



Matt Foreman To Step Down As Leader Of NGLTF

January 30, 2008 — **Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** and a national leader in the struggle for equal rights and social justice, will step down in April to lead the Gay & Lesbian Program at the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund. Foreman has led the Task Force for five years and helped propel the organization to national prominence as an outspoken and unwavering advocate of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights.

The Haas, Jr. Fund, located in San Francisco, provides more grant support to LGBT organizations than any non-gay-identified foundation in the nation.

Foreman was a visible and frequent visitor to Buffalo in his previous position as Executive Director of The Empire State Pride Agenda. At the Pride Agenda, Foreman shepherded Hate Crimes and Anti-Discrimination legislation thru the New York State Legislator and lead the effort to have the State of New York fund gay and lesbian health and human services through out the state.

"We cannot adequately express our gratitude to Matt for his exceptional leadership over the last five years," said Mark Sexton, Task Force board co-chair. "During his tenure, our staff grew to 54 full-time positions and our budget more than doubled to nearly \$10 million. Our programming expanded strategically, our public profile increased dramatically; we've granted nearly \$5 million to state and local partners. And most importantly, the Task Force has played an essential role in building our community's grassroots strength."

Foreman called working for the Task Force "the greatest honor of my life."

"I will always love the Task Force, our work, our board, and our staff," he said. "Having served for 18 years as the executive director at three LGBT organizations, I'm incredibly privileged to be able to continue to work in and for the movement in a new role at the Haas, Jr. Fund. I have no doubt that the Task Force will continue to be the uncompromising progressive voice of the LGBT movement and to thrive and help lead our community to complete equality."

During Foreman's tenure at the Task Force the organization achieved stability both financially and effectiveness. Prior to his tenure the organization had seen a number of Executive Directors come and go in a very short period of time. When Foreman began at The Task Force the organization was not considered relevant in the national conversation regarding GLBT issues. Today, The Task Force has emerged as the national GLBT organization that effectively advocates and communicates with people in power as well as reaches the grassroots through activism, training and communications at a time when other national GLBT issue organizations tend to be more focused on fundraising and image.

Alan Acosta, Task Force board co-chair, said a national search would begin immediately to find Foreman's successor. Foreman will work with his senior executive staff in the interim to ensure a smooth transition to new leadership.

Acosta said the Task Force's programmatic priorities for next year include building congressional support to pass an inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) in 2009, defeating an expected anti-marriage constitutional amendment in California and launching the organization's new Academy for Leadership and Action, designed to support skills and leadership development for state and local activists.

Foreman's direct speaking style and incisive critiques have helped raise the profile of Task Force and garnered significant media attention. In speeches, panels and op-eds, he has assailed right-wing leaders for homophobic actions and opposition to LGBT rights and challenged allies to fight for GLBT equality. At the same time, he has earned a reputation of working collaboratively with other groups and led the organization in building broad coalitions. Most recently the organization's leadership was evident in its instrumental role in the formation and growth of United ENDA, a coalition of more than 350 national, state and local organizations opposing efforts to strip protections for transgender people and others from a federal nondiscrimination bill.

"Matt Foreman's leadership solidified the Task Force as a home for the entire GLBT community," said Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality. "As GLBT people, we might not all look the same, think the same, act the same, or need the same things - but we all know the Task Force respects all of us, fights for all of us and cares about all of us in the GLBT community. I look forward to continuing to work with the Task Force that Matt has built, as it continues to fight on for uncompromised equality for all of us."

Foreman has the relatively unique distinction of serving as the executive director of a local, statewide and national LGBT organization - the New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project (1990-1996), the Empire State Pride Agenda (1997-2003), and the Task Force (since 2003). When he steps down, Foreman will have served as Task Force executive director longer than any prior director.