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VERMONT'S NEWSPAPER for LESBIANS and GAY MEN

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Vermont Law School bans military recruiters

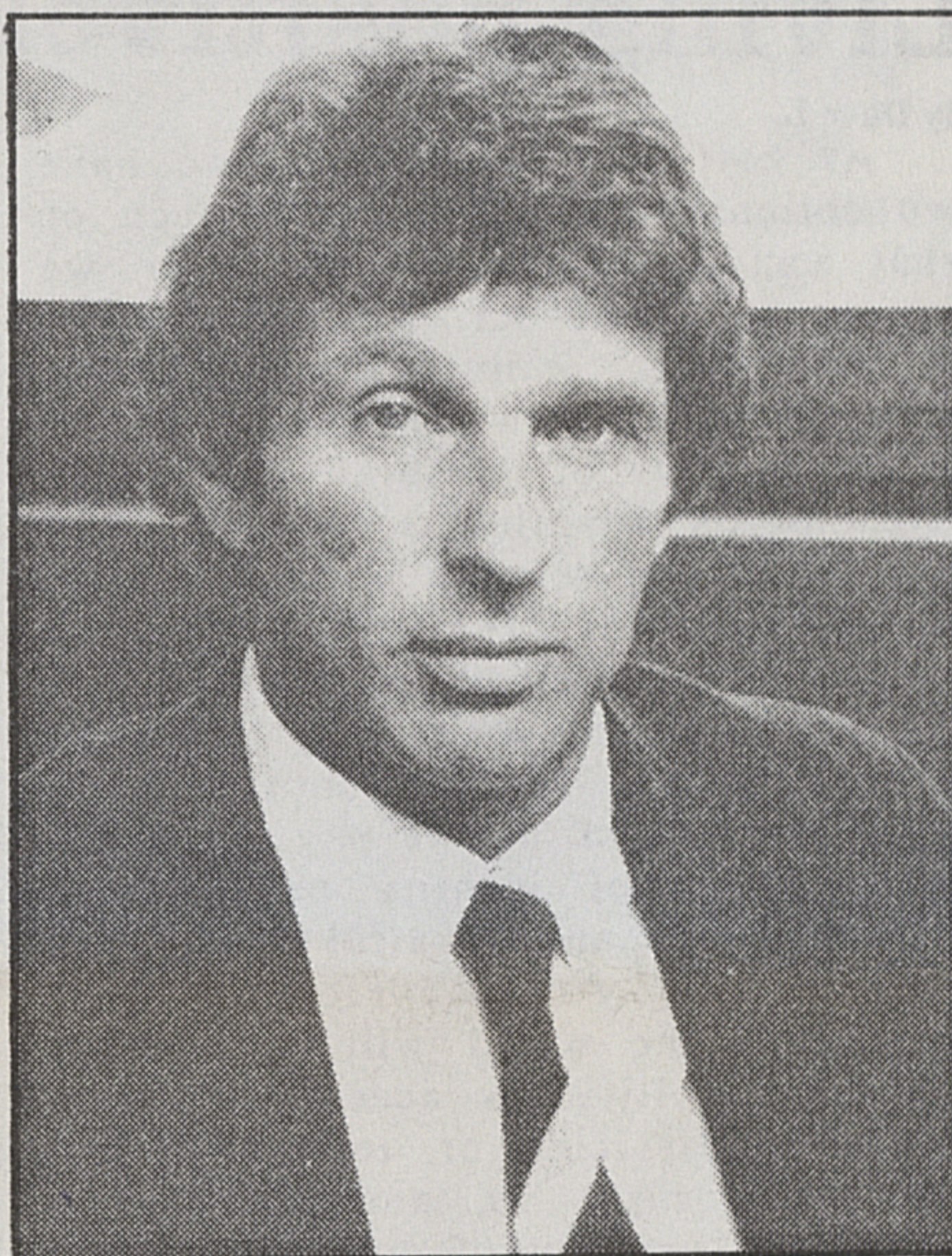
Vermont Law School Dean, Jonathan Chase, recently barred the military from recruiting on the School's campus. Chase based his actions on the School's existing non-discrimination policy which says in part that, "Discrimination based on age, color, handicap, marital or parental status, sexual preference, national origin, race religion, or sex shall not exist in the Law School. This policy applies to all aspects of administration, education, employment, financial aid, student activities and other school administered programs.

Last Fall, students met with the Dean to bring the conflict between the school's policy and military recruitment to his attention. The military has a long-standing policy against the recruitment of homosexuals. Vermont Law School does not currently have a procedure to ensure that employment recruiters adhere to the School's non-discrimination policy. The students that met with Dean Chase suggested that such a procedure be adopted. One method employed at other schools is to have each employment recruiter sign a statement saying that they adhere to the School's non-discrimination policy. This insures equality in employment opportunities for all students on campus.

Dean Chase's decision to bar military recruitment on campus is a laudable step in the right direction, according to one of the students that met with the Dean. But, she maintains that it does not go far enough.

Regarding non-military employers, the Dean said, "We assume they conform with our policy." Dean Chase stated that there are no plans at this time, to question other employers about their hiring (or firing) policies.

Student opinion on the decision is mixed. Many students agree with the Dean's action and find it incompatible for their school, which is opposed to the discrimination of homosexuals, to allow the military to recruit on its campus. Other students disagree. The



Jonathan Chase

Student Bar Association (Student Council) voted almost unanimously against the Dean's policy. The vote is a non-binding show of the Student Council sentiment.

The issue was also raised at the

House rejects amendment

The Vermont House of Representatives turned down a proposal to prohibit rental housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

On February 26 the House, by a voice vote, rejected an amendment to the pending Landlord/Tenant Bill which would have added "sexual orientation" to the legislation's anti-discrimination clause. The bill, which would regulate a variety of aspects of landlord/tenant relations, went on to pass the House and is awaiting Senate action.

The amendment's sponsor, Rep. Peter Youngbear (D-Plainfield) explained that he introduced the sexual orientation language after hearing complaints of discrimination from lesbian and gay constituents.

March 1st Board of Trustee's meeting where students asked that the Dean's actions be reversed. The Trustees assigned the issue to its Executive Committee for review. At press time, the proposal, before the Executive Committee, was to change the wording of the statement to read "no unlawful discrimination." Since it is not currently "unlawful" to discriminate against lesbians and gay men, this effectively takes the teeth out of the statement.

Persons interested in supporting Dean Chase's actions may write to him or Mr. Hilton Wicke, Esq., Chair of the Board of Trustees, in care of Vermont Law School, South Royalton, Vermont, 05068. Your letters can also urge the adoption of a more comprehensive check on employer compliance with the non-discrimination policy.

Vermont Law School does not have a lesbian and gay students' organization. The majority of lesbians and gay men at the law school are very much in the closet. Our straight allies are reluctant to support the Dean as it means a sacrifice on their part of certain recruitment opportunities. Therefore, any and all support is needed and welcome.

Lesbian and gay community activist, who were not told in advance that the amendment would be offered, were not surprised that it was defeated.

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HTLV hearing held

A public hearing on House Bill 622, the HTLV-III antibody discrimination bill, was held at the State House in Montpelier on March 13.

Dr. Heather Wishik was one of several people who testified at the hearing. Transcript of her testimony is on p. 5.

The hearing consisted of a presentation by State Epidemiologist Dr. Richard Vogt and a panel discussion and question period with six expert witnesses.

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