



Mayor gets the point at the Dayton Pride dinner

by Randy Phillips

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Dayton -- "It's About Freedom" was the resounding theme as Dayton continued its Pride festivities with the annual dinner and expo on June 16.

Rob Austin, chair of 2007 Dayton Pride celebration, opened the evening with "This is the Moment," a song from the Broadway musical *Jekyll and Hyde*.

Austin could have been singing about the momentous number of local political dignitaries who were present at Sinclair College's Ponitz Center. Co-host Andrew Hyde took many occasions throughout the evening to tease Mayor Rhine McLin about the white feather hat she donned for the event.

Many of the guests donned stickers which read, "Discrimination should be against the law in Dayton." Dan and Nancy Tepher drove the theme home as they asked everyone to stand up for freedoms so that in Dayton, LGBT people would not be fired from their jobs, evicted from their homes, or denied a visit to their partners in the hospital just because of their sexual orientation.

McLin then stood to say, "The little signs you all are wearing, let's say it is duly noted."

Entertainment for the evening followed with Kevin Moore and Katie Pees presenting an excerpt from *Avenue Q*, "If You Were Gay, It's Okay," followed by excerpts from *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Gypsy*.

Jenny Caden spoke of life as a transgender woman, and Equality Ohio board member Mickey Hart was on hand to introduce the **keynote speaker, Matt Foreman, executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Task Force.**

Foreman spoke of the work being done across the United States in their efforts to stop legislative discrimination. He commended Equality Ohio and the Dayton LGBT community for their drive and for directing such events as Lobby Day in May, when many Ohioans personally sat down with their state legislators.

Then Foreman challenged the entire audience to join the paid membership of the Dayton LGBT Center. He called for many to stand up out of the audience and walk forward to join the membership and then announced that the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force would match dollar-for-dollar all memberships and donations given that evening. An anonymous donor stated he would match any gifts sent in up to \$2,500 per donor.

A spirit of warmth, giving, and freedom was certainly shared by all as the Dayton Gay Men's Chorus and the Columbus Women's Chorus closed out the evening with song. The Simon and Garfunkel song "Bridge over Troubled Waters" resounded triumphantly as the Columbus Women's Chorus sang the final chorus for the evening.