

REMARKS OF BRIAN McNAUGHT 1997 RECIPIENT OF THE THOMAS DOOLEY AWARD

Saturday, October 4, 1997
San Francisco, Calif

Let me say that I hope receiving this award does for my career what it has apparently done for your first recipient, my friend Ginny Apuzzo, now the highest ranking openly gay person in the federal government. How long should I expect to wait before being called by President Clinton?

Please know how honored and excited I am to have been selected by you to receive this wonderful award. Since hearing word of your decision, I have been engaged in an amazing and very enriching period of recollection and reflection. Tonight I'd like to share some of those thoughts with you.

As you might expect, news of your award sent me back down Memory Lane to Catholic grade school days during which I heard inspiring stories of Dr. Tom Dooley and his heroic selfless efforts in Asia among the poor, malnourished, and infirm. He was a modern day saint...our own Mother Teresa, and his life as a healthy, devoted Catholic man was used by the Sisters of St. Joseph and those of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to inspire us children to take the Sermon on the Mount very seriously.

Now, of course, like you, I heard these stories as a closeted gay youngster who lived in utter terror that someone might guess my awful secret. I was inexplicably attracted to men, living in a world which considered such thoughts an abomination in the eyes of God...in the eyes of the gently, loving man who sat serenely on the Mount and spoke eloquently of the qualities and behaviors that entitled on to enter the kingdom of heaven.

I also recall looking at pictures of Tom Dooley and thinking how handsome he was and how I'd like him to be my friend, which was my euphemism for take me away with him, never to be seen again. And I remember being ashamed of my thoughts because he was so holy and heterosexual, and I was a bad boy with a dirty little secret. How wonderful and healing it would have been for me to have known that the good doctor was, like me, a homosexual and that neither his nor my secret was dirty. That crush on him was completely natural. How good it would have been for me to know that.

News of your award also reminded me of my early days of involvement in the fledgling gay liberation movement and of how my coming out, my subsequent hunger strike, and my battle with the Catholic Church over its position on homosexuality was motivated and energized by my faith in the Sermon on the Mount. It still is, though I now longer identify myself as Catholic, as I travel around the country, telling my story so that others might not be afraid, the source of my vision and strength is the very same call from the out to love and to give of one's self to others. This, I know, is true for you.

News of this award also brought forth bittersweet thoughts of the unique path that gay men and women of faith must walk in this world, rejected by our religious denominations because of our orientation and by other gay people because of our faith. An openly gay person fighting for understanding and acceptance will not soon be honored by my alma mater, Marquette University, nor would I imagine by yours. And when the history of gay liberation is written, generally by those angry at the institutional church, the contributions of gay people of faith are rarely acknowledged. It can be a lonely path.

In preparing to be with you tonight, I pulled off the shelf the copy of *The Edge of Tomorrow* that Ray and I have in the gay section of our library. Written in 1958, Tom Dooley—who incidentally is as handsome as I remember him—writes in the introduction of his fascination with Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who inspired him as medical student, with whom he exchanged letters, and whom he eventually met. He described him as “sensitiveness and forcefulness at one and the same time. Both tender and majestic.”

And then Dooley said, “One of Dr. Schweitzer's most important concepts is that of the Fellowship of Those Who Bear the Mark of Pain. I and my men have found this Fellowship wherever we have gone. Who are its members? Dr. Schweitzer believes the members are those who have learned by experience what physical pain and bodily anguish mean. These people, all over the world, are united by a secret bond. He who has been delivered from pain must not think he is now free, at liberty to continue his life and forget his sickness. He is a man whose eyes are opened. He now has a duty to help others in their battle with pain and anguish. He must help to bring to others the deliverance which he himself knows.”

Every person in this room understands this concept and is a member of the Fellowship of Those Who Bear the Mark of Pain. Every person in this room remem-

bers the horror of growing up with a secret we didn't understand and were afraid to tell anyone because we thought they wouldn't love or respect us anymore. Tom Dooley knew that terror, too.

Every person in this room and Dr. Tom Dooley felt it with our families, our friends, with our teachers in grade and high school, with our university communities, and with our colleagues. We knew the pain and bodily anguish of feeling psychologically homeless among those who professed to love and respect us, yet not conscious, as we were, that their love and respect was contingent upon our being heterosexuals like themselves.

But, miraculously, we survived. Through our own efforts and through the help of others, we in this room did not kill ourselves as so many of our gay classmates did and do, both physically and psychologically. We made it. We graduated. We got jobs, built loving, healthy relationships, found God on our own.

Each of you could go forward without looking back. You're basically healed. You could isolate yourself from the painful memories and the rejecting behaviors. But you don't. Why not? Because you are united by a secret bond. You have learned from experience what physical pain and bodily anguish mean. Though you have been delivered from pain you know you are not free; not at liberty to continue your life. Your eyes are opened. You know that we have the duty to help others in their battles with pain and anguish. You know that you are in Albert's Schweitzer' and Tom Dooley's Fellowship of those Who Bear the Mark of Pain.

That is why you stay attached to the University of Notre Dame despite its rejection of you. That is why you focus your attention on those gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students at Notre Dame and St. Mary's who today battle with pain and anguish. That is why you come out at work, march in parades, donate to AIDS and civil rights causes. That is why you speak up, put yourself on the line, and stay in the battle. That is why you seek to honor other gay people of faith who are committed to the struggle. Because when you honor me, you honor yourselves, and the life of suffering persecution for justice's sake to which you have committed yourselves.

I do not, dear gay brothers and sisters of the Gay And Lesbian Alumni of Notre Dame and St. Mary's College, imagine the day in the foreseeable future when a Catholic school teacher will seek to inspire students with stories of our efforts in an attempt to make clear the relevance of the Sermon on the Mount. But know

for sure in my heart that someone whom they admire admires us. I know in my heart that Tom Dooley is very proud and grateful for our participation in his Fellowship.

Thank you for including me in this great celebration.



University Declines to Include Sexual Orientation in Non-discrimination Policy

“The Spirit of Inclusion” Issued Instead

by Lisa Karle '85
South Bend Correspondent

In response to a year-and-a-half of on-campus pressure—culminating in the spring of 1997 in the College Democrats' "Justice, Rights, and Non-Discrimination" rally—Notre Dame officially declined to modify the nondiscrimination clause which appears in University publications to include sexual orientation.

In 1996—after a year-long study—the final report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs made 12 gay-positive recommendations to improve the quality of student life on campus. Most of those recommendations were adopted by the administration with the notable exception of RECOMMENDATION 5—that a gay student group be “constituted.” RECOMMENDATION 12 stated, “That the Vice President for Student Affairs should raise to the University officers the issue of modifying the nondiscrimination clause...” The officers have now considered and rejected the proposal to modify the clause.

Consequently, the University's formal policies on non-discrimination do not include legal protection in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation. Similarly, the civil rights laws of state of Indiana, as well as federal civil rights laws, do not protect gay men and women from employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

University president **Fr. Edward Malloy, C.S.C., '63, '67 M.A., '69 M.Th.**, made the announcement on August 27, 1997, in an open letter published in *The Observer*. (See sidebar, page 12-13, for the full text.)