

- If we could get every queen in Houston to send us \$1 we wouldn't need the marathon for quite some time because that would be about 30 or about \$300 or \$400,000.

- Yeah wouldn't that be great.

- So send your dollar to KPFT, Houston, 419 Lovett Boulevard. Let's go back to the rally. This is something nice, and we hope you're enjoying it. KPFT Houston.

[APPLAUSE]

- We're out here under the stars on the steps of City Hall. We're being broadcast live on KPFT 90.1 Houston. There may be a chill in the air, but there's warmth in our hearts. And though we have speakers who come from different points of view, we've gathered here together to celebrate our unity, our open hearts, and those things that we have in common.

My name is Cindy Friedman. I'm your co-host with Buddy Johnston, and I'd like to share a song with you real quickly called *We Are All One Planet*. No matter what-- stay there microphone. No matter what we do or say or how we live our lives, we're all one. We live under the same stars on the same planet. And if you know this song, please sing it with me, OK.

Thanks to all of you. Thanks. Buddy. Thank you very much.

- Can we turn the heat up a little bit?

- Oh, it's doing great. There's so much warmth in all these hearts here we don't need any heat.

- What were all those lesbians doing over at the library a minute ago?

- Well, I'm looking across the street, and they're not at the library anymore, so they must be nearby.

- That must be Heartsong getting ready to come out and sing for us. You're listening to a live broadcast of the Celebration of Life from the steps of City Hall in downtown Houston. Coming up Ray Hill, Vince Ryan District C City Councilman, and Harry Britt from the City of San Francisco. We'd like to give the podium for a moment to Sue Lovell. She's going to come up for us now. OK.

- Sue.

[APPLAUSE]

- You might say a word about your reason for being here.

- Well, since Bruce Cook wanted to show off his favorite t-shirt, I thought I'd want you to see mine.

- Yeah.

- It says queer and present danger. This t-shirt was made by a lesbian organization in San Francisco. According to law, you have the right to free speech unless you can prove that you are a clear and present danger. So I would say tonight that we're a queer and present danger.

[APPLAUSE]

We ordered this cold weather for you, Harry because we were afraid coming from San Francisco that you would thaw out in Houston weather. I just want to bring holiday greetings from the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus. That is the only political organization in this community that uses the word gay and lesbian.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

And Don was right. The only way that we are going to attain our rights and have a clear voice is to elect our own openly gay, lesbian officials and gay men too. But we must begin sometime. And I think that if San Francisco can elect an openly-gay representative, that Houston shouldn't take a back seat. AIDS may not be the disease or the clear and present danger to this community. I think that our apathy is.

I think that the past elections show that. So we have to begin sometime and tonight, on the anniversary of Harvey Milk's assassination, let's make a commitment in this community of beginning here and now to start our quest to elect our own voice in government here in Houston, Texas. Happy holidays and thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

- Back several months ago, when I first started doing it *After Hours* on KPFT, the program director asked me who we were going to talk to. And I said, I remember being a gay man going home alone after the bars closed. And I thought it was the loneliest time of my life. So if I spoke to anyone, I'd like to speak to my gay brothers sitting at home thinking that no one cared.

Well, it didn't quite work out that way because a lot of the people in the bars really didn't give a damn about radio or the gay movement. They were too busy partying and having a good time. There's nothing wrong with that because I would love to be out there with them, but I think this is a little more important.

What did happen, was we began to get telephone calls from young people all over the Houston Harris County area. One voice reaching out, one early Sunday morning, was a young man that was afraid his voice would be heard on the radio. And I remember the first thing he told me was, please don't put me on the air. I don't want anyone to hear me. No one can find out that I'm gay.

When KPFT radio broadcast the Lesbian Gay Pride Week in June, he called me up to tell me that he had listened to the parade and how much he'd enjoyed it. In October, when we had National Coming Out Day, he called me to tell me that he had come out to his sister, and he wanted to share that with me. And that made me proud.

Several weeks ago, he called and said, I'd like to help with the rally. And I said, well, what do you want to do? Do you want to park cars? Do you want to make sure people are seated? And he said, no, I would like to speak. And I said, is this the same guy that was afraid someone would hear you almost a year ago, and now you want to get up in front of God and everybody and speak to these people. And he said, yes.

So ladies and gentlemen, reading the words of Harvey Milk, a very dear friend of mine, someone very special to the movement Larry Rodriguez.

[APPLAUSE]

- Hello, get my paper out, well, I want to let you know that it's an honor and a privilege to read the words of Harvey Milk. OK, here I go. Somewhere in Des Moines or San Antone, this young gay person who suddenly realizes that he or she is gay. Notes that if the parents find out that they'd be tossed out of the house and the classmates would taunt the child.

And Anita Bryant and Don Briggs are doing their thing on TV. There are several options. One is to stay in the closet or two, suicide. Maybe one day this child will open up a newspaper that says homosexual elected in San Francisco. Now, there are two new options. The option is to go to California or stay in San Antonio and fight.

Two days after I was elected, I got a phone call from a voice. It was quite young. It was from Altoona, Pennsylvania. And the voice said, thanks. And you've got to let gay people, so that child and thousands upon thousands like that child, will know that there's hope.

Without hope, not only for gays but those Blacks, the Asians, disabled, and the seniors knowing that there's hope for a better world, a better tomorrow, the essence. Without hope, the essence give up.

She says-- I know you can't live without hope alone, but without it, life wouldn't be worth living. And you, and you, and you have got to give him hope. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

- Ladies and gentlemen, Larry Rodriguez. The hope of the Lesbian and Gay movement coming to you live from the steps of City Hall in downtown Houston. Several years ago, I went to a place called Rich's to dance. And there I saw a young man dancing and followed him around for about an hour and a half before I finally got up enough courage to ask him to dance with me. That was his mistake saying, yes because we've been living together for about five years.

He puts up with me. He gives me the strength, the encouragement, and the love to continue the struggle. Without him, I wouldn't be able to stand here tonight and speak these words to you. He's going to read a poem written to us by a Black feminist poet by the name of Pat Parker, during the proposition fight in California, several years ago. Ladies and gentlemen, someone very close to my heart, Mr. Roger Kinser.

[APPLAUSE]

- The name of the poem is *Where Will You Be When They Come?* "Boots are being polished, trumpeteers clean their horns, chains and locks forged the crusade has begun. Once again, flags of Christ are unfurled in the dawn and cries of soul saviors sing apocalyptic on air waves. Citizens, good citizens all parade into voting booths and in self-righteous sanctity X away our right to life.

I do not believe, as some, that the vote is at end. I fear even more that it is just a beginning. So I must make assessment, look to you and ask, where will you be when they come? They will not come, a mob rolling through the streets but move quickly and quietly into our homes to remove the evil, the queerness, the faggotry from their midst.

They will not come clothed in brown and swastikas or bearing chests heavy with gleaming crosses. The time and need for such ruses are over. They will come in business suits to buy your homes and bring bodies to fill your jobs. They will come in robes to rehabilitate and white coats to subjugate. And where will you be when they come?

Where will we all be when they come? And they will come. They will come because we are defined as opposite, perverse. And we are perverse. Every time we watched a queer hassled in the streets and said nothing, it was an act of perversion. Every time we heard, I don't mind gays, but why must they be blatant, and said nothing, it was an act of perversion.

Every time we lied about the boyfriend or girlfriend at coffee break, it was an act of perversion. Every time we let a lesbian mother lose her child and did not fill the courtrooms, it was an act of perversion. Every time we let straights make out in our bars while we couldn't touch because of the laws, it was an act of perversion.

Every time we put on the proper clothes to go to a family wedding and left our lovers at home, it was an act of perversion. Every time we heard, who I go to bed with is my personal choice, it's personal, not political and said nothing, it was an act of perversion. Every time we let straight relatives bury our dead and push our lovers away, it was an act of perversion.

And they will come for the perverts. And it won't matter if you're homosexual, not a faggot, lesbian, not a dyke, gay, not queer. It won't matter if you own your own business, have a good job, or an SSI. It won't matter if you're Black, Chicano, Native American, Asian, or white. It won't matter if you're from New York or Los Angeles, Galveston or Sioux Falls.

It won't matter if you're butch or femme, not into roles, monogamous, non-monogamous. It won't matter if you're Catholic, Baptist, atheist, Jewish, or MCC. It won't matter if you're socialist, communist, libertarian, democrat, or republican, they will come. They will come to the cities and to the land to your front rooms and in your closets. They will come for the perverts. And where will you be when they come?" Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

- A beautiful poem. Thank you so much. Thank you. We have a very special treat about to happen right here on the steps of City Hall literally. Every week in Houston, Texas, on Monday nights, a group of women meet together to share music, to share a song, but more than that, they need to create and provide a safe and loving space, so they can be nurturing to each other. And so they can prepare music so that they can go out into the community and be nurturing with others through their music.

These are women who know the full meaning of song from the heart, and they are my sisters in song. Please welcome, Heartsong.

[APPLAUSE]

- They are wonderful, aren't they?

- Mm-hmm.

- We're listening to a broadcast, a rebroadcast of the Celebration of Life rally that took place in 1988 from the steps of Houston's City Hall on *After Hours* this morning. It was to commemorate and remember the 10th anniversary of the killing of Harvey Milk, who was the first openly-gay politician. And we're listening to Heartsong.

- Oh, and that's my favorite song.

- The reason I had to stop the tape right now, is to tell you a little story because we didn't have a lot of support for this rally. If it hadn't been for the money and financial support from Larry Lingle and Lobo and Charles Armstrong and the support of the River Oaks Theater, it would never have gotten there.

- That's true.

- And by the time we got this far into the rally, Jimmy, I remember I was just wrecked because we had had that little scene with the GOPC.

- Oh, yes.

- And that we talked about last week and I had picked Harry Britt up at the airport who was sick. He didn't feel good. He had spent Thanksgiving with his mother who lives in Port Arthur.

- That's right.

- And when I picked him up, he said, how many speakers do you have? And I went, I don't know 10 or 12. And he went, that's too many. And all the way down here I was like, oh, Jesus, why have I done this. That day, I remember, we were pulling the piano out of City Hall and it looked like it was going to rain, and it was cold and it was miserable, but by the time Heartsong got up there and sang, it just all felt right.

- Yeah, it did.

- And I remember I walked down to the end, the east end of the reflection pool and looked back at the stage, which was on the steps of City Hall. I was standing at the far end of City Hall at the other end of the reflection pool. And Heartsong sang this next song. I hope it's the next song *From a Distance*. And when they sang that, it's really the first time I'd ever listened to this song and paid attention to the words, but when they sang that this morning, I knew it was right. I knew that we were supposed to be there.

[APPLAUSE]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- Well, girl, this isn't--

- No, it isn't *From a Distance*. It's something else.

- We haven't heard this since 1988.

- I know. I know. And in fact, I was so busy backstage, I didn't hear it at all. So this is a first for me.

- Really.

- Yeah.

- Well, what is this song?

- I don't know.

- Well to hell with it. We'll edit this out later.

- OK.

- This is what?

- I believe the name of this is *Breaths*.

- It's very pretty. And it was very cold.

- Oh, yes.

- And this young woman that played the piano, I don't know how in the hell she did it. She was banging on those keys with frozen fingers, girl.

- [LAUGHS]

- Heartsong has a new cassette out, by the way.
- Do they?
- Yes, of their third annual concert which we'll be playing. And they will probably come down here now and skin me alive for talking while they're singing.
- Yeah, well. [LAUGHS]
- Well, I thought they were going to sing *From a Distance*.
- I think they sing that next.
- Yeah, I know they do.
- Ah.
- Because it says right here *From a Distance*.
- I see.
- Isn't that great?
- Mm-hmm.
- Now, this is called *From a Distance*.
- OK.
- And when I heard this song.
- That's when you knew what was right.
- That's when I knew it was OK. Listen to this.
- Mary?
- What?
- I thought it was on here.
- Oh.
- It says *From a Distance*. Well, we're here.
- And we're queer.
- [LAUGHS]
- And you're listening to--
- Please don't come down to City Hall.

- --a rebroadcast of the November 27th, 1988 broadcast of Celebration of Life rally. That's what it was called. The Celebration of Life, even though it commemorated the death of Harvey Milk.

- Well, can we listen to Heartsong?

- Yes.

- Please, finally.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[APPLAUSE]

- Heartsong under the direction of Lynne Weynand. And we're very lucky because coming, I think in this next week, the first recorded cassette of Heartsong from their spring concert will be available. And Lynne, when is your Christmas concert?

- December 17.

- Where?

- At St. Thomas Jones Hall.

- OK, December 17 at St. Thomas Jones Hall, will be a Christmas concert of Heartsong and Montrose Singers and the MCCR choir, so we're lucky enough to hear all of you again. And?

- The Lone Star Band.

- And the Lone Star Band. Wonderful.

[APPLAUSE]

No words are needed.

- A cry to unite is in the air. Fear, death, and die even despair. But hopefully determined, we will survive by keeping the flames of our faith alive. A cry to unite is in the air, singing praises of pride. The cry to unite is in the air, a time to celebrate, to love, to care.

Forever united, we must stand or divided we will surely fall. Listen to the cry, rise up, stand tall. A cry to unite is in the air, singing praises of pride. A cry to unite is in the air, bonding of souls and hearts everywhere.

Our dream to unite must come true. The courage to face the world as you. A cry to unite is in the air, singing praises of pride.

[APPLAUSE]

- Joe Watts, ladies and gentlemen. In June of 1984, about a year and a half after coming to Houston, I went to work for the Houston Police Department as a dispatcher. In April of '87, I was going home to visit my mother in Arkansas. And that's a hell of a trip if you ever spent a weekend with my mother. She threw me out of the house when I was 17 and has never accepted the fact that I like to get down, no I better not say that.

In preparation for the trip to Arkansas, Roger and I were making cassettes to listen to. I figured if I could hear the word Houston every once in a while, I would enjoy the trip a little bit more, since I love this city so much. And while scanning the dial and recording my tape, I came across a mad man on the radio raising hell about the Houston Police and how they had raided our bars and how he was sick and tired of it. And we're not going to take that anymore.

The next week, I turned the radio on at 9:00 on KPFT and cried when I heard the words, we are all gay and lesbian people because I knew the power of radio. And I've come to love and respect the power of the man I'm about to give you now. Personally, I would like to see him as the Grand Marshal of the parade this year. I'm going to start that little push because in the last 20 years since Stonewall, who has done more for the gay and lesbian movement in Houston than my friend and yours, Mr. Ray Hill?

[APPLAUSE]

- Excuse me. I'm an old radio man. I work with the mic real close. It's been a wonderful evening. I must have heard the Altoona speech two or three dozen times. I think I've even given it twice, but I don't think I ever clouded up and cried like I heard it presented tonight.

You see, I didn't know Harvey Milk very well. We only had three conversations before he died and two of those were arguments. I wanted to call for a national congress, and he wanted to lead a national march on Washington. He won the arguments.

You see, I was hung up on the nuts and the bolts of building a movement. And Harvey was committed to win the souls and build the hopes of lesbians and gay men. He won because he was right. We had no movement to build until our people were convinced they deserved the freedom for which we were about to struggle.

And in 1978, we had not yet achieved that. And in 1988, we're still not there. But because of Harvey Milk, we're on our way. There have been some detours. You understand, Harvey died before AIDS. Harvey died before the White House of the United States became a hostile force against us.

Jimmy Carper didn't act like that. Harvey had no notion that the Justice Department of the United States of America could be used as a bully pulpit by the religious fanatics who openly call for our death and destruction and Meese did that. Frequently, I have wished I could pick up the phone and call Harvey for his advice.

What do we do now? How do we get out of this mess? How do we accomplish our goals with no money, no support, and very slim resources? The great and continuing questions of our movement in our time. We had an ancestor, Walt Whitman, who peered ahead in history and left a few words so that we would know he understood that loss. From *The Leaves of Grass, Oh, Captain! My Captain!* he wrote.

"It is some dream that on the deck you have fallen cold and dead. My captain does not answer. His lips are pale and steel. My leader does not feel my arm. He has no pulse nor will."

- But Walt Whitman's clairvoyance and wisdom is of little help if we are fighting a plague confounded by a plague of indifference and a plague of fear and ignorance and a plague of hate and violence. I instinctively know that Harvey Milk would not buy for an instant, that what we suffer is an accident. The thousands who have died and the scores of thousands who are dying of AIDS, are no more victims of an incidental medical curiosity than the nearly 300,000 gay and lesbian people who died in Nazi death camps are the products of an historical accident. Someone is to blame.

We must not and cannot fall into the trap of blaming ourselves, even though others are pointing the finger and saying we are at fault. Look at the gentle loving people around you. Look at them. Do you believe that these people are responsible for the carnage we have seen and the even greater carnage we are about to see?

- No.

- Listen to their voices. Are those voices filled with the bitterness and hate we hear from others?

- No.

- Now consider those in the seats of power with their cold indifference, their calculated excuses, their history of war and violence. It is as clear to me as it would be to Harvey Milk, we are not responsible. The difference is, he may have known how to better fight this battle than I.

- 10 years ago, on a makeshift podium across the street there by the library, only hours after his assassination, I likened Harvey Milk to Moses. I said Harvey's job was not to lead us out of bondage, but to show the way so that we could set ourselves free. I still believe that.

I learned from my prison experience that it is the convicts that build the prisons. We are the keepers of our own keys. And it is incumbent on each of us to declare our freedom and struggle for it. For without struggle, there is no freedom. And without declaration, there is not even the hope of freedom. It is possible to win or lose that struggle, but if enough of us are committed to the idea that we deserve that freedom and are willing to devote our talents and our abilities to that cause, how can we lose?

We have supplied the talent for the rest of society's progress scientific, economic, political, and all of the other areas. Harvey Milk was fully aware of who we are and all that we can do. And what he was trying to tell us, is that we too should recognize our own importance and our own abilities.

If even at this distance, we would only listen to him, we would win our cause because we are able and our cause is just. Again, Whitman from his *Leaves of Grass*, bade farewell to Harvey Milk, in his *Adieu to a Soldier*.

"Adieu, dear comrade. Your mission is fulfilled. But I more warlike myself and this contentious spirit of mine still on our own campaigning bound through untried roads with ambushes, opponents lined through many a sharp defeat and many a crisis often baffled. Here marching ever marching on a war fight out. aye here to fiercer, wavier battles give expression."

[APPLAUSE]

- Ray Hill, ladies and gentlemen. When Councilman George Greanais announced that he was not going to seek District C again, I thought, oh, my God, we 're screwed because George is a good person and cared a lot about Montrose and District C. And although we had friends in City Hall, the man that sits in the District C seat is very important to me and the Montrose area.

When the several people running for District C first started making their pitches, I went out for KPFT radio and listened 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 for District C. He was elected and has 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 he said, if you ever need me to bang on the table or march down to City Hall, I'll 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.

[APPLAUSE]

- Of course Buddy didn't tell me it'd be this cold. 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, the 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 to continue to do that in the future.

- Yeah.

- 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 and love Ray Hill here in Houston and Harry Britt. 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 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, of the assassinations that followed of his brother Robert Kennedy and of 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 and commemoration of John F. Kennedy is followed by this remembrance tonight of Harvey Milk? And what does Thanksgiving mean in the context of those events?

Well, what is the most precious gift that we commemorate on Thanksgiving but the gift and the celebration of life. That which we are doing here tonight, again. And then what tied those men together? What was common about John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Harvey Milk? And it was clear in 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.

[APPLAUSE]

And each of those people was assassinated for the same reason. Because they believed 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 Milk's life and his death as a martyr maybe progressed the cause a little bit faster, a little bit further.

And I understand Bruce's perspective on that because in a way, Martin Luther King's life, I guess, did symbolize 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 and Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King all four who fought for civil rights. That they could be here with us tonight to stand under these stars, to listen to these speeches and these songs, and to light a candle with us. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

- When you go vote, remember who was there.

- Where's the mayor?

- Where's the mayor? Hello, Kathy. Well, to be honest with you, I didn't invite the mayor because she would probably say no and that would have hurt my feelings. And I tend to say nasty things on the radio about people that 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 work 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 worked for the police department.

Listening to people like Larry Rodriguez, that we heard earlier from, the young man that called 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, 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 we 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 like 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. But 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 we 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 called from coast to coast asking who can we get? Speaking to Sallie Gerhardt, a feminist who worked with Harvey Milk, I said, Sally, what are we going to do? Who are we going to get to come to Houston? She said, call Harry.

I said Harry Britt is a very important man. He will not want to come to Houston. I mean, my God, he's 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 Rick Brullo, who spent some time in Houston, told me that he spoke to Harry about it and that Harry Britt said he would love to come to Houston to speak to us during our rally.

Harry Britt was facing re-election, which he won. Harry Britt has been named the President of the Board of Supervisors for the City of San Francisco.

[APPLAUSE]

Harry Britt is the openly-gay city supervisor who has sat in Harvey Milk's chair for the last 10 years. And when I asked Rick, Rick, why did Harry 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 Britt.

[APPLAUSE]

- 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 in 1977, in a moment when all of us were just unbelievably thrilled with the wonder 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 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 felt when confronted by lesbian and gay power, and the pride and beauty of our people when we stood up for our rights and demanded our place in 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 in women and beauty and creativity in men. They would not allow men to weep 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 onto his death. It was important to Harvey, and he talked about it a lot, that he'd be 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 that Harvey Milk took.

All of the respectability, all of the economic opportunity, all of the superficial relationships 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 life.

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 fag 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 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 if all of us are going to take that step that first we make it easy for one another. That we take care of--