

Commission Holds Discrimination Hearings

Gay and lesbian community representatives and non-gay experts in gay-related issues testified June 13 before the County of Los Angeles Commission on Human Relations' hearing on prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The hearing, held at Plummer Park in West Hollywood, addressed such concerns as Homosexuality: an "orientation" or "preference?" To what extent have religious teachings affected prejudice and discrimination against gay men and lesbians, to what extent have such teachings changed in recent years? What problems do gays and lesbians face in obtaining employment? What problems do gays and lesbians face in obtaining housing? What problems do they face in health care and delivery of health care services — particularly around AIDS? What are the problems with the police? How are gay men and lesbians depicted in the media, in the entertainment industry? The hearing also addressed to what extent are there common gay and lesbian social goals that conflict with common public values and represent a source of current or potential conflict: the portrayal of gay or lesbian lifestyles in public school textbooks, redistricting of geographical areas for gay and lesbian voting blocks, adoption of children, claims of health, retirement and other benefits for gay or lesbian couples — and does opposition to such goals reflect bigotry or legitimate majority values?

All-Day Testimony

After the introduction by James Reiver, president of the commission, day-long testimony was presented by Jane Patterson, M.D., a lesbian activist and author as well as physician; attorney Matt St. George of the Gay and Lesbian Police Advisory Task Force; Chris Uszler, an attorney associated with the Alliance for Gay Artists in the

Entertainment Industry; attorneys Lee Walker, Thomas F. Coleman and William G. Smith; Aslan B. Heidorn, *Frontiers* managing editor; Jeff Beane, MS, MFC; Lillene Fifield, MSW, director of the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center Education Component; and Geneva Fernandez, assistant director of Youth Programs at GLCSC.

Also testifying were Martin Finn, M.D., medical director of the Los Angeles County Health Services' Public Health Programs; lesbian activist Ivy Bottini; attorney Stephen Weltman; Jim Kepner, curator of the National Gay Archives; Capt. James Cook, commander of the West Hollywood station; the Rev. Fernando Martinez, founder and pastor of the Latin Church of Christian Fellowship; Rev. Peg Beissert of the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church; Father Albert Ogle, GLCSC's Director of Youth Services; Allan T. Pinka, Ph.D., co-chair of the Psychosocial Advisory Council of the AIDS Project / Los Angeles; Roy Kawasaki and Tak Yamamoto of Asian/Pacific Lesbians and Gays; Alan K. Malyon, Ph.D., president of the Los Angeles Society of Clinical Psychologists; Pam Parker of MECLA; June Awano Lagmay, council aide to Councilwoman Peggy Stevenson; Aeisha Jones; political activist Midge Costanza of Allen Landbury Productions; Charles Stewart of Black and White Men Together; and the Rev. Ernest Rudolph of the United States Mission.

A luncheon was provided by Commissioner Morris Kight's McCadden Place family and friends.

The commission on Human Relations, initially created in 1944 and one of the oldest human relations agencies in the United States, will submit the testimony and findings of the hearing to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.