

thing that we were going to go play tennis or go out for a bite or something.

Holly: Yeah, in all honesty at that point too, I did not know what a homosexual was, so there was a certain education process on my part.

OITM: So was this just a new friend as far as you could tell?

Holly: Yes. One that there was a very strong attraction to, one that I wanted to be with. But I didn't understand what the attraction was right away.

OITM: How have you marked your anniversary so far?

Lois: In October it will be twenty-five years....October 20th. That was the day I realized that this was a special relationship and we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together.

OITM: What makes your relationship work for such a long time?

Holly: Um...

Lois: You've got to work at it.

Holly: Yeah, I was going to say, there's got to be an effort at it. You've got to want to make it work. Communication. [pause]

Lois: Best friends.

Holly: A lot of it is wanting to make it work and making the effort, and not letting

things get to you that come up. It's got to be the most important thing in your life, and you've got to make sure that you keep that priority up there.

Lois: I don't think it makes any difference whether you're gay or straight, you still have to work at a relationship.

Holly: Yep. And it's worth it.

OITM: You're being asked to speak for yourself, but also for lesbians everywhere in a sense. How do you feel about that?

Lois: Actually it's sort of flattering. We've gotten a lot of endorsements and lot of people have said "I couldn't think of a better couple to have representing us," because that is what we're doing is representing the gay community. A lot of people have said thanks for sticking your neck out for us, those sorts of things.

OITM: What are your plans pending a victory?

Lois: The plan is for the three of us — the three couples involved in the lawsuit — we would all like to possibly go get our marriage licenses [at the same time]. As soon as it became legal, the first thing we would do is go get married. We haven't even thought about a celebration or party or anything, but....we're going to have one.

Holly: Somebody reminded us that there should be a honeymoon involved, and both of us were like, "oh yeah."

Lois: Maybe it will be payback

time for all these weddings we've been invited to. We've always taken gifts.

OITM: How do you respond to some of the criticisms within the community — that we shouldn't be taking this on, that marriage is a patriarchal institution?

Lois: I guess what I have to say is that marriage is ever-evolving. We're not asking anybody to get married. I don't think marriage is any more patriarchal [a part of] society than anything else. Men are still predominantly in government, in politics. It hasn't changed.

Holly: One of the things I think people need to remember is that in this lawsuit, we're not saying that couples need to be married. We're saying that the choice of whether or not to marry should be available. If a couple says they don't want to have anything to do with marriage, then they've got that choice. But if a couple says they would like to get married, that choice should also exist for them. And you can say marriage is patriarchal, but I think a lot of it depends on how the couple interacts with each other.

OITM: Do you think an appearance of "normalcy" is important to winning the case?

Lois: I don't know that it's the importance of normalcy. I think the picture that needs to be created — and I hate to say the words — is the fact that

homosexuals, gays or lesbians, can hold long term jobs, can be stable members of their society; they're not all [stereotypical]....I don't think a lot of people see that this is normal....We are normal, as normal a part of the population as heterosexual. And if you want to call that normalcy, the only non-traditional thing about our life, our family, what we do in the community, the only difference is that both adults in the household are the same sex.

Holly: Part of the problem many gays and lesbians have had over the years is that a lot of people don't realize how many gays and lesbians there are in this world. And part of that is that most of us don't look very different. The ones that do they see and are [disdainful]. I have nothing against the ones who look very different, the ones who fit the stereotypes. But people don't recognize that there are all these other people out there and so they don't know how many of us we are. If we could get people to start realizing, "well gee, there must be others like them..."

OITM: Knowing that this is for OITM, is there anything you'd like to say to the GLBT community in Vermont?

Lois: I do think we need to make ourselves more visible. Those of us who are in safer situations should make ourselves more visible, because

that will make it easier for those who can't.

Holly: Every person has to seek the level at which they're comfortable. Those of us who can be more out perhaps will make it more comfortable for others in the future.

OITM: Is that part of the issue for you?

Holly: I think it's part of why we're willing to be more out, to try to make things better for the others. I don't want to sound like a hero or anything, 'cause I don't think I am one...

Lois: Well one of the reasons we're doing it is because people did it for us....

Holly: Yes. They stuck their necks out and got the benefits. We benefit from that. So it's time for us to stick our necks out.

INTERN WANTED:

Out in the Mountains is looking for Interns. Interns will work with the editor, write articles, cover events, and also work on outreach, distribution, research, fundraising, grant writing, and various other aspects of production. Some travel might be required. Contact Chris Moes at (802) 865-9294 or oitm@together.net

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