

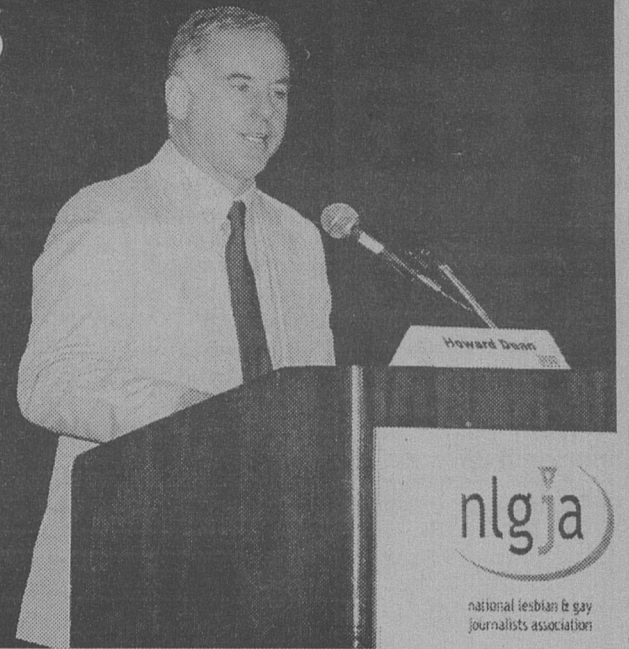
# Dean Bids VT GLBTQs Goodbye, For Now

Vermonters have not heard the last of Governor Howard Dean. Although he will leave office in January, early next year he will announce his plan to seek the Democratic Party's presidential nomination in 2004. His early announcement and active campaigning mean that Howard Dean is not going away any time soon.

Dean, a physician, has served as Vermont's Governor since 1991. Prior to succeeding Gov. Richard Snelling, who died in office, Dean served as Lieutenant Governor and represented Burlington in Vermont's House of Representatives.

As Governor, Dean has historically sided with Vermont's gay and lesbian community. He is credited with helping pass and ultimately signed into law legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. He also supported the extension of benefits to the domestic partners of Vermont State employees. In 1994, Dean appointed Bill Lippert, an openly gay man, to fill a vacant seat in the House of Representatives. As a result of Vermont's civil union law, *The Advocate*, a national gay newsmagazine, dubbed him the "Dean of Unions."

In a candid interview, Dean reflected on his tenure as Governor, his relationship with the gay community, and his upcoming Presidential campaign.



PAUL OLSEN INTERVIEWS OUTGOING GOVERNOR AND PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL HOWARD DEAN

**OITM:** You signed into law the Gay Rights Bill, Hate Crimes, Adoption Reform including second parent adoption, and Civil Unions. Which of these accomplishments are you most proud of and why?

**Dean:** I would say the civil unions bill because the opposition was so enormous and it was clearly the right thing to do. America has a long tradition of treating everybody equally under the law and I see that as a furtherance of that tradition.

**OITM:** You've become a bit of a rock star with the gay community nationally since signing the civil union law. Describe the reception you've received as you travel the country.

**Dean:** It is very warm which you would hope for because I did stand up for this community. But most importantly I stood up for the ideals of the country. You can't have a country that holds out the promise that America does unless everyone is included. And that's really why I did this.

**OITM:** In light of the makeup of the newly elected legislature, do you think that civil unions are a dead political issue in Vermont?

**Dean:** Yes. I don't think civil unions will be repealed or altered.

**OITM:** What kind of Governor do you think (Gov.-elect) Treasurer Jim Douglas (R) will be when it comes to gay and lesbian issues? Have you discussed gay issues with him?

**Dean:** We have not spoken about those issues. I think Jim is a fair-minded person. I think he's a little concerned with the right wing of his party and the pressures they'll put on him but I think Jim really is a true moderate.

**OITM:** What's next for Howard Dean?

**Dean:** I'm running for President. I believe that

for America to fulfill its promise to all its citizens it has to treat everyone the same way. That does not mean that, as President, I would require Alabama and Wyoming to have civil unions but it does mean that I expect everybody to be treated equally under the law. They will have to find their way to doing that. I also believe that the federal government should recognize civil unions, which means that gay and lesbian people would have all the same legal rights as everybody else under the federal law as well as under the state law.

**OITM:** How would federal recognition of state-sanctioned civil unions work? Could benefits like Social Security be provided in light of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)?

**Dean:** I actually think that DOMA is unconstitutional because it is an infringement on the reciprocal contracts clause of the U.S. Constitution but I guess a lawyer would have to answer that question. If the federal government recognized civil unions then gay and lesbian people would have the same rights as everybody else does under the law including immigration rights.

**OITM:** But as President you couldn't do that alone.

**Dean:** No, you'd probably have to get the Congress to go along with it.

**OITM:** Members of the Westboro Baptist Church and other antigay activists are unlikely to support your Presidential candidacy. Do you think they'll begin to protest you as you campaign?

**Dean:** [Laughs]. They may. Who knows? I can't tell what's in their minds. Sometimes I'm not sure they know what is in their minds.

**OITM:** What role do you think civil unions and your support for gay rights will play in your presidential campaign?

**Dean:** I think it will be very helpful in the Democratic Party primary and I think it will require the nation to begin to debate about appropriate rights for all citizens. In the general election, should I become the nominee, the President (Bush) will have to explain to America why everybody shouldn't be treated equal when it says that in the Declaration of Independence.

**OITM:** Your opposition to the legalization of medical marijuana angers some AIDS activists. What impact might that have on your support in the gay community?

**Dean:** It will have some impact. My opposition to medical marijuana is based on science not based on ideology. I just don't think you should single out a particular drug and use the political process to OK it when you use the scientific process to OK everything else. I will require the FDA to evaluate marijuana with a double blind study with the same kinds of scientific protocols that every other drug goes through. I'm willing to abide by what the FDA says.

**OITM:** What is your position on President Clinton's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" gays in the military policy?

**Dean:** I think it is ridiculous. The military has a ton of gay and lesbian people in it and I think the military would be in serious trouble if all the gays and lesbians were kicked out. If somebody is willing to die for our country in Iraq or Afghanistan then it seems to me they should be able to say who they are. It is silly. The most important act in the campaign for human rights is the individual act of saying who you are. It is much more difficult for a decent American to discriminate against a co-worker or a friend who happens to be gay than it is to discriminate against some group they think they don't know anything about. There are only two countries in NATO- Turkey and the United States- that don't allow gays to serve openly in the military. I'm a

big believer in people being who they are.

**OITM:** Give me your first response to the following: Civil unions.

**Dean:** The ultimate achievement in equal rights under the law for all Americans.

**OITM:** VCLGR co-liaison Keith Goslant.

**Dean:** A wonderful human being who is a pragmatic, patient and courageous person.

**OITM:** State Rep. Nancy Sheltra (R-Derby).

**Dean:** Pass.

**OITM:** Vermont.

**Dean:** A wonderfully enlightened state with the same problems of every other state in the union but with an honesty and willingness to approach those problems.

**OITM:** President Dean.

**Dean:** [Laughs]. Hopefully we'll be talking about that after January 20, 2005.

**OITM:** What final message do you have for Vermont's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community?

**Dean:** My final message is thank you to the gay and lesbian community. We certainly haven't agreed on everything but I really appreciate what all Vermonters, including gay and lesbian Vermonters, have done to support me over the last 11-1/2 years in the greatest job in Vermont. I just want to thank all your readers. ▼

(For more about Gov. Dean's presidential campaign visit [www.deanforamerica.com](http://www.deanforamerica.com))

Paul Olsen also writes for in newsweekly and lives in Colchester.

## Remembrance cont'd

minology and incorrect pronoun usage as well as language that "blames the victim." Distinctions between sexual orientation and gender identity seem to be especially problematic.

Gender identity includes an individual's identity, appearance, or behavior regardless of whether or not they are different from those traditionally associated with the individual's sex at birth.

In both California and Vermont, gender identity and expres-

sion are protected under hate crimes provisions. Four states and the District of Columbia include gender identity in their hate crime laws. The other two states are Minnesota and Missouri.

NTAC, along with the Remembering Our Dead Project, has established a Bereavement Fund to assist the family and friends of Gwen "Lida" Araujo with costs associated with loss of a loved one. Funds will be turned over to a Memorial Fund established by the family in Araujo's birth name: Eddie Araujo, Jr. Information for donating to the fund

can be found at [www.ntac.org/donation](http://www.ntac.org/donation).

The Transgender Day of Remembrance began in San Francisco in response to the still unsolved murder of Rita Hester, a transgendered woman who was stabbed to death in her apartment on November 28, 1998. At that time, the Remembering Our Dead Project (which spawned the Day of Remembrance) discovered that an average of one person was reported murdered each month due to anti-transgender violence. In 2002 this figure has doubled. Smith believes

the increase to be the result of better reporting and suspects that, sadly, "There is a chance, perhaps a good one, that there are even more still out there that we are missing."

Back in Burlington, Lurie commented, "While I am pleased that people are responding in a heartfelt way, they really can't help but be deeply affected by these stories. It could be us. It could be anybody. I'd like to see the respect and support for trans people grow into all areas of life, not just around these terrible tragedies."

Trans activist and event

organizer Eli Clare talked about how hate crimes function to make all people in the group afraid. "The murder of trans people creates a knowledge within that we are all vulnerable," Clare said. "The Day of Remembrance says 'no' to trans violence and gives us the opportunity to express our grief and rage in community, instead of in isolation. It is a way of taking some of that vulnerability and creating an event that has the potential to change the world." ▼