



Dateline

Monthly News Bulletin

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DignityUSA works for respect and justice for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons in the Catholic Church and the world through education, advocacy and support.

DignityUSA Receives Gill Foundation Grant

DignityUSA recently received a grant from the Gill Foundation, the nation's largest funder of lesbian and gay organizations. The grant will support our general operations.

"We are very appreciative to receive this grant from the Gill foundation. It will help us in our efforts to further our mission," said Matthew Gallagher, Executive Director. "This generous grant allows us to effectively continue our work and reach new levels of success."

Founded by software entrepreneur Tim Gill in 1994, the Gill Foundation celebrates 10 years of investing in change for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. With an endowment of approximately \$226 million, the foundation is the largest funder of LGBT organizations in the U.S — and has invested nearly \$67 million in nonprofits throughout the country to date. The foundation was named the 2004 Outstanding foundation by the Association of Fundraising Professionals — the largest association of charitable fundraisers in the world.

"As we continue our mission of securing equal opportunity for all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression, we are proud to support such a worthwhile organization and its important work," said Rick Jung, national program officer for the Gill Foundation.

For more information about the Gill Foundation, visit www.gillfoundation.org.

Happy Anniversary & Congratulations to:

Brooklyn (NY) - 28 Years

Phoenix (AZ) - 28 Years**

****Dignity/Integrity Chapter**

The firm of Martin & Wall is providing CPA services for DignityUSA. For information about their services, visit www.martinwallcpa.com

Two Dignity New Yorkers Share Their Catholic Wedding Story

After living together for seven years in New York City, Edward DeBonis and Vincent Maniscalco, members of **Dignity New York**, decided to get married. As devout Catholics, their Catholic wedding plans encompassed exchanging vows before God, family and friends during Mass in a Catholic church, with a Catholic priest as presider and witness to the exchanged vows. Such arrangements, with the traditional celebratory trappings, took prominence over civil, domestic unions chosen by many other gay couples to formalize their relationships. Their main priority was having their union recognized by the church.

During the planning process, Edward and Vincent came across a flyer requesting interested couples planning a religious ceremony to participate in a documentary. They spoke with the independent filmmakers, found them to be professional and sensitive, and agreed to being filmed in a documentary.

Directors Abigail Honor and Yan Viziberg documented several months of elaborate planning leading up to and including the ceremony in "Saints and Sinners – the movie," released and playing in theaters.

Film viewers will accompany Vincent and Edward in their quest to find a Catholic Church for the ceremony. Unable to secure one, they book St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Manhattan, convert it to suit a Catholic Mass — including constructing an altar, and invite Rev. Raymond Lefebvre, a gay Catholic priest — member of and presider for **Dignity New York**, to perform the ceremony.

Viewers will meet other members of **Dignity New York**, accompany Edward and Vincent at dance lessons, bachelor parties, arranging for floral bouquets and custom-made cake decorations, and the couple's request to the *New York Times* to announce their wedding.

Viewers get to witness the couple's emotional rollercoaster, feelings from hurt to joy, family feelings of misgivings and support, as well as the uncertainties and pause at the invitation to receive the Eucharist during the Mass.

Film director Abigail Honor remarked, "I wanted to make a film that would put a human face on the [same-sex marriage]

Continued next page

ATTENTION!

If you wish to receive a report of your contributions to **DignityUSA** for 2004, please contact the national office at info@dignityusa.org.

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Continued from page 1

issue. We wanted to tell a very personal story about a couple that a straight audience could identify with. I made the film for a straight audience in the hope that they would identify with Edward and Vincent's love, with them being religious people and with their desire to get married. I believe that emotions are more powerful than statistics. This is why films that tell personal stories are so much more powerful than cold arguments."

More information and scheduled showings may be found at www.personafilms.com/saintsandssinner/story.html and www.saintsandssinners-themovie.com.

Nominations Open Feb 1, 2005

Nominations to fill three (3) positions on the **DignityUSA** Board of Directors will open on February 1, 2005. The chosen directors will serve for a period of two years commencing October 2005.

Any regular member of **DignityUSA** is eligible to serve on the national board of directors. You may place yourself in nomination, or be nominated, with your consent, by other members of **DignityUSA**. All members are ensured the opportunity to be placed in nomination.

For more information concerning the candidate's desired skill sets and commitment of time, talent and treasure, as well as a nominations form and submittal requirements, please go to our website www.dignityusa.org/nominations05.

Another DignityUSA Director's Profile

Lewis Tanner has been an active member of **DignityUSA** since 1985. Currently serving his second two-year term on the Board of Directors of **DignityUSA**, Lewis has volunteered much of his time on various Board committees: Fundraising, Marketing, Human Resource and Executive Director Search Committees. He was instrumental in creating the Marketing Committee, which has worked to increase **DignityUSA**'s visibility. The Committee is currently looking for additional volunteers with marketing or advertising experience to enhance its efforts.

Prior to joining the **DignityUSA** Board of Directors, Lewis served six years as **Dignity New York**'s Treasurer, and seven years on its Steering Committee. He still enjoys serving on the chapter's Liturgy Committee. Lewis coordinated the design of the chapter's banner and website. He has increased the chapter's promotional efforts during the last few years.

Lewis has been attending **DignityUSA** conventions since 1989, and was a Delegate to the National House of Delegates in 1989, 1991 and 2001. He has led fundraising efforts in the New York area. Adorned with angel wings at **Dignity Convention 2003** in Las Vegas, he coordinated the silent auction during the convention dinner-dance.

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Originally from New Jersey and a local **Dignity** chapter, Lewis was active in his parish's Liturgy Committee, after graduating with a BA in Philosophy from Wadhams Hall Seminary College.

In 1994, he moved to New York City where he became active in **Dignity New York** and other groups, including **Defenders/NY**, an affiliate of **DignityUSA**'s leather outreach club.

Employed by a national bookseller for the last 16 years, Lewis now works in the company's Human Resources Department as a member of its Learning and Development Team, where he uses his skills and knowledge from managing stores.

Lewis continues to work at building and strengthening **DignityUSA** as THE VOICE of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics. He claims **DignityUSA** to be a wonderful family of great people.

Dignity/Dayton (OH) New Worship Space

Beginning June 6, 2004, **Dignity/Dayton** (Ohio) started to hold its weekly masses in a new space supplied by a prominent downtown Episcopal Church. The group had been meeting some Sundays at the church and some Sundays in the homes of members. It was time for a change. The pastor and parishioners of Christ Episcopal have welcomed **Dignity/Dayton** with great enthusiasm. The building's undercroft is now available for the chapter's almost exclusive use.

An anonymous chapter member made a generous donation for the sole purpose of enhancing the beauty and functionality of the space. God has blessed the chapter with many talented people, including an architect with an excellent eye for balance and style. A long-time member constructed an altar. Others painted. Another made banners and stained glass hangings. A new podium and carpeting were purchased. Some new icons, hymnals, and altar vessels have been added as well.

On November 29, 2004, the first Sunday of Advent, the community invited an especially large crowd of area progressive Christian friends to attend a special mass with a dedication and blessing of the new worship space. ALL were invited to bless these new items by their loving touch. It was a truly beautiful and enthusiastic liturgy, full of Advent hope, longing, anticipation, and joy.

The new worship space is the fulfillment of a goal to become an even more inclusive, welcoming presence in the Dayton area envisioned in October 2003, and will enable an outreach beyond the local LGBT community.

***Wishing You and Yours
Many Blessings in 2005***

DignityUSA Vision Statement

DignityUSA envisions and works for a time when Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Catholics are affirmed and experience dignity through the integration of their spirituality with their sexuality and, as beloved persons of God, participate fully in all aspects of life within the Church and Society.