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Civil rights vote pushed Bernardin withholds support; July 29 Council vote

By William Burks
and Tracy Baim

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin and a group representing the gay and lesbian community were unable to agree Tuesday on mutually acceptable language for Chicago's proposed sexual orientation anti-discrimination addition to the human rights code, and gay rights leaders said the measure would be called before the City Council meeting July 29 with no amendments added and without the support of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese.

Saying "our posture has not been one of negotiation because, as I have indicated, our contribution to the public discussion is to articulate moral principles, not draft civil legislation," Bernardin concluded, "The matter remains in the hands of the City Council."

The cardinal reiterated statements he has made before on this issue, saying, "Care must be taken to protect the rights of others as well: of parents and their children, of those who are offended by gay lifestyles or advocacy, and the rights of religious organizations to run their institutions and programs in accord with their beliefs."

The cardinal and the cardinal's attorneys never suggested any language that could answer their own objections to the proposed ordinance, according to Vincent Samar, an attorney who attended the July 22 meeting.

"We specifically asked the cardinal if people engaged in sexual actions outside of those approved by the church were entitled to any civil rights whatsoever. He said that in some cases they were not, without offering a basis for making that distinction," Samar said. The church clearly said it wants to retain an individual's right to discriminate against other persons whose actions do not agree with religious teaching, Samar continued.

"We must now present this issue to the City Council. We will submit no amendments which would support this position of the church thereby compromising the position of all Chicago citizens, gay and non-gay," Samar stated.

Mayor's liaison to the gay and lesbian community Kit Duffy, who also attended the final meeting with the archdiocese, summarized the meeting by saying, "The church wants the right to retain in law the right of people to discriminate against people based on sexual activity."



About 150 people attended the community meetings last Sunday, including representatives from many different gay and lesbian groups.

Duffy said Ald. Martin Oberman was committed to calling the ordinance for a vote July 29, regardless of whether its prospects for passage had been lessened by the lack of agreement with Bernardin.

At a press conference Tuesday afternoon, Bernardin, asked what specific rights practicing homosexuals should have in society, said, "The rights of all citizens should be protected," but he did not mention specific rights. He said gay and lesbian Catholics who were disappointed or disillusioned by his stand might write me off, but I can't write them off."

Jim Bussen, national president of Dignity, an organization of gay and lesbian Catholics,



Marie Kuda (left) at Sunday's community meeting: '[C]ompromise is clearly not worth the cost.' Bussen (right) on Tuesday: 'I am embarrassed by my church.' Photos: William Burks

attended all the discussions with the archdiocese. He said he was "embarrassed and ashamed for my church."

At last Sunday's community meeting on the ordinance, activist Marie Kuda, responding to the cardinal's concern over the right of people not to be "offended" by gay advocacy, said, "I am daily offended by a government which gives money in my name to mutilate thousands in Central America; which condones activities that pollute and destroy the environment I live in; which advocates the use of my tax money for military supremacy at the expense of social justice."

"I must find ways to live in this immoral society," Kuda continued. "It is time the church



takes off its protective medieval drag and comes to terms with the realities of life in the twentieth century as the rest of us must do."

Those representing the gay/lesbian community at various stages in the discussions with the archdiocese included: Jim Bussen, Marie Kuda of the Mayor's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues, long-time activist William Kelley, and attorneys Larry Rolla, Mary Mack, Karl Rubesch, and Vince Samar. Also taking part in the process was Ruth Moscovitch, an attorney with the City's Corporation Counsel, and Kit Duffy.

The Tuesday meeting was the first held with Bernardin, who had been out of town or unavailable during previous discussion with diocesan representatives.

With less than a week before an expected City Council vote July 29 on gay and lesbian civil rights protections, efforts to ensure the bill's passage are well underway, despite Bernardin's refusal earlier this week to support the legislation. Those efforts include community pressure on all 50 aldermen to make sure the ordinance has the necessary votes to pass.

In discussing the efforts during discussions with the church, Bussen, speaking at last Sunday's gay and lesbian community meeting, said the community negotiators "presented reasonable, fair, proper wording that does not sell us [gays and lesbians] out. The archdiocese refused all proper wording for a definition of sexual orientation. They had no proposed wording to present to us."

One of the proposed amendments stated, "Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to bar any religious or denominational institution or organization...from limiting employment or sales or rental of housing accommodations or admission to or giving preference to persons of the same religion or denomination or from making such selection as is calculated by such organization to promote the religious principles for which it is established or maintained."

Bussen called on all those he said were "oppressed by an antiquated church hierarchy"—women, blacks, Hispanics, young married couples, divorced and remarried persons, and all unmarried people to join in a coalition supporting civil rights in Chicago.

Cardinal Bernardin, writing in the July 18 *Chicago Catholic*, called "engaging in genital homosexual acts objectively immoral. In the

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Tom Norton of Unabridged dies

By Tracy Baim

Tom Norton, the young man with the big smile, died suddenly last Friday, July 18, of as yet unknown causes. Norton co-owned Unabridged Bookstore with Ed Devereux since the store's opening in November 1980.

A coroner's report has not yet listed a cause of death; they are awaiting toxicology reports. However, it does not appear as if Norton had Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, or complications of that disease.

Norton, a healthy jogger of 29, had trouble sleeping the night of July 17. At 7:30 a.m. on the July 18, he went with a friend to St. Joseph's Hospital, where Tom was in a dehydrated state and had a high fever. Tom was admitted into his own hospital room about 2 p.m. His fever was up and he began getting splotches all over his body. At 4 p.m. his temperature was 105°. At 8:30 p.m., Tom's heart stopped and he died.

"Tom was in top physical shape," according to Ed. Tom was a jogger, biker and he worked out almost every day.

Because it does not appear Tom died of

AIDS complications, other possibilities have arisen. One probable cause was the pesticides used in spraying his apartment several days prior to his death. Tom had complained of the heat in his apartment (temperatures in Chicago approached a hundred degrees most of the week), and several days after his death the odor from the pesticides in the apartment was still strong. Another possibility is spinal meningitis, but nothing had been confirmed as of Monday night.

Ed said that had it been AIDS (or if it turns out to be AIDS), Tom would never have hidden that fact. Ed also said that in his will, Tom said donations in his name should be made to the Howard Brown Memorial Clinic AIDS Action Project.

Services were held for Tom on Monday, and a memorial held Tuesday at St. Chrysostom Church, 1420 N. Dearborn.

Tom was born Oct. 30, 1956 in Clifton, Ill. He attended and graduated from the University of Illinois, and then moved to San Francisco for a year. Seven years ago, Tom settled in Chicago and in 1980, he and Ed opened

Unabridged bookstore. The two men had been lovers from November 1977 to November of last year.

The store has been very successful, and through his work there, Tom has the chance to meet many people, including politicians Jimmy Carter and Geraldine Ferraro, as well as Armistead Maupin and Rita Mae Brown, among other well-known authors.

Tom also traveled extensively, including to London, Paris, Greece, Hawaii, New York and California.

Locally, Tom was involved in the North Broadway Merchants Association, and through Unabridged, he and Ed have helped many community groups in fundraising and ticket sales.

Tom is survived by Ed and good friends Derek McLauchan, Jack Donatelli, Joe Lanenga, and Unabridged employees Kyle Martin, Carol Stucky, and Chris Kennelly. He is also survived by his parents, Irene and Corliss; sisters Rita (Steve) Fontinha, Kim, Toni (Jeff) Pivaronas, and brothers Ted and Herb (Beth); and grandmother Marie Norton of Annawan, Ill.



Tom Norton