

**Seattle Commission for Sexual Minorities  
Community Forum on Aging Issues in the GLBTQ Community  
Wednesday, September 27, 2006, 6:00pm  
Seattle Public Library, Capitol Hill Branch**

**Facilitator:** Tom Rasmussen

**Panelists:**

- 1) Margaret Boddie, MA
- 2) Sally Friedman
- 3) Karen Fredriksen-Goldsen, Ph.D.
- 4) Kenny Jo McMullen
- 5) Don Moreland
- 6) Beth Reis & Barbara Steele
- 7) Antony Stately, Ph.D.
- 8) Gary Tang

**Notes:**

- I. Introduction of City Council Member Tom Rasmussen by Co-Chair Joseph Daniels
- II. Tom speaks about this experience in the community, his career path, and some general thoughts/impressions regarding aging
- III. Tom asks each panelist to provide an introduction
- IV. **Gary Tang** – Asian Counseling & Referral Service
  - a. Talks about ACRS, generally
  - b. Lotus Root, an organization related to ACRS
  - c. Asian community is 14% of the Seattle population (80,000 people)
  - d. Program goals = outreach, education for Asian community
- V. **Kenny Jo McMullen** – People Of Color Against AIDS Network (POCAAN)
  - a. Outreach to relevant community regarding health/wellness issues
  - b. Encourage condom use in persons of all ages
  - c. Rather difficult to get an older person to engage in preventative measures
- VI. **Margaret Boddie** – African American Elders Program, Program Manager
  - a. Program sponsored by Catholic Community Services
  - b. Discusses the characteristics of the relevant community (their backgrounds)
  - c. Retired from City of Seattle in 2001
  - d. Talks about recent experience during oral screening clinic
  - e. "Frail, disenfranchised, vulnerable" ... her target audience
- VII. **Karen Fredriksen-Goldsen** – Associate Dean of School of Social Work, UW
  - a. Former SCSM member
  - b. Talks about experience on the City of Seattle sub-committee on aging
  - c. Believes many things haven't changed, over the last 20 years
  - d. Involved in many different projects in the area

- e. Talks about issues affecting aging lesbians; points to her research in this area
  - f. Illustrates issues for different groups within LGBT population
  - g. We know very little about the 50+ (how we classify in our community)
  - h. We know a lot about the health/lives of younger members of our community
  - i. Points out racial/ethnic differences within the community
  - j. Interested in working with City/County in addressing health disparities across age groups and across all ethnic groups
- VIII. **Don Moreland** – Chair, Advisory Council on Aging & Disability
- a. We must learn to age gracefully ... can't prevent it, try to stay in shape
  - b. Be young at heart ... bar scene ceases to be desirable means of socialization
  - c. Mature Friends ... organization where older gay men can socialize
  - d. Take care of health matters, proactively ... see doctor often!
  - e. Moderation in drinking as we age ... very important
  - f. Times are better now than in the "good old days" ... current generation will make things better for future generations
  - g. Gay community consistently creates change and it will continue to do so
- IX. **Sally Friedman** – Senior Services
- a. Connect people with information at Senior Services
  - b. Rainbow Train ... health care providers
- X. **Antony Stately** – Native Wellness Research Center
- a. Analysis of statistics regarding Native people
  - b. Mortality rates are much higher for Native people than the national average
    - i. As are death, suicide, wellness issues, substance abuse, high-risk sexual activity
    - ii. And depression, anxiety, and other mental health diagnosis
  - c. When aging Native communities are samples, same is true
  - d. To Native people, elders are the caretakers of the culture and transmit information regarding the community to the younger generations
- XI. **Beth Reis & Barbara Steele** – Plaintiffs in WA Marriage Case
- a. Discussion of rights associated with legal marriage
  - b. Need to pay for such things as will, durable power of attorney (medical)
  - c. Reality is need to buy rights that are automatic for legal marriages (hetero)
  - d. Some rights marriage confers can be bought (hundreds of dollars, thousands, even, can only buy some – not ALL – of the rights associated with marriage)
  - e. Dignity issue ... the institution of marriage = dignity ... anything else does not
  - f. Unfair (to those who cannot afford to buy rights) to hold out for legal marriage ... but there's only dignity in full legal marriage
  - g. Will answer questions re: the law and the lawsuit
- XII. **"What is different** about aging within the GLBTQ community?"
- a. Unique needs that we should expect, prepare for?
  - b. AIDS as a health concern
  - c. Marriage is only the beginning ... what happens when your partner dies?
    - i. Lots of things society provides to a man or woman left behind by a husband or wife ... not provided to a same-sex couples

- d. We have to make marriage equality happen ... we've come a long way from the anti-sodomy state that it was many years ago
  - e. It hurts to be invisible (as so many of the GLBTQ community are, especially the aging population of our community)
  - f. Social safety net is gone
  - g. For Native people, they often have children (from previous relationships)
    - i. A lack of respect is given to GLBTQ elders, often significant
    - ii. Moving between Native community and GLBTQ community can affect social cache, sexual cache
- XIII. **Maintaining social network** as a GLBTQ community member
- a. Fewer children and grandchildren to care for us as we age
  - b. AIDS has taken many friends/partners from us over the years
  - c. Bar scene is not a desirable place to meet friends/partners
  - d. Victimization among aging GLBTQ community is more common
    - i. However, in many ways, the GLBTQ community has incredible strength and resilience ... networks, supports
  - e. Aging community members are often forgotten ... organizations need to find these forgotten people and encourage others to address the specific person
  - f. Look at race, social networks, equality, and education ... must be addressed
  - g. GLBTQ people of color (the aging) community and straight aging community
    - i. Build networks, be creative ... it's not always wise to raise your flag
    - ii. Look to education ... often, educational level is not high
    - iii. Discrimination comes into play when talking about aging in one community versus another community
  - h. There is a downside to "aging gracefully" ... often, there are other, more important, issues concerning aging in communities of color
- XIV. **Sexual orientation, immigration, marriage, and aging...**
- a. As we get older, immigration restrictions become more frequent, severe, and at the same time amnesty becomes more necessary/important
  - b. Should the person be honest? Should a gay man marry an American woman for a green card? Should an immigrant come out and give up citizenship?
  - c. Following the proper procedures are very difficult in this nation
- XV. **Community member question**, member of Alliance of Retired Americans
- a. Also works with Pride at Work, Out Front Labor Coalition
  - b. Working toward survivor rights ... long fight ahead with Social Security
  - c. GLBTQ elders looking for assisted living facilities where providers are competent in dealing with our particular issues
    - i. It's ok to ask what training the providers are receiving before dealing with the particular facility
- XVI. **Should we have GLBTQ-trained staff**, or should we have our own dedicated facilities? Should there be segregation or integration in facilities?
- a. We should have both, so there's a choice
- XVII. **Jeanine Johnson** (SCSM) question

- a. Task force to address the current need in Seattle, followed by a development process regarding senior housing (specifically targeted at GLBTQ community)
  - b. 5 to 10-year project focus, timeline
  - c. Firm foundation in LGBT Community Center
  - d. Shannon Thomas speaks on behalf of the Center
- XVIII. **Insurance** for same-sex partners
- a. Plaintiff couple speaks to the challenges here
  - b. 15% to 20% more for insurance (long-term care insurance) for same-sex couples ... Lambda Legal often provides *pro bono* legal services for same-sex couples (basic stuff: wills, powers of attorney, etc.)
  - c. Peace of mind requires planning
    - i. Medicaid provisions are of less protection
      - 1. Dedicated remains provision?
  - d. What is being done about education within community regarding planning?
- XIX. **Law stuff** ... the legal aspects of planning in this area
- a. Lambda Legal has taken the lead for high-impact litigation around the country
  - b. Resources available through this organization and through other orgs
- XX. **Social Networks** and the community
- a. Although aging isn't popular, it's happening
  - b. We need to, again, work on achieving and building our own social networks
  - c. We have to make it happen, no one's going to do it for us
  - d. Many people are not here at the forum tonight, so we are their proxy, we are their voice ... let us not embrace generalizations regarding these issues
  - e. Do not forget the strengths and resiliencies of our community ... are we more ready to age than our heterosexual brothers and sisters? Maybe.
  - f. Do not forget religious organizations, communities of faith ... we need that powerful ally in our corner ... we need to share the information gained in these forum with religious organizations ... education, outreach
- XXI. **Miscellaneous** announcements...
- a. Pick carefully where you're going to retire ... Palm Springs gets hot!
  - b. Abrupt changes later in life are difficult when one does not find a friendly environment ... research and plan ahead
  - c. Financial planning is key
  - d. What about sex?
    - i. No less important, but approach to sex and access to sex changes