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SPEAKERS

Buddy Johnston



00:02

Linear Christ is often baffled, here marching, ever marching on a war fight out, I hear to fiercer way to your battles, give expression



Buddy Johnston 00:29

ladies and gentlemen, when Councilman George graininess announced that he was not going to seek district C, again, I thought, oh my god, we're screwed. Because George was a good person and cared a lot about Montrose and district C. And although we had friends and City Hall, the man that sits in the district seat seat is very important to me in the Montrose area. When the several people running for district C first started making their pitches, I went out for KPFT radio and listen to them. And I heard a man speak and I told him one night at church in Montrose in the basement and I said, you're going to be the next city councilman, or district see. He was elected and heads told us on KPFT on my program and other programs, that if we need to get our message across, sometimes we might have to march down to City Hall and bang on the table. And they said, if you ever need me to bang on the table, or marched down to City Hall, I will be there. He's been here in this cold weather tonight, because I believe that when he told me that he really meant those words. And he's here to support us tonight, ladies and gentlemen, district C city councilman from the city of Houston, Mr. Vince Ryan.



01:54

course but he didn't tell me this code. I want to welcome you all to your city hall here tonight, because it is your city hall. Although we work inside City Hall, the members of council and mayor, we work for you. And you need to remind us that we do that. And tonight reminds me that we do that. And we have continued to do that in the future. So thank you for inviting me tonight. Thank you for allowing me to speak between, I think two great individuals. Ray Hill, of course, we all know love Ray hill here in Houston, and Perry Britton. And tonight we're celebrating two things celebrating life, and also commemorating the life of Harvey Milk. And that celebration reminds me of what a unique this week this has been. This week, of course

started out with the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas. And of course, his assassination always reminds me as I'm sure it does, each of you have the assassinations that follow of His brother, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, who we heard spoke of earlier by Bruce. And those three assassinations were followed 10 years later, by that of Harvey Milk. I thought to myself in this Thanksgiving week. What do we give thanks for when the assassination commemoration of John F. Kennedy is followed by this remembrance tonight from Harvey Milk. It was the Thanksgiving mean, in the context of those events. Well, what was the most precious gift that we commemorate on Thanksgiving, but the gift in the celebration of life, that which we are doing here tonight again, and then one tied those men together? What was common about John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Harvey Milk. And it was clear to my mind what tied them together is what ties us each together here tonight. They fought for civil rights. They fought for what they believed was right and proper in this country that everyone is equal. Everyone has a right to live his or her life the way they want to as long as they don't harm another person. And each of those people was assassinated for the same reason. Because they believe in those civil rights. There were people who wanted to take their lives away from them. And in each case, tragically, that occurred tonight earlier Bruce had said in a way maybe Harvey melts life and his death as a martyr. Maybe progressed the cause a little bit faster, a little bit farther. And I understand Bruce's perspective on that. Because in a way Martin Luther King's life I guess this symbolizes the fight that he fought and the martyrdom that exists. But I wish tonight Instead of commemorating Harvey Milk's death, and remembering the deaths of John F Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, all four who fought for civil rights, that they could be here with us tonight, to stand under the stars, to listen to these speeches in the songs and to light a candle with us. Thank you



05:27

where do you go vote?



Buddy Johnston 05:29

Remember, who was there? Where's the mare? Hello, Kathy? Well, I'll be honest with you, I didn't invite the mayor. Because she would probably say no, and I'm going to hurt my feelings. And I tend to say nasty things on the radio about people to hurt my feelings. I haven't bitched and complained a lot tonight, because I'm trying to save that for after hours. We have touched a lot of lives in the last 14 months, but none have been touched more than mine. Doing the radio program, I would tell people that I work for the city not telling them that I worked for the police department and after listening to Harvey Milk one night, on my way home, I said to myself, I have to tell them that I work for the police department. Listening to people like Larry Rodriguez that we heard earlier from the young man that call this morning from the hospital saying that his family had left him alone. I know that we're doing the right thing. 10 years ago tonight in the city of San Francisco 40,000 people marched from Castro and Market Streets to City Hall stood in silence after the death of their mayor and Harvey Milk. Tonight, I remember Harvey Milk. When we first began to think about this rally. I said well, no one will support it because the so called leaders don't lie to me because I go on the radio and tell people the truth. I try to tell you that life is full of pain. And it hurts. No matter how hard it hurts. You have to get up in the morning and continue the struggle. Harvey Milk gave and continued the struggle. As they began to put the rally together there were thoughts that it would not happen.

And as I began to look for a speaker to wrap up the night I call from coast to coast asking who can we get? Speaking to Sally Gearhart, a feminist who worked with Harvey Milk. I said Sally, what are we going to do who are going to get to come to Houston? She said call Harry. I said Harry Britt is a very important man. You will not want to come to Houston I made my God he sat in Harvey Milk's chair for 10 years. But I finally got up enough nerve to pick up the phone and call Harry Britt's office. A young man by the name of Ribbit Reuleaux, who spent some time in Houston told me that he spoke to Harry about it. And they the Harry Brits that he would love to come to Houston to speak to us during our rally. Harry Britain was facing reelection, which he won. Harry Britt has been named the President of the Board of Supervisors for the city of San Francisco. Perry bread is the only game supervisor who is setting Hardy milks chair for the last 10 years. And when I asked Rick requited Harry to say he would come to Houston. He said Harry said the movement needs me in Houston, Texas. Ladies and gentlemen, the movement is moving. I can see the light of the candles now. And I can feel the love and energy of Harvey Milk. And I give you now the man who has sat in that seat for the last 10 years the President of the Board of Supervisors for the city of San Francisco, the honorable Mr. Harry brick



09:36

Thank you and thanks to the people of Houston for letting me come. Even in the good times. Harvey Milk was preparing for his death. I remember within a few hours after he had been elected to the board and 1977 and a moment when all of us were just unbelievably thrilled. With the wonder of, of having one of our own people in a position where all of our city would have to pay respect to gay leadership, Harvey took me aside and told me that he had made a political will and that I was one of the people that that might have to carry on when he was murdered. He felt that way and thought about his own death, because he was so overpoweringly aware of homophobia and the depth of a threat, that so much of our culture fell when confronted by lesbian, gay power, and the pride and beauty of our people. When we stood up for our rights, and demanded our place and leadership at city halls, and everywhere else in our society. He understood that there was something about our culture, that defined man and woman in certain ways that would not permit strength and women, and the beauty and creativity in men. They would not allow men into wheat, and women to lead that lesbian and gay America was a very fundamental threat to and he was prepared to take the brunt of whatever reaction there might be even unto his death. It was important to Harvey and he talked about it a lot that he prepared to give up even his own life for our movement. Because so much of his work was asking other people to give up all of the things that they thought they had going for them in this culture that they thought would be in jeopardy if they took the step of courage and Harvey Milk took all of the respectability, all of the economic opportunity, all of the superficial relationships that that people use as an excuse to not get involved. Harvey knew that he could with integrity, go to those people and say, give it up if he was prepared to offer even his own eyes. Harvey knew how hard it was for people who have made some sort of accommodation, to turn away from that. And to live in honesty and strength and to demand dignity as a lesbian or a gay man in this culture. Harvey came out in the Navy, Harvey lived in Texas, Harvey was the butt of probably more fat jokes than all the rest of us put together. And he walked places in California politics that no gay person had gone before. He knew how hard it was when the veneer of respectability was there. But he knew the world was still dealing with him as a faggot. And he because he understood he didn't try to drag people out of his closets. But he tried to live his life with enough class, he worked very, very hard to be the best supervisor San Francisco ever had, because He wanted His people to see that you could do it, that you could stand out in front of the whole world as an outrageous, if you will, lesbian or gay

man, and command, respect and dignity. And he understood how important it was that all of us are going to take that step that first we make it easy for one another, that we take care of one another, that we take those safe places where we can be together with honesty and freedom and expand them so that all lesbians and gay men can move with freedom into positions of respect. What Harvey wanted for us, for his people, was nothing less than real freedom. And he understood was a terrible passion. But you can't have that freedom. Unless you're ready to give up all of those phony protections that we put between ourselves and our families, ourselves and our churches, ourselves and our communities, ourselves and our bosses that prevent us from taking those risks that can make us really free. He came to the ghettos, the Castro streets and the Folsom streets in the Valencia streets in San Francisco. And he talked to people who wanted to get away from homophobia and said, it's not enough to get away and to be gay at night and to be respectable during the daytime. You've got to take the pride and anger you feel in the ghetto and organize around it and become visible around it until there is no need anywhere on this planet. For a ghetto of any kind for one human being to hide from another hobby was a great and wonderful man but he was a he was a man. And he knew like all of us that sometimes you do get intimidated and you do get afraid I've told too often and Harvey told to Austin the story about when he went to the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and was intimidated by this very strange, white male privileged world, which obviously, he'd invited me there because he was the new Monty. And they wanted to have some fun with him. And now he did not know their vocabulary. And he, and rather than be intimidated, he simply threw his speech aside and said, Look, guys, I'm a new head queen in this town, what are you going to do about that, and challenge them to begin to learn to deal with his experience, as he all during his life, had had felt he had no choice, but to deal with them. harbi gave us that choice, a choice not between being gay or straight, but between being free, and be continuing to invest value in the illusions that keep us in our weakness. When Harvey was taken away from us 10 years ago, today, the power and magnificence of that day, will always be with me. But that night, I was the guy that that had to get up in front of those 40,000 people and try to think of something to say, with all of the hundreds of speeches I've given since then, and to lesbians and gay people and other all other kinds of people. That was the hardest one. Because what we had to say to one another was that Harvey's dream was real, that Dan White boy could not tensile the meaning of the risk of freedom, the decision to be powerful. The dream that other kids growing up with those being gay might not have to go through the hell that we had gone through. It was hard to say that. But it was impossible not to feel it. Looking out at those candles and feeling the strength of Harvey Milk's people in San Francisco. When Harvey said, on his death tape, that he wanted the bullet that took away his life to open every closet door in America. He was challenging us saying what more has to happen? Before we give up our illusions? What more do they need to do to us before we realize that if we would be free, we must be brave. And we must tell take the challenge of leadership to teaching not just San Francisco and Los Angeles and Houston. But every village and community in this country, the meaning and the beauty of lesbian and gay experience. He was saying to us, are you ready yet to do what you have to do to get rid of homophobia. The reason that I'm in Texas tonight instead of with the 10s of 1000s of my lesbian gay friends in San Franciscos, who I love in a city that I now call home. It's because I'm a Texan. The My first time I ever reached out to a another person of my own sex for affection was in Port Arthur. Six months later, that boy died of cancer. And it was so clear to me because I was a good Port Arthur and that God had something to do with that, and that I was being punished for those feelings. It was in this city that I was ordained as a United Methodist minister. And it was in the city of Austin. Five years before ever knew Harvey Milk. But at a gay rights rally that I first heard Gay, gay people speak with pride of their lives. There was nothing in my growing up in Southeast Texas that taught me how to deal with homosexuality. But there has to have been something that taught me about pride and self

respect and made me want them to have the best that life could possibly offer to me. That could make me want to be an honest friend to my friends. A person who could stand before the world without shame about any part of my life.



19:36

I'm here partly tonight to say some good things about Texas. I'm proud to be a Texan. I know that I could not have heard Harvey Mills challenge to me, had not something in my life and this state prepared me to hear the word of freedom that Harvey spoke to us. I am I'm here tonight, because it is time that all of us who love this state that gave us life and has nurtured us and taught us our values, to stand up and claim the history of the state for freedom and justice and human respect, away from the forces of narrow mindedness and bigotry, that too often dominate the politics of the state of Texas.



20:36

Sometimes, you know, in San Francisco, there's, there's no kind of reason I'd be in the closet about being gay. But I do have to be a little careful about being totally open about being a Texan. Because you can play something of a political price for that. The sometimes Texans misplace their pride, I think it's probably spiritually good for this state that the Cowboys are having a lousy a year. But we are a people with pride, and a people who don't want to settle for anything but the very best. It is my pride in myself that I learned as a son of Texas, that makes me want nothing but the best for the people of this state, and does not want to see another decade go by when the family of the state of Texas as defined by any leaders in this state, political, religious or social in a way that does not include the beauty and the power of the lesbians and gay men of this state. We Texas has a history, beyond the cowboys and all of the beating up on all of the different people. It has a history of proud and strong women, a history of creative men who are our ancestors, and whose heritage we must claim. When Harvey said to us be free, he wanted us to claim our history, not to get away from our history, whether it be in Texas or New York or anywhere else, but to claim our heritage and our birthright. Sometimes when I talk to people from this part of the country, they start explained to me about all the Southern Baptists that they have to deal with down here. And I, I admit, in San Francisco, we're a little short on Southern Baptists and Republicans and other things, somewhat difficult to understand groups of people. But I want you to know, my dad was a Southern Baptist. But somehow by coming to San Francisco and meeting the lesbians and gay men of our city, he was able to come to feel real pride in his son, and in the community that he was part of. And there's no better Baptists in this state than my 95 year old grandmother in Fort Worth, who stayed up till three o'clock in the morning last Tuesday to find out how I did how i did in that election, because of her pride in what we've achieved as openly gay people. In San Francisco. We if we believe in our community and our state and our religious heritage, we have to believe that if confronted honestly with our life, experience the bigotry or go away. Harvey Milk's people like Martin Luther King's people are challenging this state and the south and America to build a future that is not narrow minded and authoritarian, but based on an appreciation of the freedom of the human spirit and the diversity of the American dream, and the American family. On January, the ninth, I will be sworn in to the second highest office in San Francisco. And the judge that I have asked to swear Me in that day, is a remarkable lesbian named Mary Morgan. When Mary was sworn in as a judge, some years ago at city hall in San Francisco, it was one of the great moving experiences of my political life. All the judges were there maybe a few too

many judges and lawyers and politicians, but the whole spectrum of the San Francisco family was there labor Filipino Americans, Korean Americans, black Americans, Jewish Americans, the whole city with enormous pride and Mary and in what she had to contribute as a lesbian, to the understanding of Justice and the furtherance of our community. One of the The great and wonderful thing that's happened in San Francisco, even in the last two years, is extraordinary outburst of lesbian leadership, that is setting new directions for lesbian, gay politics in San Francisco. The other. The other important change, of course, is the repercussions of the AIDS epidemic. A community that 10 years ago was united in a war against homophobia is now united in a war for our lives. The political work that we have done, has taken on a kind of meaning it never had before, because we know our lives are at stake. There's a lot of good news coming out of that epidemic. I met a few days ago with researchers from the various campuses of the University of California to talk about where they stood in terms of AIDS research. And the message that I'm hearing is not that there's some miracle cure that's gonna come along in the next few months. I don't think that's the way research is going. What I'm hearing is that we are making solid and real advances in our ability to manage the AIDS epidemic, that those people affected by AIDS, the seropositive people and the people with full blown AIDS have increasingly at their disposal, ways medical and non medical, of managing an illness and enjoying long term health, as people affected by this epidemic. All of us at this point in time, who were once defined in terms of our sexual orientation, are now defined in terms of our connection with this epidemic. And our political work will reflect that the right will continue to try to protect real people from as the left will continue to try to educate people about a it's our job as lesbians and gay men, is to look at the lives of maybe those 2 million people who are sero, positive to AIDS, and be sure they do not get lost in the continuing political work, that they need to begin to manage their life. To have long and healthy experiences in a post aids world. The politics of AIDS is a politics of pride. And if there was ever a moment when we could no longer offer any excuse for not getting involved. It's when the lives of so many of our people are so much at stake. Another good thing that happened to us on Tuesday in California, was the defeat of proposition 102. We last year, we had to take on Lyndon LaRouche and it's it took millions of dollars and 1000s of hours of people who would rather have been fighting aids directly. And to have to find after that, that major leadership from the Republican Party in our state was prepared to sponsor an initiative that would forever destroy confidentiality of AIDS testing in our state was something we didn't want to handle and didn't feel we could handle. And we were 25 points behind in the polls. And it was not a year we wanted to deal with it. But the way our community responded and the leadership we showed and the fact that people all over California showed respect for our efforts to fight this epidemic, not just in LA San Francisco and Los Angeles, but in Bakersfield, and Fresno, and in the mountains and in the redwood forests, and in the deserts of the South showed the power they can come out of this community. When we let the world see us as we really are. The spirit of Harvey Milk is very much with us and that fight challenge you get us to put aside our illusions that we have something to lose by standing up for our freedom, and that our future can be saved until we are strong and teach the world the beauty and the strength and the power that he was prepared to die for that we see in one another. Thank you very much.

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Buddy Johnston 29:23

Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the Board of Supervisors for the city of San Francisco, Mr. Herring. We're very lucky to have Harry Britton, Houston and I and he's going to sit at a board of supervisors meeting tomorrow in San Francisco where he's going to face a lot of heat for being here tonight. I'm sure he wishes that he was here now. Please leave the candles with us to the far left your right. So we can gather them up with nine yet yeah, but not Yeah, we

want to leave a nice clean air I got something to share with you as we close out the evening and tonight you've been listening to a live broadcast on none other than KPFT Pacifica station, can I get a copy of one of the programs from somebody please Jimmy, I don't have it. I need to say No The one that's printed we need the printed one. There are a couple of things we need to say before we leave City Hall steps and Cindy Friedman is going to seem like this. Thank you very say Ray Ray Hill is always there when you need we need to say Special Thanks tonight to Heartsong and Watteau singers, the MCC our choir, local bookshop for without their money, we wouldn't be here. The River Oaks theatre for last evening last weekend letting us show the life and times of Harvey Milk. Absolutely three Pacific Arts videos St. Martin's Press, Larry lingo was Sego of Lobo marine McNamara of the Rhodes theater, Ray Hill, or will it be without Ray hill the gay and lesbian students association University of Houston my friends standing here to my right Cindy Friedman