

HRCF News Notes

Bill Olwell Elected to HRCF Board HRCF Pledges Cooperation

William J. Olwell, Vice President of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) and the highest ranking openly gay union official in the country, was unanimously elected to the Board of Directors of the Human Rights Campaign Fund at its winter meeting in Ft. Lauderdale. The UFCW, with 1.3 million members, is the largest affiliate of the AFL-CIO.

When asked about his election, Olwell said, "I'm honored to become a member of such a prestigious Board of Directors and hope that my presence will contribute to the growing influence of this important political organization."

Much of the remainder of the two-day meeting was devoted to fundraising and Campaign Fund finance.s During these discussions, the board resolved that each member would commit to raising a minimum of \$5,000 per year. Members are currently responsible for their own travel and other expenses in connection with Board activities. According to the Fund's Executive Director, Vic Basile, "No other Board of a national organization has made such a large personal commitment to fundraising. This is clearly the direction we should be moving in, and I am proud of the leadership the Campaign Fund's Board is showing."

In an effort to expand its major donor program, the Board established the "Insider's Group." Membership in the Group will be open to those who contribute at least \$1,200 per year to the Fund.

Increased efforts will also be made to find smaller donors through a continuation fo the Campaign Fund's highly successful Show Our Strength (SOS) program. Last year, the SOS-84 program raised more than \$100,000 and found several thousand new donors in many new cities around the country. This program will work in tandem with an expanding direct mail operation.

Finalization of these plans will take palce at the spring Board meeting on April 27-28 in Los Angeles.

The Human Rights Campaign Fund has adopted a resolution pledging its cooperation with other national gay organizations in reducing overhead and operating costs where possible in the interest of maximizing the limited resources of the gay rights movement.

HRCF executive director Vic Basile noted that nearly all gay organizations suffer from frequent operating deficits because of inconsistent levels of fundraising and high overhead costs in New York and Washington, where the groups are headquartered.

"Our feeling is that the gay rights agenda has reached too critical a stage to by stymied by budgetary problems," said Basile. "By pledging to join forces where possible, we hope to eliminate many of the financial problems which occasionally hold us up."

The resolution was passed at the Fund's recent Board of Directors meeting in Florida. It states, "The Human Rights Campaign Fund pledges its fullest cooperation with the National Gay Task Force, the Gay Rights National Lobby, and the Federation of AIDS-Related Organizations in advancing the cause of gay and lesbian human rights at the federal level, and supports all efforts to build a united gay and lesbian community and to avoid duplicate activity and expenditures by the community we serve."

The resolution was prompted by the resignation of Virginia Apuzzo from the National Gay Task Force and discussion of possible consolidation among the national gay and lesbian organizations.



Damned if we are; Damned if we aren't

Kindergarten teacher Linda Conway's ouster from her job by the Hampshire County (West Virginia) School Board was recently upheld by the W. Va. Supreme Court. The Board held that Conway has a "reputation in the community" for being a homosexual. Actually, Conway is not a lesbian, but the fact that she had a female roommate and worked weekends at a gas station convinced the Board that she should not be teaching young children.

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