

SPEAKING OUT!

Send us a copy when you send letters or telegrams about gay/lesbian issues to elected officials, other press, etc.

February 27, 1991

Mr. Art Cooley
WHKP Radio
P. O. Box 2740
Hendersonville NC 28793

Dear Mr. Cooley:

This is to follow up our telephone conversation which took place at 6:40 a.m. today concerning a remark which deeply offended my wife and me.

Just after 6:30 a.m. there was a discussion concerning a news story that an employer (I think it was Cracker Barrel) had fired workers because they were lesbian and/or gay. One of your two morning radio personalities commented, "Good for Cracker Barrel."

Many times these gentlemen, on the air, give off-the cuff personal opinion remarks, many of them in a political vein, that we have let slide by in the interest of freedom of speech...

This particular remark, however, we will not let go unchallenged. We are willing to grant that perhaps the remark was based not on malice, but on ignorance; however, that does not excuse it.

Statistically, gay and lesbian people comprise ten percent of the population. If you add parents, siblings and other relatives and friends of gay persons, you will come up with a significantly larger percentage of the population who are not only offended, but also alarmed when such naked prejudice is expressed.

Two of our four children are gay. In our efforts to break free from the conditioning we grew up with because of the overwhelming prejudice of our society, we have become acquainted with many persons in the gay community and find them to be among the most winsome, creative, compassionate people it has been our privilege to meet. Large numbers of them gravitate toward the helping professions, and society would be much the poorer without them.

We have learned that to be homosexual is not something they chose, it is simply something they are. Yet we have to live with the fear that if their sexual orientation, which is really nobody's business but their own, were known, our two sons are in danger of losing their livelihoods, their living accommodations, perhaps even their lives, if they are accosted on a dark street by a gang of self-righteous gay-bashers swinging baseball bats.

We suggest that your announcers think twice when expressing personal opinions....

I am a retired United Methodist minister, AIDS information officer for the Hendersonville chapter of the American Red Cross and a member of the Red Cross board. My wife and I are founding members of the Henderson County Chapter of PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). If any of your staff (the offending announcer in particular) is interested in helping to overcome prejudice in society's treatment of lesbians and gays, we'd be happy to meet with you/him/them at a mutually agreeable time to discuss how it might be done.

Sincerely,

James F. Allen
Jean W. Allen

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