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00:07

The following program contains language or images of the phrase or sensitive nature which may be considered objectionable by some listener discretion is advised.



00:47

Oh yes, you've tuned into after hours queer radio with attitude right here on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. The crew of after hours is ready to bring you news interviews, dialogue and music geared for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people and their friends. Hear it after hours, we may be diverse, but we have one thing in common. We are all out of the closet and urge everyone to come out of their closets. That means standing up for yourself taking responsibility for your own life and being proud of who you are. Realistically, we know not everyone can do that because of age job or frame of mind. That's okay, we're here for you too. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of after hours.



02:12

Hello, Houston and college station and welcome to after hours career radio with attitude. I'm Jimmy Corker. And with me tonight,



02:21

then si Edwards Foster. Hello, Vanessa,



02:23

how you doing?



02:26

Today I'm coming here to turn on I thought well, hey,



02:29

it happens. Whatever. Before we get into anything, I want to talk about the music that I played. Because I always like to talk about the music that I played that last piece was by a man who has been on the show before a couple of times. David Alan Moore's mo R S. He's got a new CD that's not yet out, but soon will be called where I'm free. And that was called someone to kiss. And before that, we had Melissa Ferrick Yes, the other Melissa. The one who never know the one who came out of the closet before she got famous. Ah, sir, she's having a harder time of it. Yeah. Melissa Ferrick. She's got a great, great voice. And that's off of her brand new CD, called freedom and it's called Hold on. I'll be playing more of that later. And next week, I want to just talk about this performer from Scotland by the name of horse is going to be in Houston on the show. I mean, called horse. No, no, no, no, a woman called horse as a matter of fact, and I've been playing her music now for four or five, six years. She the song that I play a lot is called and she smiled and it's a real rockin number. This this is a new CD from her. It's her in her new went out. She's with it's alive along with the Scottish chamber orchestra. And what's interesting about this, she doesn't have any explicitly same sex lyrics. However, the audience is about 95% female and they know every song within the first two notes.



04:15

I guess I could make some kind of comments so



04:21

I've talked with her and she's just a very, very, very wonderful woman and I I'm going to be really happy to have her on the show. And the show is after hours and we've got Mrs transgendered our Yes, definitely. So what have you got on on store in store for us? Well, actually,



04:39

I had an original subject that I've kind of more or less kind of pushed to the backseat for right now until a little bit later in the show. Okay. With us today, we've got Don Sinclair, who was just named the Grand Marshal of the honorary Grand Marshal, this year's Pride Parade and I thought it was rather appropriate just finishing up with the Pride Month and all done one of them say, Hello. So we know you there.



05:07

I'm here and hello.



05:08

You have been here before? Yes. It's been a very, very long time.



05:14

I was here in the grand marshals were here



05:21

for lesbian and gay forces.



05:24

The other show it was a different show. Yeah, yeah. Yeah.



05:28

That's the Monday night show. Must have been must have been. Yeah, yeah. You would remember being up this light.



05:37

It's harder to get people for after hours till weekend and it's midnight. Pretty much everyone's either in bed or somewhere.



05:47

You are not new to the to our community at all. You've been you've been here for us for a very long time in different capacities.



05:55

Yes.



05:57

Well, I do want to thank you for coming on to the show with us. How there was a reason I guess I wanted to bring you on. Hello. Can't see your random monitor. Can I? Actually, I did want to mention that. We were very happy to hear your nomination is the Grand Marshal nominee. Just briefly, before we get into I guess, some of the more detailed stuff. I was kind of wondering if you could give us a little rundown is to PFLAG. And what they are doing currently, any current projects, especially the billboard project.



06:40

Tucson has always been capable of doing extraordinary things. And back in 95, and six, they put up 10 billboards across the city for a month announcing unconditional love someone you know, and love is lesbian or gay and 10 different boards. And so it accomplished a great deal. It meant a lot to a lot of people who had never seen anything like that in public view. So this time around, they've decided to focus on three billboards and keep them up for 12 months. That is quite, it's going to cost a great deal of money. Yes, it is. And but they're determined to do that. And I've never seen people like Houston unable to do what they set out to do like that. So that right now they're up. At least some of them are up. I know the one that we three of them, and they will stay they will move them around. But they will be three billboards up with those three messages for 12 months. Who knows what you know. Another thing that's going on that astounds me, we used to go over to New Orleans sometimes who had a tremendous chapter PFLAG. And I was always impressed. They were giving \$20,000 a year in scholarship money Wow, to lesbian and gay students. For college, and artists. That is enormous thing to do. Well, PFLAG presently has teamed up with hatch. And with the talent on both sides of those two organizations. Last year, PFLAG gave who flag Houston gave \$50,000 scholarship for last year. And that was quite a program that day when these students showed up and a lot of their parents. And were given money for college serious money for college, and not just 100 or \$500, serious money for college. Now, there's no telling what they will do. Because you know, you can't not do as well next time as you did the last time. So it's a matter of setting precedents and I just,



09:19

well, this is an investment in our future is



09:23

and they're, they're, they're pitching it with all of those things, and, and pitching it also to people who have had some success that are lesbian and gay saying remember how hard it was for you. We're making the world a better place and we need your help. So there's just an enormous response to



09:46

actually getting back to the billboard. Question What has been the community response from that? Have you gotten much in the way of feedback? I guess extra community wise from the The non GLBT community,



10:02

the straight community, yes.



10:09

I am not as close to that project as I was to the earlier one. And I do not know the particulars of any responses except there has been from the religious people who still have some notion that God does not love lesbian and gay people. And I don't know how long it's gonna take the light to come on in their head, that God creates us the way we are. And that we are not, as one mother said in the latest national PFLAG paper. Know that God didn't make my child lesbian for you to make fun of or to abuse? That's right.



10:55

That's transferring. Well, you know, since 1969, when the Stonewall Rebellion occurred, there's been a lot of lights, it's been turned off.



11:07

All kinds of ways and all kinds



11:09

of ways. That's right.



11:12

Yes, hopefully, it's just a cyclical type of thing. I know that a lot of what they do is, in essence, to get people in to people seated in the pews, so to speak. And it seems to me that a lot of what they do is push on the hot buttons at that time. And unfortunately, this is the topical hot, but



11:35

I don't get it, you know, don't you I always thought you could get more more flies with honey than with vinegar, and then get more people in the pews with love than then with fear.



11:46

But then look at the media. Hey, controversy sells.



11:51

Yes, and you'll I did not go to the Methodist churches General Conference. This time. It's held every four years. And it's the one that has the rules and makes the rules in the discipline Book of Discipline. The group that has been trying to talk to its own church, The United Methodist

Church has been rather civil. The only thing that I've seen them do and I participate in this was one of the vote was taken against that all of the people in the stands as a bleacher section that's not members of the conference would rumble their feet, who make this noise like a basketball game. And would shout the rocks will cry out, which is a term if you do not acknowledge the rockville pariah. And that's the most uncivil thing that I've seen them do, but not this time. This time, Mel White showed up with soul force. And they were a little worried about Mel because he was not in the United Methodist group. But Mel is a tremendous man. And he knows he knows there comes a time when a little bit of non civil action can open these doors that people will not open. And so there were a lot of tears shed as people became unusual in that conference going to the front taking over the meeting. And they had to call the police in to and they hated to do it because they had United Methodist meetings had such a clean civil name. But they had to ask the police to come into their meeting, and quell and large influence. And that was what is called soul force that we're becoming very familiar with. But the church is now going to have to face this embarrassment, more and more and more, and it will open some of the doors that we've been talking about. It will force people to look at this.



14:01

Sometimes you have to kind of take an extreme measure. I guess maybe I have to get the ancient African American had



14:09

to do that.



14:10

I was just gonna ask about that. It was a Native American. Native Americans. Yes.



14:18

And the women Wow. Yeah. And of course the when it's gender related, anything gender related just scares civil people to death. Because that's 180 year old Presbyterian lady told Janie spar who is lesbian hired by congregation as an evangelist and she makes she appears all over the country. And she went to this church to talk about homosexuality and this lady said to her, when there was this quietness on Janie asked him just return. And she said, she got up and said, Reverend spar, this congregation has never dealt with heterosexual, much less. So the problem goes way back into their own relationship to their own sexuality. It's a twin, it's gender related. You get this enormous fear response. And it can turn to hatred.



15:26

Yeah, I never realized that. But yeah, so as Americans, we have this thing about sexuality, right?



15:33

They blame it on the Puritans, I guess they get credit for it, but it's there. It's there nice. People do not. I don't think my buttons are



15:43

nice. People must or we're not gonna have a future.



15:46

I don't think my mother ever used the word sex in her life. So we're, we've got to get removed from that.



15:54

Sometimes you do have to take I guess I'm a bit of a well, oh, a very hardline stance just to get people to open up to these Shona type of things. And it has been, so it's just periences that have done so and especially with the mores in the nation, we had problems with sexuality and gender. In fact, actually, it kind of dovetails a little bit with what I was going to touch on next. The transgender inclusion issue in PFLAG obviously, we had a bit of a history here as well, over the course of I don't know how many years I guess, five years was it



16:38

for for about four years, I guess. And I don't know, when it came to the attention of PFLAG nation, I don't know when it was on their agenda. I do know, there was a discussion at the National Meeting, about 95 or 96, about the inclusion of transgender in that, and I do remember, there was some heated discussion.



17:09

Oh, yeah, I can imagine and



17:12

actually went on for quite some time, I guess, Mary banky was big on maybe a being the catalyst for change within the national organization, from what I understand. She had a daughter that who was born a daughter that grew up to be lesbian. And over the course of the years, her daughter realized she wasn't really lesbian, after all, but was indeed a trans man, and broke the news to her mother. Right at about that time at about 9596. She spoke out about it. Yes, definitely. And she was very, very active in PFLAG, I guess, at the local level. I don't know about the national. But this, of course, turned her whole life around, and suddenly kind of

forced the issue within least, that that particular chapter, and of course, he went ahead, being right there next to DC kind of guessed took it to the national organization as well. And it was something that I guess a lot of folks did not get Originally, the there was, I guess a juxtaposition between changing gender and sexual orientation in people could not, I guess, see how the two could be interrelated since there were different circumstances involved. But with



18:36

that relate to



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I know, it's very confusing is is all very confusing. I know that I've had a transgendered segment on this show for nearly six years. And I get confused sometimes, and I should know better. I've had Sarah dipalma teaching



18:56

you had to master



18:58

it's probably what is no place to fit it in to the categories that we have. Yeah, we just don't have a place. PFLAG is a natural room for that was exactly a gender issue.



19:17

There was, I guess, maybe some, I guess, education that was needed. For a lot of the folks that did not quite see, I guess how they related always. But luckily, I guess it maybe took a little bit longer. While not maybe it took a little bit longer than the national level data down made the announcement I guess it was 1998. And at that time when they had the vote, this was something that Kirsten had mentioned that it was basically unanimous across every one of the chapters except for one, which, ironically, was here in Houston. I had



19:55

two articles written about this And the negative position came out of Houston chapter. And it had a it had a locally had its own struggle with this. Sure that was kind of a false struggle. It was more personality struggled, and it was a struggle, a gender issue. But it got off to a real bad start. And I don't know, it had to come around. I knew that because I learned long ago that just not to be afraid of things you don't understand, go and ask and find out



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20:45

sometimes that's hard to do.



20:47

And well, yeah, that means you're your own problem. When you do a



20:52

fight. Like you said, not having a slot can be scary for a lot of people.



20:59

And especially if we I guess operate on information that we think is complete, but in essence, it's just cursory information is just scratching the surface without really knowing I guess all of the the nuances and all the the various breakdowns within I guess the the communities in to understand fully exactly what's involved. We kind of tend to over simplify, I think maybe some of the some of the issues. I was just as bad about that, as a lot of folks that I've encountered, I presume, you know, well, gay and lesbian at home was like one conglomeration, but I didn't see that there were various various subgroups, even within the gay and lesbian community. And how they enter reacted, or maybe didn't didn't really, we didn't have that in the heterosexual cultural lesson? Sure, sure. I guess this is probably going to be a bit of a, I guess, sensitive subject. But they're, I guess, originally came up. Whether this is true, or whether this is not, there came up the story that one of the transgender community had gone to baring at one point and had asked for either inclusion into PFLAG, or inclusion in the church, one of the two. And she had gotten, I guess, a response supposedly, from you, where she was referred to as an IT. And this, I guess, got back to some of the other elements in the community. And that's, I guess, for a lot of them what acted as a bit of a catalyst for this. I was wondering if you could respond to them.



22:53

Yeah. I heard something about that. In 95 and 96, when I was president of PFLAG Houston. I don't remember anything like that happened, that would be very, very against my nature, called anyone, and it are respected in a sensitive area like this, because I just don't I wish I just can't remember anything like that ever happening to me. Or anyone that came to bearing because my joy at bearing, United Methodist Church was the acceptance was so total. We we have the finest or had that that time. And still it's there. The finest relationship one to another, this mixed group of people that I've ever seen, I've tried to figure out, looking back in its history, how this came about. Because I didn't do it. It was there already. When I came to varying and I did what I could to make an improvement in that and to broaden it and to make it public, which we did, and which is still is. And we have we have quite a high church to call it in the United Methodist Church service, which you you you look much like the Roman Catholic or Episcopal Church bringing the cross and ringing the Bible in and you hear hear different parts in the service and we have cross dressers that bring that cross in this had read from that Bible in our service. And it's just a joy to see that and always have like that. So I just can't believe that I

would ever even think of calling anyone and hit for anything. And so I have not been able to. I got into a lot of trouble all that. I even had the president of National President of PFLAG write to me and asked me if I would please apologize to this person. And I say, Well, I would be glad. I don't don't remember this kind of thing happening. And I'd be perfectly willing to say that if I ever said that to anybody, it would just it would sound to me terrible. And but to call someone in it when it's a gender issue over whether they were going to be a man or a woman. No, no, that they got enough trouble on their hands without some preacher calling them when he



25:50

Thank you. Thank you. I hope that lays it to rest.



25:55

I actually, um, and that, I guess, is what started a lot of the controversy within some of the elements in the transgender community in within PFLAG. And yet, that kind of built upon itself it built a bit of a history



26:09

took on a life of its own here, locally. And that made us late getting around to affirming sure what we now affirm as a as an organization. I was the president during that year, and PFLAG had discovered that it had great power, personally, just parents telling the story of their children. One, one of the board members when we were investigating and realizing how much power that is. He said, I know this sounds crazy. To all of you. This was in my home where the meeting was done. And he said, until my child came out to me, I never thought of gays and lesbians having parents. Now, this is one of them are marvelous people in PFLAG. But he just said that's where I was.



27:10

There was an article in the out voice, which I think was just the most wonderful thing that they've ever done with PFLAG members talking about their children coming out to them. And I remember I used to work at tenneco for for 19 years. And one of the people, one of the members, one of the people in that story was a former employee there, and I knew him. And I was really gratified at what he had to say. And it was very similar to what you're what you've said, it's like, I'd never thought about gays and lesbians being actually really people. Yeah, until my own child came out to me



27:54

kind of like my third grader. years ago, asked one night at the dinner table. Daddy order teachers go at night. They were not regular people, regular people, right where they are. Right, you know, they weren't something special.



28:13

You know, I remember that as a kid. I don't know how I did 678. And as seeing one of my teachers at a grocery store, and that just floored me.



28:27

Yeah, I have to eat.



28:31

You don't belong here. You belong in school.



28:33

But getting back to our struggle here locally in Houston with the transgender thing. We discovered and PFLAG that we could put together educational events. And we started doing it. It's so much work. We did it a couple of years. And then we laid off for a little while. And we did it some more. We've done several types of thing. But that one was the second one, that on 9095 on I was the president of PFLAG Houston. And we worked from month to month, month month, but we had all kinds of group sessions and people were invited in to handle these sessions. And of course, you're always looking for the very best you can get to do the most good with with the ones you get. And we were out to get educators and police officers, administrative people in school, especially counselors, and as many football coaches as we could get, especially because they're going to get these schools and a lot of trouble. They really are because these suits that are coming down over the way that the football coaches participate with their boys and sticking them on gay men is an old story, and it's going to cost the schools a lot of money. And I my wife and I have gone to schools in our area to tried to warn them that they needed to do something to show good faith now, are there some of their money was going into the pocket? Yeah, yeah, Miss training. But we discovered that we had this thing. And we were mainly after teachers, we after ministers, you have more luck with teachers. I don't know there's something more normal about teachers.



30:26

I think they're more open to new ideas.



30:29

We had these 350 people out at Sheraton Hotel. And I didn't know there was so much work to putting on a conference like that. It was myself and a Presbyterian minister, who were the president and vice president of PFLAG. And we, we had a lot of help from from, from PFLAG people. But we got out there. And well, before we got there. the transgender community call me or somebody in the transgender community call me and we had what I thought was a good

conversation on the phone. Why not include transgender? And all that kind of stung me because I had never thought about. And I didn't know anybody, particularly who was involved in that. And we didn't have any parents in PFLAG that we had talked with that had this kind of issue in their family. And so I kind of was stunned. And I said, Well, we don't know anything about transgender. We don't have any, any, any. It's not been on our agenda. We've not brought it up. We don't have any programs. We don't have any parents of people in that community that are part of the PFLAG. So let us get through with this educational thing that we're drowning in here. And then we will have you come to the PFLAG board meeting. And we will talk about this, which I thought was a good conversation. And wasn't an agreement that I understood. Well, that agreement didn't hold because some person in the transgender community sent a couple of transgendered people into some of those workshops. And they came in, and the one I was in had Janie spar in it as the presenter that day. And a couple came there and said, Where do you want us? We are presenters today. I felt they were in the wrong meeting. No. I said, Well, this is a PFLAG meeting on homosexuality. And they said, Yeah, and we're here as presenters, where do you want us? So well, you're not presenting? So we had a little exchange there about this. I said, What are you doing here? Who sent you out here? Who told you that? And they gave me the name. And it was the same one that I had talked to earlier? And I said, Well, you're not presenters, and they won't know how you get to be presenters. I said, Well, you have to be invited. And it's usually because you know, something that people want the world to hear are, you are, have accomplished something that we want to get out to people. So we bring you in. But you don't just come in and say presenters, and they said, Well, we're here, what can we do, I said, become a part of the group if you'd like. So they sat and they became a part of the group. And I had that happen and to other groups I learned later. And also it made P flags board members who put that together, just so angry, that they would not meet was transgender. And, and so when I retired from that office in 95, that's the condition we were in. And that it's too bad.



33:57

So this is quite got the other board members, I guess, more or less turned?



34:03

Well, it was splitting thing. The board had some discussions about it. Others were saying we need to do this, I thought we needed to do this. Because I felt like this was just one person. You know, you don't you don't you don't go making anybody represent a whole group of people that we don't know anything about. But I was never able to get them to allow the transgendered community to come in. Then the national board went ahead of us. And they they heard this and they saw that there was no other place that we were the natural one. But Houston still had a very



34:44

bad taste in their mouth



34:45

personal, local trouble over that. And I've always thought it was a mistake and I just didn't want them bulldozing that important educational conference that we ran But we needed to learn about trends to do and have done that.



35:05

Describe the change, I guess from a year and a half ago to now within the the PFLAG group overall, if you can just give me a little bit of a feel as to the attitudinal acceptance. Now, this, you know, as measured maybe a year and a half ago before all this started.



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I doubt if there's any problem at all? Well,



35:34

I, I'm not



35:38

any. I've not heard anything like this. And we have had transgendered people attend and become members of the PFLAG. And I think now that of the transgender representation on board, some 15 to 20 people. That I'm not positive. I'm not on that, and don't do any nominating at that point. But I'm pretty sure there's transgender representation. In fact,



36:07

even more, even before the the inclusion vote took place. This past I guess it was November, was it not? There were actually transgenders who attended the meeting even before then before all the I guess, recent stuff came up last year. I knew Cheryl Bolin was a longtime attendee of the PFLAG meetings. And



36:33

she has I know, there were I'm pretty sure there were at least two transgendered who showed up shortly after that, and attended regularly in the PFLAG. And you never know for sure who is a transgender. It's like other things, you you. You shouldn't to jump to many conclusions like that.



37:00

Well, that's true. I guess we do. That's kind of what we attempt to do at least has to sort of do the blending into society

the blending into society,



37:10

at flag Houston has now put on transgender workshop, and have brought to the table individuals. And that's where I met you by the individual who could tell the story they had not heard, and about a personal struggle that they knew very little about, and could see that it was it was an enormous struggle. And I've always said to anyone that I'm talking to you that I can't imagine any people being more persecuted and people who are working with transgender issues, that it's an offense to so many people, it's a fright to so many people. It's an unknown to so many people, that they're just gonna catch it more than just about anybody I've ever known blacks, women, gays, lesbian, I just feel like the transgender is treated rougher than anybody else in the world.



38:08

That's kind of, well, gays and lesbians do not have an easy road either. The the sexuality is the big bugaboo. But I guess kind of touching on what you were saying transgenders get, I guess tagged with the sexuality issue. But on top of that, they're visually obvious and get tagged with the, the the switching of the gender issue, which just completely, I guess befuddles a lot of people, they don't really know how to handle that



38:36

gay and lesbian, maybe offensive to some of those, but the transgender really represented visibly. And it's, it's tough to be either.



38:52

I, I guess I can admit to that. I've been there. And I'm very, very fortunate though. I do want to say I've had a relatively easy time, especially living here in Houston, it could have been so much worse. In fact, I've got a lot of my friends here with me from the headgroup who live down and Alvin or any of the other, more rural settings. It's just it's almost