

Project Sample: Personal Narrative

Parameters: Describe how subject fights for equality

Target Audience: General public; supporters of Basic Rights Oregon



Ed Dennis is a public servant twice over, and that allows him to speak for equality with twice the volume. During the day, he's the Deputy Superintendent for the Department of Education; in the evenings, he's a City Commissioner for Hillsboro. In both roles, he devotes much of his time and energy to ensuring equality for gays and lesbians.

"It's one thing to have a set of values or beliefs," Mr. Dennis explains, "it's another to have the opportunity to act on them. And I feel blessed that I have the opportunity to do so. In my day job, I spend a fair amount of time thinking about public policy, about politics, and about the best way to present an idea or to communicate a position to the maximum number of people. I look at my position as a City Commissioner, however, as a chance to say, do, and push for exactly what I think is right. It's an opportunity to move positive changes forward in a less politicized atmosphere."

Ed Dennis has strong reasons for believing in positive changes. He grew up poor in rural Alaska, and says that a public education, both in high school and at the university level, was responsible for his many opportunities. He sees no reason that everyone, whether rich or poor, majority or minority, straight or gay, shouldn't have the same opportunities he did.

The best way to make sure that kind of equality exists? Mr. Dennis recommends simply taking the time to get to know someone different. "If people will allow themselves to put their fears aside, they will come to realize that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people...they all need protection in our society, simply because there are so many others out there who cannot, or will not, put those fears aside."

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