

University of Rhode Island

DigitalCommons@URI

The Committee to Eliminate Heterosexism and
Homophobia

Gender and Sexuality Center

1997

URI President Robert Carothers' Speech at 3rd Annual LGBT Symposium

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cmte-eliminate>

Recommended Citation

"URI President Robert Carothers' Speech at 3rd Annual LGBT Symposium" (1997). *The Committee to Eliminate Heterosexism and Homophobia*. Paper 129.

<https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cmte-eliminate/129><https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cmte-eliminate/129>

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Gender and Sexuality Center at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Committee to Eliminate Heterosexism and Homophobia by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu.

X-Sender: vocino@131.128.1.1

Mime-Version: 1.0

Date: Mon, 14 Apr 1997 09:13:29 -0400

Reply-To: URI Faculty Senate List <FACSEN-L@URIACC.URI.EDU>

Sender: URI Faculty Senate List <FACSEN-L@URIACC.URI.EDU>

From: Michael Vocino <VOCINO@URIACC.URI.EDU>

Subject: Pres. Carothers and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Symposium

To: FACSEN-L@URIACC.URI.EDU

This past week, President Robert Carothers gave the University Welcome at the opening session of the Third Annual URI Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Symposium. I thought the entire community could benefit from reading them. With the President's permission, I post them here:

Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transsexual Conference Opening
April 10, 1997

Welcome, on behalf of the students, faculty and staff of URI

I am grateful for the opportunity again to host this conference and to say a few words this morning.

This is another celebration of diversity, those things which are both different among us and which at the same time affirm our common humanity.

The strength of America lies in diversity--the source of our energy--a cause for celebration in a land where freedom is our most important asset.

The public discussion of the issues of sexuality and lifestyles advances openness, which a necessary condition of freedom. Repression of what we think, what we feel, what we say and how we choose to express love restricts our freedom, causes us to lie and sometime live lies, and weakens us as a people and ultimately as a nation.

This is particularly true at a university, where we are committed to exploring ideas, values and the dynamics of human behavior. The clash of ideas is encouraged in this environment; this is the crucible where ideas are tried and tested.

Yet no ideas have been more repressed than those to be explored here in the next few days. Instead, what we have seen is the cultivation of shame as a strategy for the repression of these ideas, a strategy resurrected in recent days as a tool of conservative religious groups working in the interests of a national vision very much at odds with the concept of freedom that lies at the very core of America. And these forces are powerful and must be confronted wherever they would restrict our freedom.

What we must do is the very antithesis of "don't ask, don't tell," that awful compromise struck by a president unable in at least this critical moment of truth to take the heat which is an inevitable condition in the nation's kitchen.

For the next few days, we are here to ask. And we are here to tell.

To ask both what and why, and to challenge the assumptions of ignorance and of prejudice.

And to tell, to bear witness to our experience and to tell the tales of

what we have learned in our journey and in our studies of the lives of lesbians and gay men and bi-sexuals.

This conference does that across a broad spectrum: education, psychology, sociology, music and art and film, health care, politics and race and religion.

Again, it is an honor for the University of Rhode Island to host this conference and I wish you a powerful and fulfilling learning experience, together.

.....
michael vocino interim dean of libraries
university of rhode island kingston, ri 02881
voice: 401-874-2666 fax: 401-874-4608
e-mail: vocino@uriacc.uri.edu