

A Unique Perspective

Undergrad Student Amy Abrigo's Opening Speech on Nov. 7 Convocation Panel Reads Below:

First of all, let me just state that we are not up here to change anyone, change minds, or declare some sort of political stance for Concordia, we're not here to tell what's right, what's wrong, etc. This is not about starting an LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender] support group or club, because Concordia may or may not be ready for that. This is, like President Ries said, about starting the conversation; to broaden minds and enlighten perspectives. To say, this is something that needs to be talked about. This is something that is okay to bring up on-campus. This may not be something that Concordia as a University supports, but Concordia supports conversation, love, and passion for other people.

I'm up here because I like Concordia's promise statement and hope that we can truly live up to it as a university. I'm worried that all the talk about 'Christ is honored, all are welcome' won't translate to any action. This is especially true, and sometimes hard to discuss, when it comes to people on this campus who are gay, bi-sexual, lesbian, and/or transgender - whether we can see it or not.

I was raised with two moms. My biological mom was artificially inseminated, which, for anyone who doesn't know, in layman's terms, means they planted a little Amy seed inside of her through surgery. We didn't know who my biological father was, but that was all part of the procedure. I was okay with that. Now I could sit here and talk about how awkward father-daughter events were, how my mom had to lie to me saying that Troy Aikman, a football star, was my dad before I was old enough to understand why I didn't have one. I could talk about how my other mom had to be documented at school as a 'family friend'

instead of a 'Parental Guardian' even though she helped raise me since birth. I could talk about why my mother always came alone to parent nights, or why my second mother couldn't visit me in the hospital. But the point is, though I was raised a little differently, it does not mean my mother didn't do her best to show me love like any other mother would. My mom is the only person in the world who I believe when she says she will love me no matter what I do.

Now, because of this, it is offensive when some people refer to homosexuality as something that is to be fixed, as if people who love someone of the same sex are infested with tumors that are waiting to burst forth.

It is not possible to choose who we are attracted to or who we fall in love with. We can choose to be curious, to experiment, or to ignore that attraction or passion we feel towards another individual, but just as we may have darker or lighter skin, female or male equipment, a higher or lower voice, the fact of being gay, lesbian, or bi-sexual is not a life-choice. It is not something to be fixed.

So what particular interest do I have in this subject? I am interested as an ally, as a student, and as a daughter to see where this conversation takes us, where it takes Concordia, and what stories will soon be told as we realize just how real this issue is. These difficult topics, about homo and heterosexuality are things we need to bring up. This is a university that intends to prepare students for the real world, and if we sweep the topic of LGBT and sexual congress under the table, just how prepared are our students going to be when they step off of this campus?

Opinion: Minnesota Freedom to Marry Day

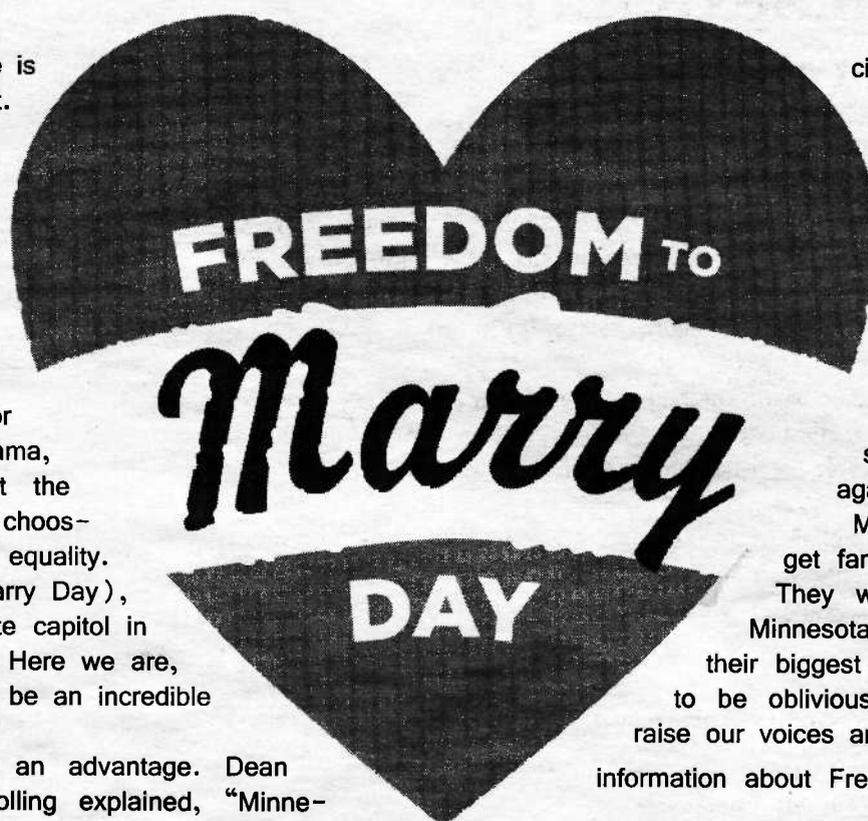
Feb. 14 Has A Whole New Meaning

By Samantha R. Huet

Nov. 6, 2012 marked an important day in history for same-sex marriage supporters and proved that love is far more powerful than our government. Rejoicing was in order after Amendment 1—legislation that would have made it near impossible for gay marriage to ever be legalized—was defeated by 52% of Minnesotans voting against it. The principal group against the proposed amendment was Minnesotans United for All Families. With supporters such as Governor Mark Dayton, Senator Scott Dibble, and President Barack Obama, Amendment 1 being denied was just the foundation for the group and they are choosing to mobilize their efforts for marriage equality. On Feb. 14 (Minnesota Freedom to Marry Day), protestors will gather outside of the state capitol in a plea to be heard by state legislation. Here we are, living in the midst of what will someday be an incredible moment in history.

Minnesotans United is now at an advantage. Dean Debnam, president of Public Policy Polling explained, "Minne-

MINNESOTANS UNITED *for* ALL FAMILIES



sota's marriage equality advocates are in a strong starting position if they decide to push to allow gay marriage." The most controversial argument against gay marriage is that, "thousands of other Minnesotans believe in God's design for marriage between one man and one woman," stated a member of Minnesota Family Council. This will be Minnesotans United's biggest rivalry throughout the debate. Those against gay marriage have formed a project called "Minnesota Worldview Leadership Project," which has been advocating against same-sex marriage since 2011.

Minnesotans United has chosen to target family-friendly events to do their promoting. They will be setting up a booth at the 2013 Minnesota State Fair where they predict to reach their biggest audience to date. To those who choose to be oblivious, or simply wait for a solution - let's raise our voices and be a part of the change. To see more information about Freedom to Marry Day visit: mnunited.org.