

Battles Have Been Won!

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Thank You!

Civil Rights Bill Signed

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handed the pen used to sign the bill to Keith Goslant of whom Senator Wolk said, "Keith probably had a better attendance record than some of the members" (of the Legislature).

Even after the final vote, supporters found it hard to believe the bill was reality. Passed relatively easily in the Senate by a vote of 20-9, the bill faced an uphill fight in the House. Among the hurdles were language changes, including a controversial addition to exclude automatic coverage of domestic partners by Ruth Stokes (also a member of the Board of Trustees at UVM); and fierce lobbying by fundamentalist groups, including Palm Sunday sermons chastising several representatives. A last minute effort to kill it through reconsideration failed on a vote of 80 to

67, a wider margin than the bill itself received.

After the signing, supporters, still somewhat in awe that it really was true, greeted one another with the words, "Hi citizen," a reference the feeling expressed by many during the course of the fight that they did not feel like real citizens of the state since they lacked the legal protections and rights of other citizens.

S-131 takes effect on July 1, 1992. For more on the bill see Susan Sussman's article, "What to Do Next: Enforcement of the Anti-Discrimination Bill" on page 10 and Ron Squires' testimony reprinted on page 4. ▼

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