

Student Spotlight

What do you think about the latest chapter in the Jerry Tarkanian saga?



David Abner
Senior
Business

"I guess I'm not surprised. I think that everybody thought that he'd eventually sue them (UNLV). I'm surprised he waited this long."



Vinnie Petrosino
Junior
Communications

"I'm a student so having this effects our university. It gets me a little bit, but I think he's doing the right thing. For 19 years he's put up with a lot of stuff and it's time for him to save his name."



Al Friedman
Senior
Psychology

"I just kind of wonder why he's taken so long to pursue it, but I guess I can understand also from him not wanting to get into it until the point when he couldn't be pushed into a corner anymore."



Scott Marco
Sophomore
Accounting

"I don't know much about it because I'm from San Diego. If he was falsely accused I hope he gets some money out of it or something."



Brad Rose
Freshman
Communication

"I think Jerry Tarkanian is very angry at this school and therefore he's taking his anger and using it against us. I think he's wrong."

Special privileges for alternative lifestyles?



DONOVAN STELTZNER
STAFF COLUMNIST

A hypothetical situation:

"I don't quite know how to broach this subject matter with the two of you," I started my speech to my parents, "but I feel that I must tell you something about me, lest you find out first."

Stone silence. You could hear tectonic plates creaking in the background.

My dad hesitated. "You lost your base ID card for the sixth time, right?"

"No."

"You wrecked the car, didn't you?"

"Not exactly."

"Dennis," Mom chimes in, "Donovan's getting married...well, are you?"

"Oh, please."

"Then, what is it, son?" My parents pause, waiting to hear the earth-shattering news.

"Mom, Dad, I just discovered something about myself."

"We aren't playing 20 questions, are we? Get to the point!" A little bit of impatience from Mom.

I stood there, waiting for the right words to come to mind. Finally, I...

"Okay. I'm black."

...
The above situation, of course, is a bit on the silly side, but I do believe that it illustrates perfectly why the list of categories protected by law under the United States Code, Title X, which guarantees nondiscriminatory practices toward any person regardless of race, color, gender, creed, or national origin, is sufficient to encapsulate within it every single person that needs it.

But no need to include sexual orientation in that list.

Why, you might ask, do you believe this? And so, open-minded ones, I will tell you.

The underlying thread that goes through all the existing categories of Title X is that one can either visually recognize or logically deduce any or all of such characteristics by just seeing them and asking his or her name.

Race and gender are obvious (usually). A surname can flag nationality or heritage characteristics. An accent can be a sign of race, in some subcultures. And so on.

Sexual orientation, on the other hand, is another different matter. Unlike race or sex, sexual orientation can be disguised (maybe Michael Jackson can bleach his skin, but I'm not even going to try). Everyone is assumed to be heterosexual unless the person wishes, by word or action, to make it known the contrary.

It's more like a skeleton in the closet. Admittedly, I have a few of a different kind, but just because I choose to show my skeleton to everyone else does not mean that society must accept my skeleton, embrace it and give me, the owner of the skeleton, special protections.

When we attempt to create a certain class of protected citizens based on what they do in private (which is "none of the government's business," anyway), we end up undermining the right to privacy. Most people don't care what others do in the privacy of their own homes, and to make an issue of it would hardly be appropriate.

Rather, the public would be right in saying, "We all have skeletons in our closet. But we don't want to see yours—it's best that we keep such matters to ourselves."

As William Raspberry has said, there is a difference between saying that "my sex life is none of your business" and "(my sex life) is the moral equivalent of yours. Accept it!"

Gay men and women do have rights—the right

to vote, the right to bear arms, the right to free expression, and so on. Their extremist groups, perhaps consisting of one-fifth of one percent of the population of the country, wield the political clout of groups 20 times their size.

Should what I prefer to do on my own time—eat at KFC, scare the neighbor's cat, drink milk, write in the newspaper—entitle me to certain protections under the law? Of course not. But even if drinking milk were taboo, I could choose not to drink it. Or I could sneak it by. I alone take that risk, and if I get caught, I face the consequences.

It's not who gays are, it's what they do, that revolts a sizable portion of the populace.

Unfortunately, it will take a long time to convince some gays of that

truth. It is behavior, plain and simple. An action, in and of itself, cannot be a right. The society should guarantee basic rights and freedoms that are essential for its survival, and homosexual sex is certainly not one of them.

...
After my parents were finished rolling on the floor in laughter, my mother finally came to.

"You know what, Donovan?" she spoke. "No offense meant, but I knew you were a black guy all along."

"Gee, thanks, Ma."

Boy, was I relieved. Aside from the utter humiliation, it wasn't so bad after all.

Donovan Steltzner is a Rebel Yell columnist. He appears every Thursday in the Perspective section.

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