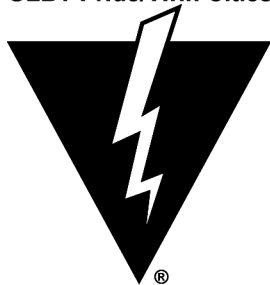


GLBT Pride/Twin Cities



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Senator Paul Wellstone 2003 Gay Pride Grand Marshal Reception February 8

MINNEAPOLIS, MN - GLBT Pride/Twin Cities is proud to announce that Senator Paul Wellstone has been posthumously selected as the 2003 Grand Marshal for the Twin Cities Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender Pride Celebration, which will take place in June.

Senator Wellstone was a staunch advocate of GLBT rights throughout his career in the US Senate. He cosponsored the Employment Non Discrimination Act (ENDA) and fought hard for the approval of James Hormel to be the Ambassador to Luxembourg, making him the first openly gay Ambassador from the United States. He was a reliable supporter of the local Pride Celebration, appearing every year, and offering letters of support whenever he was asked. Jim Kelley, Pride CEO, said "we feel that by selecting Senator Wellstone as our Grand Marshal that we memorialize his support of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender people. This is our way of recognizing Senator Wellstone's support of the Pride Celebration and thanking his family for his years of work on our behalf."

Additionally, Melissa Schmidt, a Minneapolis Police Officer, has been posthumously selected to be the 2003 Every Day Hero Award winner and GenderBLUR, a grassroots community group, has been selected as the 2003 Community Pride Award winner.

Melissa Schmidt was a supporter of the Pride Celebration, and often gave her free time to work at Pride events in uniform to help with crowd control and security. Ms. Schmidt was killed on the job in 2002 and has been selected as the 2003 Everyday Hero Award winner. Pride CEO Jim Kelley said, "Our Every Day Hero Award is very special to me as it recognizes the important contributions by individual members of our community. These are people that are out in our community doing the work that needs to be done without the need for notoriety. These statements apply particularly well to Officer Schmidt. She will be missed, not only as a Police Officer, but also as a member of our community."

genderBLUR is a community group that provides social, creative, and artistic space for transgender, genderqueer, and allied communities where they facilitate discussion, builds coalition and connect otherwise isolated individuals. genderBLUR, a regular social event, cabaret, and party for the trans, genderqueer, and allied communities, started in March of 2002.¶ Each of the five events held last year drew a crowd of 300. “I’m very excited about selecting genderBLUR to receive the 2003 Community Pride Award,” said Pride CEO Jim Kelley. He continued, “Their dedication to be an open and inviting forum challenges us all to create opportunities that engender acceptance.”

The annual Grand Marshal Reception and Silent Auction will be held on Saturday, February 8, 2003 at the Great Lakes Ballroom at the Mall of America. The reception will run from 7:00 pm to midnight and will feature an awards presentation, keynote speaker and entertainment. The reception is open to everyone and free of charge.

The 2003 Pride Celebration is a combination of several events including the Pride Festival, The Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade, the Pride Boat Cruise, the Pride Block Party and, new for 2003, the Pride Day at Como Zoo. All Pride events take place during the last two weeks of June.

Celebrating it’s 31st year in 2003, GLBT Pride/Twin Cities, the organizer of the Twin Cities Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender (GLBT) Pride Celebration, began in 1972 with a small group of activists meeting for a picnic in Minneapolis’ Loring Park and a short march down Nicollet Mall. Over the intervening years, the Twin Cities Pride Celebration has grown to be the largest GLBT Pride in the region and 4th largest in the United States, with an estimated 2002 attendance in excess of 380,000 people. GLBT Pride/Twin Cities is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization.

It is the mission of GLBT Pride/Twin Cities to commemorate and celebrate our diverse heritage, to inspire the achievement of equality and challenge discrimination.

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