

YALE GALA

YALE'S LGBT ALUMNI/AE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Yale Amends Non-Discrimination Policy in Response to Student Campaign

University Is the Final Ivy to Add Gender Identity and Expression

New Haven, CT The Yale Corporation, the governing body of Yale University, voted this semester to add gender identity and expression to its non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity policy. The vote comes in response to a student campaign, spearheaded by the undergraduate-run Queer Political Action Committee, that began last spring and drew the support of over 1,000 students, faculty, staff, and alumni. In addition, the Yale College Council, the undergraduate student government organization, overwhelmingly approved a resolution endorsing QPAC's proposal.

Yale is the final school in the Ivy League to add such protections to its non-discrimination policy. The change aims to address discrimination faced by transgender people at Yale.

"This is a tremendous first step

toward making Yale a more safe place for all its students, faculty and staff, regardless of their gender identity or expression", said Hugh Baran '09, coordinator of the Queer Political Action Committee (QPAC). "I'm glad that the University has listened to its students and made this important change, which will not only provide real protection to students, faculty, and staff across the University, but also sends a powerful message about the University's commitment to equality, diversity, and respect in our community."

"QPAC looks forward to working with the administration to ensure that the University's policies reflect the new commitment to equality that has been articulated with this change," Baran added.

President Levin's Statement

On October 17, President Richard C. Levin released this statement:

"I am pleased to say that the Yale Corporation at its most recent meeting approved a measure amending the University's Equal Opportunity Statement explicitly to protect gender identity and expression. With this step, the University expressly affirms that discrimination on the basis of these factors is unacceptable at Yale, as is discrimination based on any of the other listed grounds, and that all members of the University community enjoy the protection of the policy as so amended.

The Equal Opportunity Statement now reads as follows:

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LGBTQ Liaison Is Appointed

Trumpler selected to be University's first adviser for issues of queer student life

By Cullen Macbeth,
Yale Daily News Staff Reporter
From in the *Yale Daily News*, September 20,
2006. Reprinted with permission.

For the first time, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community at Yale has a new liaison for formal communication with University administrators.

Maria Trumpler, who will be director of undergraduate studies in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department in the spring, has been appointed as a special advisor to the administration on all matters relating to the life of LGBTQ students and staff at Yale, University Provost Andrew Hamilton announced in an e-mail to the LGBTQ Needs Assessment Task Force.

Trumpler—previously the coordinator of bisexual, lesbian, gay and transgender advisers at Harvard University—said she will spend the fall talking with students and University administrators, trying to get a feel for the issues and problems that LGBTQ students face. In addition, she will speak with administrators at other colleges about ways those schools have offered support for their LGBTQ populations, she said.

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Yale Appoints LGBTQ Liaison

Maria Trumpler selected to be University's first adviser for issues of queer student life

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"I'm going to be talking to people at Yale who are already very active on LGBTQ issues and then some people who aren't yet," Trumpler said. "I'm going to talk to registrars' offices, athletic departments, housing offices, and I'll be thinking about places that Yale can improve its support for LGBTQ issues."

Trumpler said she will prepare a report on her findings in January and hopes to spend the spring semester implementing some of her proposed changes.

Last spring, the Task Force—a group of undergraduate and graduate students who joined together to give voice to several previously separate campus LGBTQ organizations about four years ago—submitted a report to Hamilton about the needs of LGBTQ students at Yale, Task Force member Rudy Kleysteuber GRD '07 said.

He said the Task Force submitted its report after its members concluded that the University lacked adequate support structures for the problems confronting LGBTQ students.

"These people got together informally and realized that there was no institutionalized support network for gay and lesbian students at Yale and that the resources that we had available to them were sort of ad hoc and transient," Kleysteuber said. "They were there one year, and then the next year no one would pick them up."

Kleysteuber said a list of Yale's institutional shortcomings—such as a lack of counseling for students in the process of coming out—was included in the Task Force's 20-page report, which also contained a comparison of other schools' support for LGBTQ students and a list of the most pressing needs on Yale's campus.

Following that report and a series of discussions with various student

groups, Hamilton decided to create a formal adviser position that would give a single person the responsibility of investigating the challenges LGBTQ students face, he said.

"As a result of those meetings, we felt that Yale would benefit from a closer consideration of academic and life issues as they affect students from this community," Hamilton said.

Trumpler said she has not done enough investigation yet to speculate about the types of problems confronting LGBTQ students that she might discover this year.

Hugh Baran '09, the coordinator of the Queer Political Action Committee, said he applauds Trumpler's appointment as a step forward for Yale's LGBTQ community. He said Trumpler could provide, for the first time, a central source of information about support structures available to students and could help in advocating for issues of importance to the LGBTQ community—such as changing the University's official non-discrimination policy to include gender identity and gender expression.

"Having an institutional voice in the Dean's Office on behalf of LGBTQ students would be a way to speed change like that," he said.

But some students said they are skeptical about the need for this new position. "I don't think it's something the administration necessarily needs to concern itself with," Casper Desfeux '10 said. "From what I have experienced from my time at Yale so far, it seems absolutely unnecessary."

It seems like a waste of resources."

Trumpler held previous positions at Yale and Middlebury College before joining Harvard's faculty in 2001, and has 20 years of experience teaching and advising on LGBTQ issues. She rejoined the Yale faculty this year. ▼

Gay Giving at Yale

is always in search of support. Many giving opportunities exist. Funds can be earmarked for the Larry Kramer Initiative for Lesbian and Gay Studies (LKI); the Sarah Pettit Fund (supporting Lesbian Studies); or the Fund for Lesbian and Gay Studies—FLAGS (supporting faculty and student research).

Contributions can be sent to Development Office, PO Box 2038, Yale University, New Haven CT 06521-2038: Direct your contribution in either a notation on the check or through an accompanying letter. Gifts may receive Yale fundraising credit toward class or reunion goals. Those with questions about giving also may call the Office of Development and Alumni affairs. For student life initiatives, donations can be sent to Yale GALA, PO Box 207118, New Haven CT 06520-7118. ▼

The Yale Gay and Lesbian Alumni/ae Association Newsletter is published three times a year by Yale GALA for its members and friends.

To join our e-mail list and to receive notification of upcoming GALA events, please send your contact information to: yalegala96@aol.com

Yale GALA page (Alumni), <http://www.yalegala.org/>, on Yale's Lesbian and Gay Studies at Yale University Web Site—<http://www.yale.edu/lesbiangay/homepage.html>

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University Puts Focus on LGBTQ

Despite recent developments, many maintain that Yale's resources lag behind peers'

By Jessica Marsden, *Yale Daily News* Staff Reporter. Published in the *Yale Daily News*, Thursday, October 05, 2006. Reprinted with permission.

The vote is still out on whether Yale's gay-friendly reputation truly matches campus reality.

Despite Yale's reputation as the "gay Ivy," students have long complained that the University does not provide enough institutional support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students. Though this past month brought three major steps forward for Yale's LGBTQ community—suggesting that the University now has the momentum for change—students said the University will need to establish more concrete LGBTQ resources before it can claim to match those available at some of its peer institutions.

This semester saw the arrival at Yale of George Chauncey, an eminent scholar of gay history, and Maria Trumpler, who will be the first special advisor to the administration on LGBTQ students. In addition, last weekend the Yale Corporation approved the expansion of the University's nondiscrimination policy to include "gender identity or expression."

"I think they all reflect a common concern in LGBTQ issues in different parts of the University," Yale College Dean Peter Salovey said.

Yale ranked below its peers in *Advocate* survey

The administration's apparent commitment to LGBTQ issues comes after the University was scored below many of its peer institutions in the *Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students*—published this past summer—which scored colleges and universities on their policies and programs for lesbian and gay students. Yale scored 12 points out of 20 in the survey, which placed it in the bottom 20 of the 100 schools ranked, below the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Duke and Stanford universities.

Yale lost points for the absence of a resource center for LGBTQ students, procedures for reporting bias and harassment and specialized housing, among other criteria. The University also lost one point for not including gender identity in its nondiscrimination policy at the time the book was written.

Although students quoted in the guide said favorable things about the atmosphere on Yale's campus, its authors noted that the University has often needed prodding to change policies or add programs for gay and lesbian students.

"A quick glance at the history would show that LGBT students have had to fend for themselves," its authors wrote.

Indeed, student organization by the Queer Political Action Committee was key in last year's push for the nondiscrimination policy amendment, and the creation of Trumpler's position followed a recommendation by the LGBTQ Needs Assessment Task Force.

Rudy Kleysteuber LAW '07, who served on the Task Force, said Yale's reputation as the "gay Ivy" masks the fact that the University is rarely on the cutting edge when it comes to policies and programs for LGBTQ students.

"We don't have to be the "gay Ivy," but what we do have to do is at least be able to compete with our peer universities, which tend to have a much more welcoming climate," he said.

But Trumpler's appointment shows a willingness on the part of the administration to begin addressing deficiencies in its approach toward the LGBTQ community on campus, Kleysteuber said. The Task Force report described a lack of institutional support structures for students, such as counseling for students in the process of coming out.

"It acknowledges a shortcoming, and these are clear and obvious steps to improve that," Kleysteuber said.

Trumpler said the convergence of the three advancements has invigorated the LGBTQ community at Yale and has created a fertile ground for future projects.

"I feel like I'm sort of at a party," Trumpler said. "Everyone is sort of upbeat, and there's lots of new energy."

Jessie Ellner '08 said she is optimistic about the opportunities created by Trumpler's arrival, since she will be the first person to conduct a comprehensive examination of LGBTQ issues on the administrative level. Though students may not immediately see the effects of the new liaison and the changes to the discrimination policy, Ellner said, the changes indicate that the administration has made LGBTQ issues a priority.

"It might be the case that a lot of those things don't directly affect student life, but I think the administration is giving a signal of openness," she said. "It definitely creates an environment where there's acceptance and welcoming."

Ellner said she eventually hopes to see the creation of a permanent position in the Dean's Office to administer programs for lesbian and gay students, as well as the expansion of the space allotted to the Queer Resources Center. The QRC is currently housed in a space at 305 Crown St. that is cramped and far from students' dormitories, she said.

The availability of courses in lesbian and gay studies is important to establishing a climate friendly to lesbian and gay students, Kleysteuber said, because students and faculty need to understand the concerns of the gay and lesbian community, not just accommodate them. He compared the push for lesbian and gay studies at Yale today to the call for the introduction of African-American studies during the Civil Rights movement.

"It's hard to be respected as a community until people recognize that your community not only has an identity, but that it also makes contributions," he said.

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George Chauncey, '77, PhD '89, Author of *Gay New York* . . . 1890–1940, Named Professor of History at Yale

A Moment with George Chauncey: An Interview

By Benjamin Gonzalez

Books. Professor George Chauncey's sun-kissed office overlooking Saybrook Courtyard is filled with books crammed in shelves, stacked neatly on his desk, and lying in countless still unopened boxes. Best known for his award-winning book, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940*, George Chauncey, '77, Ph.D. '89, returned to Yale this fall as a Professor of History and is teaching a lecture course on U.S. Lesbian and Gay History. Ready to laugh at once, he is also serious, shy even, in his modest and careful choosing of words as he stares out the window to tell his fellow alumni how it feels being back at Yale.

So tell GALA, how does it feel?

I'm very glad to be back. Yale students are fantastic, and I'm enjoying my classes a lot. I also think we have a real opportunity to turn Yale into a major center for research on lesbian and gay history. The administration has committed resources to help make this happen, and a number of phenomenal librarians here are already doing excellent work to develop our research collections.

You were a Yale undergrad, but then where did you go?

I was in Trumbull College, and after graduation used a Yale travel grant to spend a year conducting research in Zambia — in a former life I was an African historian — and then spent a year in Boston, where I wrote for *Gay Community News*. I then came back to Yale for grad school and eventually moved to New York to work on my dissertation, which became the basis for my book *Gay New York*. After receiving my Ph.D. in history, I had two one-year appointments at Rutgers and NYU before getting a tenure-track job at the University of Chicago, where I taught for fifteen years.

What made you leave Chicago for New Haven?

It wasn't an easy decision, because I liked the faculty and students at Chicago a lot. But the prospect of moving back East and being closer to New York City was appealing. So was the prospect of joining Yale's extraordinary History Department. And both the Department and the Administration made it clear they were ready and eager for Yale to become a major center for lesbian and gay historical research, and would provide the resources necessary to accomplish this. The Larry Kramer Initiative for Lesbian

and Gay Studies (LKI), which completed its fifth and last year this past spring, played a key role in paving the way for all this. LKI had a transformative effect on Yale by revitalizing lesbian and gay studies here and demonstrating the field's vitality, and, of course, Larry has always been a passionate advocate for the importance of history. So this felt like a good time to move to Yale.

How will you accomplish these goals?

First, I'm blessed to have a wonderful new colleague, Joanne Meyerowitz, a women's historian who joined the Yale faculty a couple of years ago and who has published an important book on the history of transsexuality. We're already co-teaching a graduate course on the history of sexuality this semester. She and I will be co-directors of a new project called the Yale Research Initiative on the History of Sexualities, which is funded by the Provost and based in the History Department. This initiative will organize public lectures on campus, conferences, and so forth, but our primary goal is to advance the field's research agenda by organizing small national and transnational working groups of scholars investigating central questions in LGBT history and the history of sexuality more generally, especially from a transnational perspective. We're also eager to work with the Yale libraries to develop the research collections here. And I think it will have a tremendous impact on the field that Yale's History Department, the top-ranked history department in the country, will now also become a premier center for training Ph.D. students in LGBT history and allied fields.

Your class, "U.S. Lesbian & Gay History," involves an oral history project that supports a dialogue between LGBTQ undergraduates and alumni. What would you like this project to accomplish?

First, this assignment will give the students in my course a chance to talk with people who experienced some of the history they've heard about in class, and I think both the students and the alumni they interview will find it to be a very rewarding experience. Second, I think one of the most urgent tasks before us as gay historians is to record the stories of people who found ways to survive and often thrive as gay people long before the growth of the gay movement. Gay history will never be able to recover from the loss of those stories if we don't collect them now. I hope we can develop a major archive of LGBT oral histories at Yale, and this class project will be a first step in that direction. I

expect to teach my course on US Lesbian and Gay History every year, and to include this assignment every year. Yale GALA has already been fantastically helpful by helping me contact alumni to be interviewed, and if anyone reading this would be willing to be interviewed, I hope they'll contact the teaching assistant coordinating this assignment, Caitlin Casey (caitlin.casey@yale.edu).

Your partner Ron Gregg has also taken a position at Yale?

Yes! Ron is a film historian and curator who has published on the history of gay representation in Hollywood film, has taught film history at Northwestern, St. Cloud State, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the University of Chicago, and helped curate numerous LGBT film festivals. He's now the Programming Director for Yale's Film Studies Program, so he brings filmmakers to campus, organizes film conferences, workshops, and so forth. He's also been appointed a Senior Lecturer, and this semester is teaching a new course, Introduction to Queer Cinema. Like every university, Yale has grown adept at dealing with dual-career academic couples, and it was fortunate for us and for Yale that he appeared on the scene just as the Film Studies Program was expanding and needed precisely the sort of programming skills and vision he could bring. I was pleased to see Yale responded so well to the needs of a gay couple.

What's the latest news on your upcoming book?

My next book is on gay culture and politics from the Second World War to the gay liberation years in the 1970s. It reconstructs the African American, Latino, and white gay male worlds and sexual cultures that developed in the neighborhoods of postwar New York City. I'm particularly interested in analyzing the generational shift from the culture of the double life to the culture of coming out and in reinterpreting the sources of postwar antigay politics and the cultural origins and development of the gay movement. This book has been "almost done" for a long time now, but my work on it was constantly interrupted by my administrative and programmatic responsibilities at Chicago, as well as by my involvement in several Supreme Court gay rights cases and the marriage debate. Yale has given me a year-long sabbatical, starting this spring, during which I hope to finish it. Most of the research is done and I have hundreds of pages written, but it will be another long book, so I'm grateful for the time Yale's given me to focus on it.

What gay rights cases have you been involved in?

In 1993 I testified in *Romer v. Evans*, the federal case challenging the constitutionality of an anti-gay rights amendment passed in Colorado. This case ultimately resulted in the Supreme Court's landmark ruling that gay people could not be excluded from the political process, which stopped the momentum of the anti-gay rights referenda then sweeping the country. Since the state was arguing, in part, that gay people didn't need antidiscrimination protections because they had never suffered from discrimination, the lawyers asked me to educate the court by testifying as an expert witness on the quite extensive history of antigay discrimination and political disenfranchisement.

Being involved in this case brought home to me how important a role historical research can play in dispelling some of the myths that undergird many arguments made against gay rights. Then in 2003, Lambda Legal asked me to write and organize a Historians' Amicus Brief to be submitted to the Supreme Court in the sodomy law case, *Lawrence v. Texas*. It was thrilling, and astonishing, to see the Supreme Court cite the brief and accept its historical arguments to help explain why it was reversing its earlier decision, *Bowers v. Hardwick*, which

had upheld Georgia's sodomy law partly on the basis of quite erroneous claims about the history of sodomy law and sexual regulation.

Most recently I've joined other historians in submitting amicus briefs on the history of marriage in several cases in which same-sex couples have sought the right to marry. In 2004 I published a short book analyzing the historical changes in gay life, antigay politics, and marriage itself that resulted in the marriage issue becoming so explosive, *Why Marriage? The History Shaping Today's Debate over Gay Equality*. It never occurred to me when I started my Yale dissertation some twenty years ago that history would one day play such a significant role in debates over gay rights. ▼

New Book Chronicles Admissions Policies of Yale, Harvard, and Princeton

A new book, *The Chosen*, by Jerome Karabel, (Houghton Mifflin, 2005) offers a history of the admissions policies at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, showing how they reflected their times, were designed to maintain each school's preeminence, and set the standards of admissions selection for the nation's colleges, over the years. ▼



Yale Professor of History George Chauncey, right, shown at home with his partner Ron Gregg, who is the new Programming Director for Yale's Film Studies Program

Two Campus Leaders Profiled

Hugh Baran

Hugh Baran—Davenport '09, American Studies major—is a revolution. A member of the Undergraduate Organizing Committee and Press Director for Students for a New American Politics (<http://www.snappac.org>), he goes where political change is needed and social justice threatened.

Also, as coordinator of the Queer Political Action Committee, Baran spearheaded a campaign during the 2005–2006 school year that gathered over 1,000 signatures from students, faculty, and staff across the university in support to amend Yale's nondiscrimination policy to include gender identity and expression (see Non-Discrimination article, page 1).



Hugh Baran



Anna Wipfler

Anna Wipfler

Master's Aide, Yale Recycling employee, and Coordinator of the LGBTQ Cooperative for the 2006–2007 school year, Anna Wipfler promotes a platform of community, diversity, and communication. Her initiatives as Coordinator include the new Queer Dinners and the recently appointed Queer Liaisons; these serve as representatives of the LGBTQ community to the cultural houses, where they plan events, such

as films and speakers relevant both to the queer community and to the cultural minority. Yale now maintains cultural centers or houses for cultural minorities—Asian-American, African-American, Latino, and soon, Native American.) A sophomore in Branford College, Anna plans to major in Architecture and in the LGBTQ Track of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. ▼

Professor George Chauncey Requests Alumni/ae Help for His Gay/Lesbian History Course

I plan to teach a lecture course on US Lesbian and Gay History this fall, and for the final assignment I would like to have each student conduct an oral history interview with a lesbian or gay man who lived through some of the history discussed in the course. It would be an enormous help if members of GALA (class of 1994 or earlier) volunteered to be interviewed! Students will record the interview (usually conducted over the phone), transcribe it, and write a paper about it. You do not have to have been involved in gay politics or even to have been "out" to other people when you were at Yale to be interviewed. We would be glad to take steps to protect the confidentiality of alumni who do not want their names recorded.

I think alumni would find this to be as meaningful an experience as the students surely will, and over the course of a few years the assignment should also produce an important archive of oral histories based at Yale that will be invaluable to future historians. I believe we have the chance to turn

Yale into a major center for LGBT historical research, and this is one important way GALA can help us do so.

If you would be willing to participate in this project, please send the following information to:

Caitlin.Casey@yale.edu—

- your name, Yale affiliation, and years at Yale
- telephone number and best times to reach you
- your address
- where have you lived since graduating from Yale (and when were you there)?
- did you think of yourself as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans when you were at Yale?
- if not, when did you identify yourself this way or start participating in LGBT life?
- anything else it would be useful for us to know

A member of GALA or Caitlin Casey, a TA in the course who is coordinating this assignment, will contact you to arrange the interview. Thanks very much for considering this! ▼

Two Figures in the 1960 Smith College Anti-Gay “Witchhunt” Each Had Yale Backgrounds

Joel Dorius, a brilliant and widely admired teacher of literature and one of the anti-gay witchhunt victims at Smith in 1960, previously had taught at Yale; the new President of Smith at the time, T. C. Mendenhall, had been Master of Berkeley College from 1950 to 1959 and a member of the Yale faculty since 1937.

The Smith “scandal,” described in the 2001 biography of Newton Arvin, *The Scarlet Professor*, by Barry Werth, and in a 2006 WGBY/PBS documentary, “The Great Pink Scare,” involved the arrests of Smith faculty members Dorius, Arvin, and Ned Spofford on charges of possession and distribution of pornography. The triggering incident was when several men met in Arvin’s apartment and viewed photos of male nudes, many similar to today’s underwear ads (that meeting was the “distribution”).

In his 2004 memoir, *My Four Lives: an academic life shattered by scandal*, Joel Dorius wrote that “in the late ’50s, the concept of civil rights for lesbians and gays was inconceivable. . . . Our ‘crimes,’ as publicized, had been too offensive and outrageous to be tolerated, much less defended, by reasonable citizens. . . . I had suffered a ‘social death,’ . . . punished savagely for an event that today seems trivial.”

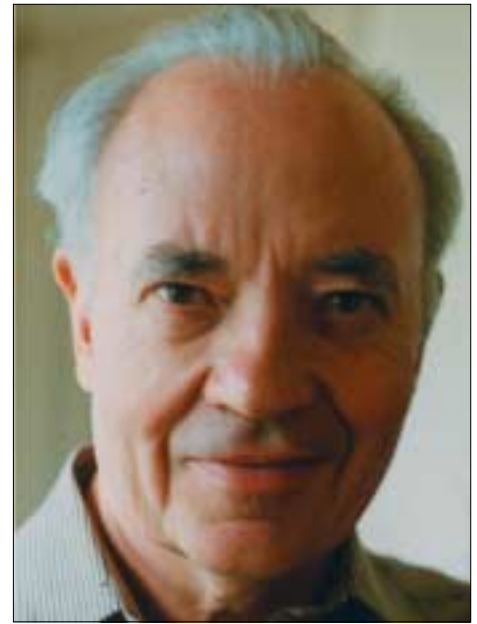
He also wrote that his lawyer told

him that President Mendenhall “didn’t speak a word in our defense” before the Smith Board of Trustees, which terminated their employment despite a contrary faculty recommendation.

In 1963 the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled the convictions invalid, on a technicality. Smith never apologized, but in 2002 school officials established the Dorius/Spofford Fund for the Study of Civil Liberties and Freedom of Expression and the Newton Arvin Prize in American Studies.

Joel Dorius taught Shakespeare, Elizabethan drama, and the classics of English literature at Harvard, M.I.T., and Yale and, for 20 years, at San Francisco State University, retiring in 1984.

News accounts have quoted a close friend, English professor James Brogan, as saying of Dorius, “He was witty and had an incredible charisma that drew people to him. . . . He was a mentor to many very, very bright people, which has to be the greatest intellectual ac-



The late Joel Dorius (1919–2006)

complishment, when other people of stature look up to you.”

Joel Dorius died in February 2006 of a form of cancer. Donations in his memory may be given to the ACLU.

A personal note: This writer’s Yale roommates often discussed the content of Dorius’s lectures enthusiastically. And T. C. Mendenhall was the person who convinced me to matriculate at Yale rather than Harvard and later was my history professor.

By Robert Leuze, ’58 ▼

University Puts Focus on LGBTQ

(Continued from page 3)

Chauncey’s course “U.S. Lesbian and Gay History” will explore Yale’s record on LGBTQ issues through an oral history project pairing current students with Yale alumni. Interviews will serve as the basis for a paper analyzing the subject’s experience at Yale and placing it in a historical context, according to the syllabus for the class.

While the convergence of Trumpler’s hiring, the new nondiscrimination policy and Chauncey’s arrival all contribute to improvements in LGBTQ life at Yale, the fact that they all happened this month may be coincidental. Chauncey’s hiring was in the works for months, while the Task Force and QPAC worked independently in lobbying the administration.

“It’s part of the overall picture, [but] the fact that it all happens at once is just a little bit serendipitous,” Rudy Kleysteuber said. ▼

Yale Amends Non-Discrimination Policy

(Continued from first page)

The University is committed to basing judgments concerning the admission, education, and employment of individuals upon their qualifications and abilities and affirmatively seeks to attract to its faculty, staff, and student body qualified persons of diverse backgrounds. In accordance with this policy and as delineated by federal and Connecticut law, Yale does not discriminate in admissions, educational programs, or employment against any individual on account of that individual’s sex, race, color, religion, age, disability, status as a special disabled veteran, veteran of the Vietnam era or other covered veteran, or national or ethnic origin; nor does Yale discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

For more information about the change, or about QPAC’s campaign, please contact Hugh Baran at 201-218-4409. ▼

“Why We Need Gay Marriage and Should Settle for Nothing Else” Is Passionately Argued by Evan Wolfson

GALA Co-hosted Prominent Civil Rights Attorney and GALA member at Yale Club of New York in September

By Dennis Mack

On September 20, about 75 members of Yale GALA and their friends gathered in the library of the Yale Club to nibble on cheeses and veggies and to hear Evan Wolfson, Yale '78, speak on why marriage matters. Although we were seated in formal rows as if for a reading from his book, Evan spoke as if he were talking to just a few friends to explain why we needed to embrace his passion for gay marriage and refuse to settle for anything less. He spoke without notes and without wandering from the logical course of his position. Although Evan has been involved in issues related to gay marriage for more than a decade, his arguments were fresh and uplifting—not leaden from having spoken on the subject in a thousand venues before.

Evan gave an abbreviated timeline of the evolution of marriage in New York State. Man and woman were by marriage made one flesh, and the man controlled the wife's power to contract, her property, and her body. Even in our lifetime, a husband could not be found guilty of having raped his wife, because among the marriage vows the wife had submitted to her husband's sexual appetite unconditionally. New York has been in the forefront of changing the institution of marriage. Over the last 200 years, the relationship of husband and wife changed radically in New York, usually by judges deciding cases brought by women who sought some measure of relief from the traditional strictures. Courts also were responsible for lifting the restrictions on interracial marriages, even though the public of that time thought that prohibition to be right. It would be consistent with that history for the courts, rather than the legislature, to remove the prohibitions against same-sex marriage.

Unequal treatment under the law

Evan explained why the refusal of the state to recognize our relationships amounted to unequal treatment under the law. He reduced the recent New York Court of Appeals decision to an absurdity: the state has to protect heterosexual couplings because they might accidentally produce a child and the state must provide a stable framework for the child that they might accidentally produce while gay people are more responsible and have to make a conscious effort to produce a child, and therefore the state does not have to provide supports for

stability for such relationships. As Evan pointed out, many marriages are not fruitful and many cannot be fruitful, but the heterosexual couples are permitted to marry without inquiry of their plans to be fruitful. And many same-sex couples that choose to have children need stronger support to maintain the stability of their relationship.

After the court's decision, the battle for gay marriage in New York courts is over for the time being. We must now turn to the legislature, which is way behind the views of the people of New York State. A majority of New York residents still oppose gay marriage, but a majority favors civil unions that would give all the benefits and responsibilities of marriage that New York State can confer but not use the word “marriage.” Evan says that we should not settle for civil unions. They are a form of second-class citizenship, he argues, because we would be treated differently and unequally from other couples, acknowledging the prejudice and anxiety of others. Marriage is the term used in all cultures to describe a relationship of

love and dedication to another person. Marriage matters because it, not civil union, is the building block of our society.

Those wanting a fuller, more accurate statement of Evan's arguments should read his book, *Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality, and Gay People's Right to Marry*, which he signed after responding to questions. ▼



Evan Wolfson

**YALE GALA
2006-2007
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