

## Gay National News

### Gay Man Sues Skinhead Attackers

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund joined other lawyers and gay community groups in announcing the filing of a unprecedented \$20 million suit against members of a Skinhead gang alleged to have brutally beaten Rodney Johnson of Washington, DC solely because he is gay.

The suit, thought to be the first in the country against members of the Skinheads, alleges violation of Johnson's federal civil rights as well as assault and battery. The case, filed on September 15, 1989, marks the first time a victim of anti-gay violence has sued members of an organized hate group for civil damages.

According to a NGLTF report on anti-gay violence in 1988, "Skinhead attacks were by far the most numerous and brutal of all [anti-gay] hate group incidents documented." Even though some Skinhead factions purport not to be racist, the hate the groups thrive on is aimed at several minority groups. By far, the most clear and common link between all these factions, NGLTF reports, is their fervent hatred of lesbians and gay men.

### Howard Forced to End Discrimination

The Whitman-Walker Clinic, Inc. and Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund announced a settlement of a lawsuit against Washington, D.C.'s Howard University Hospital ("Howard") for discrimination against AIDS patients. As a result of the settlement, Howard has agreed to adopt a hospital-wide policy permitting persons with AIDS or HIV infection to be treated on all wards in all rooms of the hospital. Previously, patients with AIDS and HIV disease were refused admission to certain wards of the hospital, including the psychiatric ward, and were treated only in isolation, in private rooms, or in rooms with other patients with HIV disease.

Howard has also agreed to follow federally-recommended "universal precautions." These procedures call for treating all patients as potentially infected

with HIV, rather than singling out HIV patients and treating them differently. The federal government and all public health experts recommend this approach to prevent the transmission of HIV in the hospital setting.

### Dignity/USA to Provide Catholic Leadership

Pat Roche, who became President of Dignity/USA recently, named AIDS ministry as the leading item on a five-point agenda for the national lesbian and gay Catholic movement over the next two years. "AIDS ministry will absolutely be this organization's number one priority," said Roche. "Through a new program, the National AIDS Project of Dignity, we will provide leadership and education to fill the void left by the Catholic Church's oftentimes inadequate efforts to minister to people with AIDS and those who are HIV-positive."

"We extend a special invitation to women, to divorced Catholics, and to other disaffected Catholics who feel alienated from the Church to support us on this project and work with us on other crucial issues of mutual concern."

For a list of chapters or for more information, please write to: Dignity/USA, 1500 Massachusetts Ave, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005

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