

Lesbian
Gay
Bisexual
Transgender

E D U C A T I O N
O U T R E A C H
S E R V I C E S

Out Words

Alumni Perspectives: Class of '74

Ithaca College alumnus Jim Kelsey, Class of 1974, serves as the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan. He has been friends with V. Gene Robinson for about 30 years. Bishop Kelsey wrote the following after attending Gene Robinson's ordination; he proudly voted to consent to his election, and was one of the 53 bishops present at his ordination, as a co-consecrator.



Up close to the building, there was a stretch where the protesters against the ordination were corralled to one side and on the other side of the sidewalk were the counter-protesters, who carried signs and chanted slogans of support for the ordination. At this early hour, there were very few in place, but you had the real sense of what was to come.

Entering the arena, you had to pass through metal detectors, emptying your pockets as at the airport, but all bags were searched by hand, since there were no x-ray machines.

We went through the security check, and once inside, we finally found people who could tell us of the location of the bishops' meeting, so we ended up leaving the arena and going to the complex next door.

As we left the arena, a state trooper stopped us and asked us where we were going and why we were leaving.

November 3, 2003

As we drove into town, you were aware of the excitement in the air. Various roads were blocked off, there were state police and other security guards posted around town. As we approached the arena, there were already protesters beginning to line the walkways. There were also TV satellite dishes and vans and cameras, videotaping everyone approaching the building. My clericals and vestments bag obviously attracted them, because two or three shoulder mounted cameras followed us along the sidewalk.

Who is V. Gene Robinson anyway?

In November 2003 V. Gene Robinson became the first openly gay Bishop to be ordained by the Episcopal Church.

This event was not only significant for the Episcopal Church but serves as an example of acceptance and progress for all communities of faith struggling with how to affirm and actively welcome the diversity of their congregations.

Getting closer to the arena, we were confronted with several dozen state troopers. Most of the walkways were blocked off by orange tape and mesh and other barricades, so there was only one path to enter.

Over at the New England Center we found a number of other bishops and we learned that the meeting first called by the Presiding Bishop had been cancelled due to all of the craziness surrounding the media and security and all the rest, *continued on page 2*

Inside this issue:

Alumni Perspectives	1
LGBT Legal & Policy Issues –By the Numbers	4
Rainbow Reception: Save the Date!	4
Community Connections	4
Upcoming Events	5
Sexuality & Faith Film Series	5
Alumni Honors	6

Lisa Maurer, Coordinator
Center for LGBT Education,
Outreach and Services
Ithaca College
150 Hammond Center
Room B16
Ithaca NY 14850

(607) 274-7394
Lmaurer@ithaca.edu
www.ithaca.edu/lgbt

Alumni Perspectives, continued

but we did have opportunity to get some lunch and to visit with some friends. During the meal-time conversation, we learned that there were 53 bishops coming (almost three times the number usually anticipated for a bishop's ordination), and also that there had been death threats issued against Gene Robinson, his family, and Frank Griswold and other church officials.

These threats, as they came in, were referred to the FBI who checked them out, and they determined that some of them were of such a nature that they should be taken very seriously.

After a few minutes, Gene Robinson stopped by the room where we were meeting, and as I greeted him with a warm hug, I felt the bullet-proof vest he was wearing. When I greeted his partner, Mark, I discovered that he was wearing one as well. They have had to move out of their home over the past several days, for security reasons, and Gene's two daughters, son-in-law, and grandchild have also had to be protected.

When we returned to the arena, we found that the huge crowds had started to form. The line for those waiting to go through security stretched outside and well along the building. The protesters were out as well, but one surprise was that the group of negative protesters was outnumbered by those who gathered in support. Those in support were mostly students from the university, who carried signs and chanted their well wishes for the Episcopal Church.

Inside the arena, it was a mob scene. Getting registered, being given a color coded name tag, after your name was checked off, then waiting forever to get through security screening. Your ticket was punched (after which you were not permitted to leave the arena without losing the ability to re-enter). The crowds were overwhelming, and it was still 1:30 pm before a 4:00 pm liturgy.

From the moment we arrived in our designated area, there were several video cameras and sound people, with huge boom microphones with big fluffy covers, wandering around the room. Every once in a while, you'd be aware that your conversation with others in the room was being filmed, with a mike hanging overhead. (You then thought back to try to remember what you had been saying!).

When Gene arrived with his family, it was easy to spot him in the room. Just look for the clutter of cameras and mikes and reporters, as well as the team of body guards who followed him every step he took. At one point, I learned from Mark (Gene's partner) that the two of them will be interviewed on the Today Show on Tuesday morning. This is the first time that Mark will accompany Gene in one of these interviews. He's used to speaking in public (as a part of his work for the state), but this will be different from anything like that he's done in the past. Their daughter Ella would be with them as well on the show. At another point, Gene told me that he had received a call the day before from Matthew Shepherd's mother. She had told him that she was sure Matthew was smiling down upon what was happening that day.

Finally, the time arrived for us to vest and line up for the procession. Interesting to see the mix of bishops there, including some very prominent, now retired, bishops and those of us who are new. It was a real sense of the leadership of the Church, old and new through many generations, standing together.



The IC United Christian Fellowship (UCF) Board.
Jim Kelsey, top left and Chaplain George Clarkson is sitting on the right.
(This group was the precursor to the Protestant Community of which Allison Stokes is now the Chaplain.)



Kelsey (in the middle wearing a hat), his roommates, friends and family members at the time of his graduation from IC in 1974 in front of his house off campus on Buffalo Street.

Alumni Perspectives, continued from page 2

At one point, we advanced to some stairs next to outdoor windows, and we watched several bomb-sniffing dogs being led around the building and parking lot - reminding us of the seriousness with which security was being taken. As we entered the arena, we were surrounded by 3000 Episcopalians singing "Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!", it was truly a remarkable moment.

The dramatic moment, of course, came when Frank Griswold read the same words spoken at every ordination: "...if any of you know any reason why we should not proceed, let it now be made known."

Everyone knew that there would be at least two objections. There were, in fact, three. When Barbara Harris, Jane Dixon, and Mary Adelia McLeod were ordained (the first three women bishops) objections had been voiced as well. In the case of Barbara Harris, the congregation started booing and shouting out against those

who objected, so by now, a careful process has been developed to deal with what could be a volatile situation. Before the protesters were given the microphone, Frank asked the congregation to be seated. He then pointed out that those who were about to speak are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and it is important that we give no response; either in favor or against as each person is speaking.

There were many other marvelous features to the liturgy, including a seven year old child who read one of the scriptures, and a Hebrew student who read the first lesson from Isaiah in Hebrew. Doug Theuner, the retiring bishop of New Hampshire, preached a stirring and challenging sermon, reminding us that what is happening is not about Gene so much as it is about what new thing God and the Episcopal Church are doing. When the time came for the bishops to lay on hands, it was an inspiring moment for me personally to join with these colleagues of mine in what is a truly historic moment. There was a great sense of reverence and, again, the presence and power of the Spirit.

Mary and I joined the private dinner for Gene. It was a wonderful, relaxed, and informal way to end what had been a very long day. An important day, and one which makes me prouder than I can imagine to be a member of our Episcopal Church.

—Jim



Article and photos provided by Bishop Jim Kelsey, Class of 1974.

Bishop Kelsey got in touch with the LGBT Coordinator after an announcement was sent to alumni inviting LGBT and allied alumni to be in touch with the Center. The Center wishes to thank Bishop Kelsey for his story, his support and his fine work as a committed ally to LGBT people everywhere!

An invitation to all alumni:

Please be in touch with your stories of being an LGBT student or ally during your studies at Ithaca College!

Email: Lmaurer@ithaca.edu or call Lisa at (607) 274-7394

Out for Info; Recent LGBT Legal & Policy Issues by the numbers

11 = State constitutional amendments seeking to ban same-sex marriage that passed in the November elections.

Margins of defeat ranged from 86% to 14% in Mississippi to 57% to 43% in Oregon.

But...every LGBT American who voted against an amendment was joined by at least five non-LGBT voters who stood with us for equal rights.

60 percent = Voters who support some form of legal protection for same-sex couples

And, in the same exit polls that said moral issues were important:

- × 25 percent were for legal marriage*
- × 35 percent were for civil unions*
- × 37 percent were against any protections*

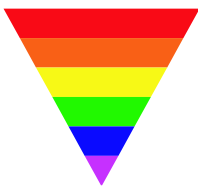
0 = Number of Massachusetts legislators who supported equal treatment for same-sex couples that were voted out of office

1 = Law repealed that previously prevented the city from passing any legislation that protects gays and lesbians from discrimination (in Cincinnati, Ohio)

And, in Idaho and North Carolina voters elected their first openly gay legislators while an out lesbian Latina woman was elected county sheriff in Dallas Texas.

Data from NGLTF, HRC and the National Election Pool

Save the Date!



The Third Annual Rainbow Reception will be held on **Saturday, April 16th** in the Tower Club.

The Rainbow Reception is a special gathering of students, families, friends, staff and faculty to celebrate the accomplishments of our LGBT and allied graduating seniors.

Please mark the date on your calendar and let family members and friends know the date! This year we are hosting the Rainbow Reception on a Saturday night to allow more time for family and friends to travel to IC and attend!

**A Special Note to Alumni: Would you like to attend the Rainbow Reception? Please be in touch with the LGBT Coordinator for more information.*

Community Connections

Ithaca's Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) is located in the Tompkins County Cornell Cooperative Extension building. The MRC seeks info about, focuses attention on, and creates dialogue around diversity issues, particularly racism, in Tompkins County.

MRC also strives to facilitate community work on these issues by sharing existing resources and seeking additional resources.

The LGBT Coordinator is pleased to be a new member of the MRC Board of Directors and is looking forward to working closely with them on their mission and efforts. It's also an exciting opportunity to promote positive community/college relations.

Upcoming Events ~ Spring 2005

January 24

Out in the Workplace Panel
featuring LGBT alumni, campus & community members
7pm, Clark Lounge

January 27

Out for Info: LGBT Legal and Policy Update
Faculty Colloquium presentation
12 noon, Clark Lounge

February 2

AIDS Up Close in Namibia and Cameroon
6:30 pm, Emerson B

February 7 National Black HIV/AIDS
Awareness and Information Day

February 7 -14

National Condom Week

February 20-24

The AIDS Working Group presents
a display of the Names Project Quilt
Emerson Suites

March 13-19

Third Annual LGBT Health Awareness Week

March 16 - Diversity Coffee Talk Event

Campus Center

more information to be announced soon

March 23 & 24

Homophobia and sports speaker Eric Anderson
3/23 keynote: How Homophobia Hurts Heterosexuals
7 pm, Textor 102
3/24 schedule of activities to be announced

March 28-29

Filmmaker and photographer Joan E. Biren,
3/28 Screening & Discussion of "No Secret Anymore"
7 pm, Textor 102
3/24 schedule of activities to be announced

April 6

Performer Rich Kiamco
7:30 pm, IC Square

April 8

Musical performer Katie Sawicki
8 pm, IC Square

April 12

Pioneers in the LGBT civil rights movement, with
special guest "pioneer" Frank Kameny
7 pm, Textor 101

April 16

Rainbow Reception
Tower Club

More great events are yet to be scheduled! The LGBT student groups are also busy planning spring events, contact them directly for details.

Out of the Closet and Onto the Screen: Intersections of Sexuality and Faith in Film

a year-long film series at Ithaca College

The film series will continue with the presentation of documentary films that explore sexual orientation and identity through the lens of faith.

Two films will be shown during the Spring 2005 semester:

February 1st *All God's Children*

March 1st *Maybe We're Talking About a Different God*

Both films will be screened at 7 pm in Textor 102



Lesbian
Gay
Bisexual
Transgender

E D U C A T I O N
O U T R E A C H
S E R V I C E S

ITHACA

Lisa Maurer
Coordinator

150 Hammond Center
Room B16
Ithaca NY 14850
(607) 274-7394
Lmaurer@ithaca.edu

Check out the full-color version of this
newsletter on our

AWARD WINNING
website!

www.ithaca.edu/lgbt

Alumni Honors

Recent graduate Braeden Sullivan ('04) is a recipient of the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship at Santa Clara University School of Law. Thurgood Marshall was the first African American U. S. Supreme Court justice. Justice Marshall also served as lead counsel in the key *Brown v Board of Education* decision.

Justice Marshall's opinions displayed a commitment to equality and inclusion; he authored many opinions that expanded equality and sought access for those who are disenfranchised. He believed that all attorneys are obliged to work for social justice and equality because "lawyers have a duty to represent the public, to be social reformers."

This scholarship was established as a means of enabling future generations of lawyers to continue the work of Justice Marshall.

Selection criteria include:

- ◆ Demonstrated academic interest in equality, inclusion and social justice
- ◆ A record of community service, with a commitment to eliminating racial, social and economic disadvantage in under-served communities
- ◆ Intent to pursue a legal career that advances equality and social justice.



Photo courtesy of Braeden L. Sullivan

Congratulations, Braeden!