Notable . Noteworthy . LGBT News & Views

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Charlotte lesbian pastor to become bishop

National Unity Fellowship conference meets to consecrate two female bishops

by Will Billings
Contributing Writer

CHARLOTTE — The national mid-year conference of the LGBT-affirming Unity Fellowship Church Movement will meet here Apr. 21-27. During the conference, Charlotte-based pastor Tonyia Rawls, as well as another female pastor, will be consecrated as bishops in the denomination.

The historic occasion will mark the first time female candidates have been inducted to the Unity Fellowship Church's House of Bishops.

The Unity Fellowship Church Movement (UFMC) is a small, Christian denomination — it has 14 churches nationwide — founded in 1982 and primarily serving the African-American community. For 25 years, one of the church's primary missions has been serving those affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In fact, the church itself grew out of the ministry



Bishop-elect Tonyia Rawls, of Unity Fellowship Church of Charlotte, will be consecrated a bishop on Sunday, Apr. 27.

offered to those with HIV/AIDS and their families by founder, Archbishop Carl Bean. Previously a minister in the Baptist church, Bean reached out to African-American men and women infected with HIV/AIDS during the earliest years of the crisis.

“Those hospital visits he made turned into funeral services,” Bishop-elect Rawls told *Q-Notes*. “In those days, AIDS — known as GRID, or Gay-Related Immunodeficiency Syndrome — was a death sentence.”

Rawls said Bean's outreach and compassion allowed grieving family and friends to have “a safe venue to bury their loved ones” without any of the anti-gay bashing many families experienced at funeral services during the 1980s.

“We've come a long way now,” Rawls said. Rawls first heard of Unity Fellowship

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Day of Silence sparks outcry

Carolina conservatives gear up to protest gay students

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

REGIONAL — On Friday, Apr. 25, thousands of LGBT and straight ally students in the Carolinas and across the U.S. will participate in the National Day of Silence, a day-long vow of silence to represent how LGBT people are forced to live invisible lives.

In response, national right-wing groups including the American Family Association (AFA) and Americans for Truth are pushing a “Day of Silence Walk Out.” The action was originally called for by Mission America, a Columbus, Ohio-based organization that cites witchcraft as one of many “problems” plaguing public schools.

In Charlotte, Board of Education member Kaye McGarry has backed the boycott. She told *The Charlotte Observer* she would put a motion excusing students' absences for April 25 on the board's April 15 agenda. (The meeting is after our press deadline. Check www.q-notes.com for updates).

According to the *Observer* report, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) sent memos to principals “reminding them they must give students observing the Day of Silence ‘the same restrictions or access as you

do to any other student-led activity.”

Students are not allowed to miss school to avoid events they disagree with, CMS spokeswoman Nora Carr told the *Observer*.

Daniel Gonzales is an “ex-gay” survivor turned activist in Denver, Colo. He is also a contributing author at BoxTurtleBulletin.com. He said McGarry's proposal “would effectively sanction the avoidance of the [Day of Silence] by anti-gay families.”

He told *Q-Notes*, “Given her previous opposition to the anti-bullying proposal I believe she is being disingenuous when she claims her motivation is to prevent the Day of Silence boycott from becoming a big deal. She's wasting the district's time to accommodate the most anti-gay of her constituents.”

AFA announced the creation of its North Carolina affiliate, the Faith, Family, Freedom Alliance, on Apr. 4. With the help of Mission America, the group is circulating a list of all

the schools where students have indicated they will participate in the Day of Silence.

The list, from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), includes more than 30 schools in North Carolina and eight in South Carolina.

On the Mar. 29 edition of “Family Policy Matters,” the right-wing, radio talk show of the N.C. Family Policy



Council, Americans for Truth founder Peter LaBarbera attacked the Day of Silence.

“The Day of Silence is a national homosexual event. They try to make it seem like students do it on their own but this event was started by a group called GLSEN... a very well-funded pro-homosexual activist group.”

The assertion is patently false — the first Day of Silence was organized by University of Virginia student Maria Pulzetti in 1996.

LaBarbera encouraged listeners to find out if their children attend a school that is

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Carolinas Prides gear up for 2008 festivals

Local events span two-state region

by Collier Rutledge . Contributing Writer

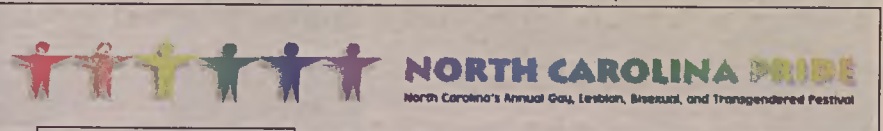
REGIONAL — In recent years, a proliferation of local Pride festivals have popped up across the Carolinas. From Wilmington to Boone, Raleigh/Durham to Columbia, LGBT folks will have plenty of activities to choose from throughout the 2008 Pride season.

The first event of the year will be the Triad Pride festival in Greensboro. Spanning five days in the second week of May, Triad Pride will feature LGBT-affirming worship services, a kick-off party on May 8, a May 9 Winston-Salem OUT at the Movies showing of “For the Bible Tells Me So,” a day-long May 10 festival in Greensboro's Festival Park and a May 11 Pride Picnic.

Other planned events include a pageant, a softball game and Saturday night Pride parties at Greensboro's Warehouse 29 and Winston-Salem's Club Odyssey.

Wilmington and Boone both have their Pride festivities slated for June. Small but inviting, the coastal and mountain cities will roll out their gay days June 7-14 and June 13-15, respectively. Wilmington's eight-day series of events will feature a picnic, drag show, an '80s roller skating party, wine-tasting and more.

Pride Charlotte, slated for July 26, is anticipated to draw more than 8,000 attendees, making it one of the largest Pride festivals between Washington, D.C., and Atlanta. The day-long festival will again be held at uptown Charlotte's Gateway Village. An extended festival grounds will include Trade St., next to Johnson and Wales University, and a second



stage is being added this year for community speakers and performances.

The Carolinas statewide Pride festivals are both planned for late September.

The SC Pride 2008 festival will be held Sept. 20 in Columbia's Finlay Park — the same location as last year. The SC Pride Committee is currently seeking sponsors and vendors for the event and has opened registration for groups planning to march in the parade through downtown.

“A New Day Dawns” is the theme for this year's SC Pride. On Mar. 16, the board of the S.C. Pride Movement voted to approve the theme and

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