

## NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY CELEBRATED

National Gay Rights Advocates and The Experience Weekend sponsored National Coming Out Day on October 11, 1988, the first anniversary of the historic March on Washington. The goal was to increase the visibility of the more than 20 million gay men and lesbians in this country. CGLA distributed lavender ribbons to persons wishing to take their "next step" by publicly wearing them with pride. Others wore T-shirts and buttons for the occasion. The co-sponsors of National Coming Out Day explained the importance of coming out:

Our silence is killing us. Our silence is allowing society to make the rules for us by defining who we are, and what we can hope to achieve in life. Our silence is allowing ignorance and intolerance to play decisive roles in such life-threatening matters as AIDS funding, research and patient care. Silence means invisibility.

Our invisibility is the core of our oppression. We experience hate, fear and prejudice because people don't know who we are. But we know. We are their sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, and mothers and fathers. The truth is that we are everywhere. We are lawyers, doctors, mechanics, engineers, architects, teachers, bank tellers, secretaries, artists and truck drivers. We work within every professional field at every professional level. We touch the lives of millions of people whose negative views of homosexuality would change if they knew who we are.

Your coming out can help turn fear into acceptance. One-to-one contact between straights and gay men and lesbians is our most powerful tool in bringing about a major shift in society's attitudes. Coming out is the most powerful statement we can make--power with political influence, and personal power in releasing energy that is wasted in hiding the truth.

Coming out. Changing the tide of history. You can be an incredibly powerful force shattering the wall of silence. Together, we can end discrimination forever. You can be part of something very important. Only your personal involvement will make this possible.

Coming out is a continuum, a series of steps that often take place over the course of months or even years. There is a "next step" in coming out for each of us. Yours must be appropriate and comfortable for you, but be willing to push yourself a little. Coming out is a never-ending process.

LAMBDA encourages readers to submit "coming out" stories so we can share them with others who might benefit from your experience. Help break that wall of silence.

--compiled by Ashton Labourgeois

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### *RAs Sought for Second Semester*

OutRageous! is the adjective chosen by the Department of University Housing as its current recruitment theme. Applications for mid-year positions are available now at Carr Building and are due November 7. Current RAs and housing officials will be on hand to answer questions at RA awareness day, October 26 from 10-12 in the Pit.

RA positions might be of special interest to students interested in gay and lesbian issues. "We'd like to see more gay and lesbian RAs," said one current RA. "Any diversity makes the program richer." Since aiding students' personal growth and helping them to get in touch with themselves are central to the RA's job, this RA continued, helping students come out can be an especially rewarding experience.

RAs often utilize CGLA's outreach program to increase awareness of lesbian and gay issues in their residence halls. In addition, RAs can take a training program on gay and lesbian awareness. The program, which includes role playing and examination of one's own feelings regarding homosexuality, is "hard, but very educational," according to Morrison RA Candace Rowland.

Second-semester sophomore standing and a 2.3 grade point average is required for mid-year positions. All RAs must also be enrolled for at least 12 hours per semester, and should possess sensitivity, flexibility, diversity, and awareness of the residence hall living environment.