



Equality Pennsylvania

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 15, 2011

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Equality Pennsylvania Elects New President and Vice President; Expands Board of Directors

Harrisburg – The Board of Directors of Equality Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth's LGBT advocacy organization, has elected a new slate of officers and expanded its Board to include several new members, further sharpening the organization's statewide perspective. Brian Sims, who has served as Board President for the past two years, will conclude his term as of September 1. Sims' tenure has seen the transitioning of Equality Pennsylvania from a regional organization to a statewide advocacy operation. In the past year alone, Equality Pennsylvania has built a statewide board of directors, hired an Executive Director, opened an office in Harrisburg, created the first, statewide LGBT 501(c)(4) political organization and will soon launch a Political Action Committee (PAC).

Sims will be succeeded by Adrian Shanker, a 24-year-old Allentown-based organizer, who, in the last year, led successful campaigns to win same-sex partner benefits in Allentown and Easton, and a non-discrimination law in Bethlehem. Shanker has served as Vice President of Pennsylvania Diversity Network, the regional LGBT advocacy organization in North East Pennsylvania, a post he is stepping down from in order to concentrate on the State level. Shanker, a former non-profit fundraiser at a Lehigh Valley community arts organization and organizer with SEIU 32BJ, is currently employed in the management team at Wolper Subscription Services, a small, LGBT-owned business in Easton.

"I am extremely proud of the growth of Equality Pennsylvania" said Sims, "I look back on the last two years, and I see an organization emerging as a force to be reckoned with in Harrisburg. I have every confidence in my friend and colleague, Adrian Shanker. He has proven himself as a leader who can win LGBT rights, and I believe in his ability to continue this work to make Pennsylvania more equal for the LGBT Community."

Shanker shares a similar perspective on Sims, "Brian has worked diligently to re-structure and re-create Equality Pennsylvania from the ground up. I know he will continue to do great things for the LGBT community. It is an honor to be elected President during such an exciting time in LGBT history and I look forward to working with our Executive Director, Ted Martin, to advance LGBT rights in Pennsylvania."

Shanker will be joined in his new post by incoming Vice President, Lisa Kustra, CEO of Plan4Demand, a Pittsburgh-based consulting services firm that helps Fortune 500 corporations and mid-market companies around the world, and across multiple industries, rapidly drive down costs, increase profits, boost operational efficiency, and maximize promotional spend and retail shelf space. In 2001, former Governor Tom Ridge named Lisa one of the Best 50 Women in Business in Pennsylvania.

Treasurer Kevin Wm Bennett of Erie and Secretary Paul Nardone of Scranton, will continue in their roles.

Additionally, the Board voted to elect five new Board Members, Adam Hymans and Rick Naughton, both of Philadelphia and Dr. Michelle Angello of Wayne, Fiona Hensley of Meadville, and Jessica Rothschild of Scranton.

Hymans is the Donor Engagement Officer at The Philadelphia Foundation and serves on the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition and the William Way LGBT Community Center.

Naughton, an associate with Philadelphia-based, Sellers Dorsey, holds a Juris Doctorate from Penn State and has served on the Board of Directors of Equality Forum.

Hensley is a senior at Allegheny College in Meadville and recently served as President of Queers and Allies at Allegheny College. She has also served as the Erie Regional Chair for Equality Pennsylvania's youth program, SNAP.

Rothschild is in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at the University of Scranton and the founder of Scranton Inclusion, the LGBT student organization on campus. She also served as North East Pennsylvania Regional Chair for Equality Pennsylvania's youth program, SNAP.

Angello holds a doctorate in Philosophy from the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality and is an adjunct-professor at Widener University, where she developed the first graduate course in the U.S. focusing on clinical issues in Transgender communities.

Equality Pennsylvania is the statewide voice for LGBT Equality in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and works collaboratively to establish a comprehensive network of individuals and organizations united in securing equal rights for the LGBT community. For more information: www.equalitypa.org.

Equality Pennsylvania is a proud member of the Equality Federation.

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