

has also devoted considerable attention to the civil rights issues arising from AIDS, filing and then winning the very first case in the nation alleging discrimination on account of AIDS.

Lambda pursues test-case litigation in all parts of the country, and in all areas of concern to gay men and lesbians. Case by case, its efforts strip away any respectability afforded sexual orientation discrimination, bringing gay people closer to equal citizenship under the law. The organization's work ultimately benefits all Americans, for it helps to fashion a society that is truly diverse and tolerant.

Lambda, the oldest and largest legal organization of its kind in the country, is not-for-profit, tax-exempt, licensed to practice law by New York State, and involved in legal cases across the state.

Lambda has made new law throughout its history. Here are some examples:

Lambda was its own first test case. When the founders of Lambda asked New York State for recognition as a "legal assistance corporation" in 1972, a state court denied the petition, claiming that the organization was "neither benevolent nor charitable." Lambda appealed to New York's highest court, and won a reversal--and the right to exist. *In re Thom*.

In 1973, the University of New Hampshire, under pressure from Governor Meldrim Thomson to take "positive action" against "socially abhorrent activities" on campus, sought to curtail events sponsored by a newly-formed Gay Students Organization. Lambda joined with others in challenging the restrictions, and the following year a federal appeals court sitting in Boston nullified the limitations as an infringement of the students' First Amendment rights. *Gay Students Organization v. Bonner*.

Lambda played a key role in the lawsuit that led to the invalidation of New York State's consensual sodomy statute in 1980. In a landmark opinion, the state's Court of Appeals declared that the constitutional right to privacy extends to all "noncommercial, cloistered personal sexual conduct of consenting adults." *People v. Onofre*.

Lambda brought the very first case in the United States alleging illegal discrimination related to AIDS, helping to establish the principle that laws prohibiting unequal treatment against those with disabilities also

protect people with AIDS. Lambda also initiated the first such suit under the federal Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and won the first ruling by a federal agency finding a violation of the statute against someone with AIDS. *People v. 49 West 12 Tenants Corp.* and *Doe v. Charlotte Memorial Hospital*.

In 1986, after six years of litigation, Lambda became counsel to a Tennessee lesbian mother who was fighting to retain custody of her child. Immediately, Lambda succeeded in dismissing the long-standing challenge brought against her by the woman's own parents. *Hyde v. Parrish*.

How can you help Lambda? Write to Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012 for more information.

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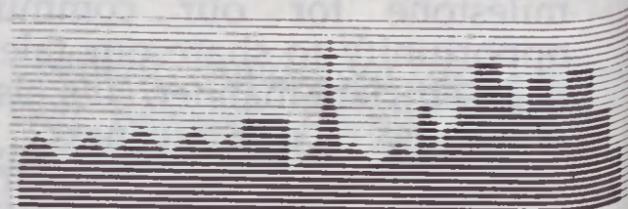
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