

Backing Equality

Meet Our Donors



Anita May Rosenstein

Important alliances are created in the face of adversity, and it is no different for the relationship that bloomed between Lambda Legal and Anita May Rosenstein. Anita turned to Lambda Legal when a Los Angeles hospital blatantly discriminated against her dear friend, Connie Armijo, following the death of Connie's partner of 14 years, Dana Schwartz. With help from Lambda Legal's senior counsel, Jenny Pizer (currently serving as Marriage Project Director), and additional support from California Assembly-

woman Jackie Goldberg, Connie won the right to sue the hospital for wrongful death — a right previously limited to legally married spouses.

While involved with Connie's struggle, Anita saw firsthand how vital equal relationship recognition is for same-sex couples. To take action against the inequalities Connie suffered — and in honor of Dana — Anita created the Dana Schwartz Education Fund to support Lambda Legal's work protecting same-sex couples in California.

Prop 8 was a harsh reminder of the challenges the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movement still faces, and Anita is continuing to help overcome these obstacles. She is currently supporting our work for marriage equality. And along with LuAnn Boylan and Connie Armijo, Anita is hosting a special major donor outreach event at her Laguna Beach home this summer. She views Lambda Legal as an organization with the mission and structure to help fulfill her vision of equality for all couples and one that is critical to the future of the LGBT movement. We are proud to share this vision with Anita and honored to have her by our side as the gay civil rights movement enters a new phase. **L**

Elizabeth "Babs" Conant had always planned to leave a significant gift to Lambda Legal. She included Lambda Legal in her will years ago, and provided for us to receive a piece of real estate she owned in Princeton, NJ, upon her passing. But Babs soon realized that she wanted to find a way to support Lambda Legal with a significant gift during these challenging economic times, and she and her partner, Camille Cox, wanted to see the impact of this gift during their lifetimes. In 2008 it became possible for Babs to achieve that goal by passing her property to a community foundation in her hometown of Buffalo, NY, for immediate sale, with a provision that Lambda Legal should receive 80 percent of the proceeds — resulting in a gift of \$460,000 in January 2009.

Babs and Camille have been together for 27 years. An important reason for their appreciation of Lambda Legal is our work on marriage recognition, including the foundational cases that have been won in New York State. Babs says "Our children and grandkids keep asking us, 'When are you going to get married?' We tell them that we hope to be able to do it here in New York very soon, thanks to the work of Lambda Legal and its sister organizations."

She continues, "Our present desire is to move marriage equality along, but there is also still so much work to do on school discrimination." Babs and Camille have a passion for working on parent education and safety in schools, and spent years giving presentations at colleges for soon-to-be elementary and high school teachers as part of their work with PFLAG — for which Babs has served as a board member since the early 1980s. Babs' and Camille's commitment to Lambda Legal deepened when, in 2000, they learned about Lambda Legal's representation of Jamie Nobozny, who for years was subjected to relentless antigay verbal and physical abuse by fellow students at his high school. Babs and Camille are dedicated to ending that kind of abuse and seeing gay-straight alliances flourish in schools.

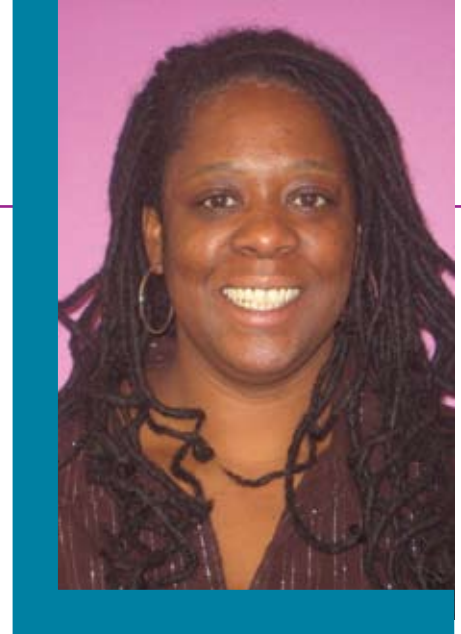
"You can't look at any corner of antigay discrimination and not see Lambda Legal in there fighting," Babs says. "I look forward to years of seeing the great work that its lawyers and public education staff will be able to do with this donation." **L**

Babs & Camille



A CLOSER LOOK

SIMONE BELL, SOUTHERN REGIONAL
OFFICE COMMUNITY EDUCATOR



As a community educator, how does your work help fulfill Lambda Legal's mission?

My role as a community educator is vitally important to the work of Lambda Legal. I see myself as the face of the organization for the communities in my region. Legal issues can often feel overwhelming to people who are not familiar with the law. The language can be frightening and confusing and is often a barrier for those seeking help. My role is to take that language and present it in a way that makes our work accessible and therefore relevant to the communities we serve. As the messenger, it is my responsibility to make sure that LGBT people, those living with HIV, and the larger world — including our opposition — understand that we have rights, we have resources and we have the ability to take action in the face of discrimination. Thanks to the awesome work that our lawyers do, I am fully prepared to educate, train, and change hearts and minds.

What has been the focus of your advocacy work most recently?

There is so much needed work in the LGBT and HIV civil rights movement that I often feel overwhelmed by making a choice or focusing on one particular area. But this year, most of my time has been spent educating and advocating for hospital visitation rights for LGBT people, specifically by educating people about the Janice Langbehn case in Miami. I've spent two Pride seasons educating the South Florida communities about the horrible experience of Janice Langbehn and her children being denied access to partner and mother Lisa Pond while she lay dying in Jackson Memorial Hospital, simply because Janice and Lisa were lesbians. It's such a compelling story; though most people's first reaction is one of disgust and outrage, it's impossible to hear the details and not be moved to effect change. My calling is to help others take that rage and channel it

into an effective instrument of peace. I know we will find justice for Lisa's family. The Langbehn case has given Lambda Legal additional motivation to focus our energies on a health fairness campaign we'll be publicizing during this Pride season, which includes a health care fairness survey we are conducting.

> *Learn about Janice Langbehn's story online and fill out our health care fairness survey at <http://www.lambdalegal.org/healthsurvey>*

Can you describe a pivotal moment in your career as an activist and educator?

I've been an activist and educator for more than 20 years, so there have been more than a few significant moments. Most recently, I helped organize and spoke at a vigil for Jaheem Herrera, an 11-year-old boy in Atlanta who committed suicide after being constantly bullied with the word gay. Jaheem committed suicide approximately two weeks after another 11-year-old, Carl Walker-Hoover of Massachusetts, also committed suicide after being bullied in the same way. This happened right here in my home community where I have worked so hard to dismantle the oppression of homophobia. I at once feel that I have failed Jaheem and that I have been given an opportunity to go deeper into my work and effect greater change within and beyond the LGBT communities: Jaheem's death reminds me that there is still so much to be done. **L**

Lambda Legal 2009 EVENTS CALENDAR

JUNE 2	Forum Conveniens	Chicago, IL	AUG 15	Into the Woods	Harbor Country, MI
JUNE 4	Lambda Legal in D.C.	Washington, D.C.	AUG	Lambda Legal in Connecticut	Fairfield County, CT
JUNE 7	Lambda Legal's Orange Co. Brunch	Santa Ana, CA	AUG	New Jersey Turf Event	South Orange, NJ
JUNE 20	Dallas Lawrence Celebration	Dallas, TX	AUG	Lambda Legal in the City	San Francisco, CA
JUNE 25	Ladies on the Lake	Chicago, IL	SEPT 25	Indiana Benefit Dinner	Indianapolis, IN
JUNE 26	Houston Lawrence Celebration	Houston, TX	SEPT 29	West Coast Liberty Awards	Los Angeles, CA
JULY 11	Lambda Legal Pines Brunch	Fire Island Pines, NY	SEPT	Mad Hatter Garden Party	Dallas, TX
JULY 18	Lambda Legal in the Hamptons	Sag Harbor, NY	SEPT	Lambda Legal in Miami	Miami, FL
JULY 18	Long Beach House Party	Long Beach, CA	SEPT	Cleveland House Party	Cleveland, OH
JUNE	New Jersey Surf Event	Asbury Park, NJ	SEPT	Lambda Legal in Atlanta	Atlanta, GA
JULY	Denver House Party	Denver, CO	OCT	Fall Theatre Event	New York, NY
JULY	Lambda Legal in San Diego	San Diego, CA	NOV	Liberty Circle Thank You Reception	New York, NY
AUG 6	Seattle Garden Party	Seattle, WA			