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## Carolina Gay Association Newsletter

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*"domino of oppression"*

### Matlovich Reinstated

Five years since openly declaring himself gay to the Air Force and being discharged, Leonard Matlovich was fully reinstated and could receive more than fifty thousand dollars in back pay.

Matlovich, 37, said, "It's been a very, very hard battle."

On September 25, 1975, Matlovich was given a general discharge from the Air Force. He appealed and in October after his appeal was denied he decided to take his case to the Federal courts.

In July 1976, Federal District Court Judge Gerhard Gesell upheld the right of the Air Force to discharge Matlovich. Again, Matlovich appealed.

In December 1978, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled unanimously that Sgt. Matlovich was unfairly discharged from the Air Force.

The court criticized the military for failure to establish a clear policy on discharging gays.

The next day the Pentagon began major reviews of its policies dealing with gay service men. A joyous Matlovich said, "Another domino of oppression has been knocked down and I think more and more gay people will be allowed to serve in the armed forces."

(AIR FORCE, cont. p. 13)

### WCU Forms Gay Organization

Lesbian and gay male students at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee have recently formed the Gay Students Association on their campus.

Dacus Haining, one of the organizers, said the group formed in response to a professor's homophobic statements during his lecture to a class of first year undergraduates.

Haining said the full professor and minister involved stated that "homosexuality is a sickness needing treatment."

Members of the newly formed GSA protested to the head of the department involved.

They asked that the professor qualify his statements as his own views and that the department see to it that other viewpoints were presented.

"The first triumphs of GSA were getting the professor to qualify his homophobic remarks and motivating the department to issue a position paper supportive of gays," Haining said.

He said that a loosely knit organization of gay men and lesbians has existed at the University for some time, but that this incident is the first time organizing has been public.

The GSA is working with the Counseling and Placement Center on campus to continue rap groups for lesbians and gay men.

Haining said the center has been supportive and may help with initial funding to help GSA get off the ground.

"We want to establish a good base of support before going to the student government for funding and getting publicized in the campus newspaper," he said.

The GSA has also been successful in getting the University library to order books by and about lesbians and gay men.

Although the University librarian declined to establish a separate collection of the materials, a staff member will be assigned to work with the GSA in selecting publications.

Haining said that the name of the organization may be changed as more people get involved and as the goals evolve.

The Gay Students Association can be contacted at:

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