

TESTIMONY BY G. JACQUELINE SCHULZE

My name is Gloria Jacqueline Schulze. I am a resident of Susquehanna Township in the Harrisburg Area. Formerly, I was a long-time resident of the City of Harrisburg. I am President of the Central Pennsylvania Chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays or Parents FLAG. Central PA Parents FLAG formed in the late 1970's and has served hundreds upon hundreds of family members and gay and lesbian people in understanding and accepting their gay family members. The local chapter has met monthly under the guidance of Tressler-Lutheran Services in Mechanicsburg and is affiliated with the International Federation of Parents FLAG which boasts a central office in Washington, D.C. and over 300 chapters and contacts throughout the United States. The primary goal of Parents FLAG is to strengthen families by providing support, information and advocacy. Our message is that we love our gay children!

I am also a mother of a gay son. During the early 1980's, not only as a resident of the City of Harrisburg but also as President of the local chapter of Parents FLAG, I became involved in advocating for the passage of a human relations ordinance which would protect my child in accessing employment, housing, education, etc. regardless of his orientation. I saw and continue to see this as a basic human right which many in our society take for granted. During the Spring of 1983, I testified at hearings in which my address in the city was of public record. I was a public figure because many in the gay community were fearful to speak for fear of violence. Then, the ordinance was passed and a substantial amount of press coverage may have made my name familiar to some citizens. Several days after the passage, approximately seven false fire alarms were made at the corner of my apartment building at 1117 North Second Street, Harrisburg. Apparently, someone kept pulling the fire alarm box near the corner of Second and Cumberland Streets. Then, that evening, I was awakened around midnight by neighbors in the apartment building and a smoke alarm. A fire had consumed the outer lobby of the three story apartment building. We were terrified but the fire was minor and the police and fire departments responded rapidly. Officials found bible tracts scattered in the lobby and

stacked by the locked entrance to the apartments. The tracts had been set aflame with lighter fluid. It was apparent to the authorities and Parents FLAG that I had been targeted because of my public stance in favor of passage of the ordinance for our children. Of course, I was terrified as were the other residents of the building. However, the incident galvanized me into understanding the importance of continuing my involvement in helping families and society in understanding our gay and lesbian sons and daughters. I am here today to share my personal story with you and urge you to become educated about our gay and lesbian children.

THANK YOU.

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