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LGBT Symposium Speaker Biographies

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[Professor Susan Becker \(#becker\)](#)[Paula L. Ettelbrick \(#ettelbrick\)](#)[Lynne Bowman \(#bowman\)](#)[Dean Geoffrey S. Mearns \(#mearns\)](#)[Councilman Joe Cimperman \(#cimperman\)](#)[Camilla Taylor \(#taylor\)](#)[Carrie Davis \(#davis\)](#)[Sarah Warbelow \(#warebelow\)](#)[Sue Doerfer \(#doerfer\)](#)

Professor Susan Becker was a newspaper photographer and reporter before entering law school. She graduated from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 1983 and clerked for the Honorable Judge Robert Krupansky of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit from 1983-1985. She then worked for five years as an associate at Jones Day, litigating cases in state and federal courts in Ohio, Texas, California, New York, Montreal, and other jurisdictions in North America.

Professor Becker joined the faculty of Cleveland-Marshall in 1990 and was named the Charles R. Emrick Jr.-Calfee Halter & Griswold Professor of Law in the fall of 2007 and will hold that position until summer 2010. Her teaching areas include Civil Procedure, Remedies, Legal Ethics, and Sexual Orientation and the Law. Her scholarship focuses on civil litigation practice, civil justice reform, and sexual minorities and the law.

Professor Becker's public interest work includes serving as a board member or as pro bono counsel for various not-for profit organizations in Northeast Ohio. She has worked closely with Lambda Legal and other national non-profit entities in representing organizations that wish to participate as amicus curiae ("friends of the court") in high profile cases where the sexual orientation of one or more parties is at issue. Professor Becker served on the board of the Cleveland Chapter of the Ohio ACLU for many years before being elected to the state board in 2004. She was elected president of the ACLU Ohio Board in 2009.



Lynne Bowman is one of the many founders of Equality Ohio. Since its formal incorporation in 2005, she has served as the organization's Executive Director. She came to the role with 17 years of organizational leadership experience in the non-profit, for-profit and government sectors, focused on providing and improving services for people with developmental disabilities across Ohio. A graduate of Otterbein College with degrees in both Psychology and Music Theory & Composition, she later returned to study business and went on to receive a Master of Arts in Administration from Central Michigan University.

Lynne is a graduate of the Ohio County Boards Association Superintendent Development Program class of 2003, Leadership Columbus class of 2007, a member of the United Way of Central Ohio's Diversity & Inclusion Committee, an ex-officio board member of Plexus in Northeast Ohio, and currently serves as the Board Chair of the Equality Federation, a national organization dedicated to strengthening statewide LGBT organizing. In her free time, she enjoys yoga, fitness, reading and hanging out at home with her wife of nearly 16 years.



Joe Cimperman currently represents Ward 13 in his third term on Cleveland City Council. His ward is one of the largest and most diverse in Cleveland and includes downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Councilman Cimperman currently serves as the Chair of the City Planning Committee, Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee and as a member of the Health and Human Services Committee and Legislation Committee on Cleveland City Council. He represents the Council on the Cleveland City Planning Commission.

Born and raised in the St. Clair-Superior neighborhood of Cleveland, Councilman Cimperman's family was active in the Slovenian-American community. After graduating from St. Ignatius High School, Cimperman earned a degree in English from John Carroll University where he served as Student Council President. While at John Carroll, Cimperman also founded Project GOLD, an award winning international service organization dedicated to helping underprivileged families.

After college, Councilman Cimperman worked with Cleveland's I Have a Dream Foundation, a program which provides opportunities and support for low-income children to pursue higher education. During two years of service as a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC), Cimperman worked with developmentally challenged adults in Portland, Maine, and at the Don Miller AIDS Hospice in Baltimore, Maryland. Upon returning home he served as an outreach worker at the West Side Catholic Center.

Since first being elected in 1997 to serve Cleveland's Ward 13, Councilman Cimperman has focused his efforts on community revitalization. His many achievements in that area and his long list of other community activities resulted in his being named as the 2008 recipient of the prestigious Ruth Ratner Miller Award in recognition of his outstanding record of civic achievements and continuing commitment to Cleveland.

Councilman Cimperman sponsored and successfully lobbied for the passage of legislation creating the Domestic Partner Registry for the City of Cleveland. The registry, one of only three in the State of Ohio, enables same-sex and unmarried couples that live in or out of Cleveland to make an official record of their relationship. Its aim is to help provide health care and other benefits not normally available to domestic partners.



Carrie Davis joined the ACLU of Ohio in 2003 as Staff Attorney. Carrie travels the state working on important civil liberties litigation, lobbying all levels of Ohio government, helping to organize other Ohioans to lobby their officials, and speaking on a variety of subjects.

Carrie is passionate about too many issues to name, and has many notable accomplishments with the ACLU.



Carrie has served as counsel on landmark cases involving voting rights, free speech, and individual liberties. She regularly testifies before and lobbies members of the Ohio General Assembly. She serves on the board of Ohioans to Stop Executions, a growing organization dedicated to ending the injustice of capital punishment. In 2006, Carrie was honored as a “Champion of Choice” by NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio. Carrie’s proudest accomplishment with the ACLU of Ohio is that she has trained scores of Ohioans to speak out through her advocacy training program.

LGBT rights issues have been a focal point of Carrie’s work. Carrie served as amicus counsel on several cases testing the scope of Ohio’s marriage amendment, including the pivotal case, *Carswell v. Ohio*. She has lobbied and testified in support of the Equal Housing and Employment Act, that would extend Ohio’s non-discrimination laws to LGBT people. In 2008, Carrie was part of the advocacy team that successfully lobbied the City of Cleveland to adopt a domestic partner registry. Carrie also serves as a local action team leader for Equality Ohio, helping to organize local advocates to lobby for stronger LGBT protections.

Carrie is a native Ohioan. She has an academic background in public policy and public service, philosophy, and law. Carrie worked on Capital Hill in Washington, D.C. as part of a Women in Public Policy internship program. She went on to work as a Congressional Aide for a U.S. Representative from Michigan. Carrie returned to Ohio to attend law school and enter public service. During law school, Carrie worked as a legal intern with the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education, served as Editor-in-Chief of The Internet Law Journal, and competed in mock trial and moot court.

Carrie has a BA in philosophy and public policy from Albion College and a JD from Case Western Reserve University.



Sue Doerfer has served as executive director of The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center of Greater Cleveland for the past 4 ½ years. The Center provides direct services to the LGBT community, advocacy for LGBT rights and offers education and diversity training to the greater community.

Before taking over the helm of the LGBT Center, Doerfer worked as the Clinical Director of Services for the AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland. Since relocating to Cleveland in 2001, Doerfer has also served on the County Committee on Disabilities, the Ryan White Case Management Network, the Cleveland Pride Board of Directors and the Regional AIDS Advisory Committee. She has also been involved as an adjunct professor at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences and a private practice therapist in Ohio City.

Doerfer holds a Master of Social Work degree and is a board member of CenterLink: The National Association of LGBT Community Centers. Well known for her community leadership and activism, Sue is directly involved in advocating for the rights of the LGBT community in Cleveland, in Ohio and nationally.

Before her move to Ohio, Doerfer worked for many years providing services to people with HIV/AIDS in Newark, New Jersey.



Paula L. Ettelbrick is a lawyer, law professor, writer, speaker, and long-time LGBT rights advocate from New York. Until March, 2009, she was the Executive Director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), a US-based non-profit headquartered in New York with regional offices in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Cape Town, South Africa. IGLHRC partners with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender groups around the world to challenge human rights abuse and discrimination and advocate for global policies and laws that respect the rights of LGBT people everywhere. A lawyer by profession, Paula has a 25-year history in



leadership positions within LGBT advocacy non-profits in the United States. She has served as the legal director at Lambda Legal Defense, policy director at National Center for Lesbian Rights, legislative counsel for the Empire State Pride Agenda, and family policy director at the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Paula has written and spoken extensively about civil, constitutional and human rights issues related to sexuality, gender and sexual orientation. She is an adjunct professor of law at New York University Law School where she teaches Sexuality and the Law, and a lecturer in the Women's Studies Department at Barnard College. She has also taught in the law schools of the University of Michigan, Columbia University, Wayne State University, Whittier Law School's Amsterdam Summer Program, as well as New York Law School.



Dean Geoffrey S. Mearns is Dean of the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. He joined the law school in 2005 from the Cleveland office of Baker & Hostetler LLP, where he headed the firm's national Business Crimes and Corporate Investigations team. Before entering private practice, he had a distinguished nine-year career as a prosecutor with the U.S. Department of Justice. From 1997 to 1998, he served as Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney General in the prosecution of Terry Nichols, convicted of bombing the Oklahoma City Federal Building. Dean Mearns was a member of the Committee on Identifying the Needs of the Forensic Sciences. His B.A. is from Yale University, and his J.D. is from the University of Virginia.



Camilla Taylor is Senior Staff Attorney in the Midwest Regional Office of Lambda Legal, the oldest and largest national legal organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and people with HIV.

Taylor's litigation docket includes a diverse array of legal matters that span family law, employment discrimination, criminal law and advocacy on behalf of transgender clients. A skilled public speaker, Taylor has traveled throughout the Midwest Region to meet with community groups and help LGBT people and people with HIV better understand their legal rights.

Since joining Lambda Legal, Taylor has been the Midwest Region's point person for the Marriage Project and currently represents six gay and lesbian couples in Lambda Legal's marriage equality lawsuit in Iowa, [Varnum v. Brien](http://www.lambdalegal.org/our-work/in-court/cases/varnum.html) (<http://www.lambdalegal.org/our-work/in-court/cases/varnum.html>). Also in Iowa, Taylor obtained a favorable ruling from

the state high court in 2005 in *Alons v. Iowa District Court for Woodbury County*, which held that seven antigay legislators, a pastor and a church had no standing to challenge a judge's decision to grant two Iowa women a dissolution of their Vermont civil union.

Taylor has appeared before numerous Ohio courts to make clear that Ohio's 2004 antigay constitutional amendment, while spiteful and discriminatory, does not leave unmarried people broadly unprotected. In numerous appeals from domestic violence convictions, including the Ohio Supreme Court case, *State v. Carswell*, Taylor authored *amicus* briefs opposing criminal defendants' claims that Ohio's constitutional amendment invalidates domestic violence protections for unmarried individuals. Also in Ohio, in a child custody dispute, Taylor represents Therese Fairchild Leach against efforts by her former partner to deprive her of any contact with the child she parented from birth. Leach's ex-partner argues that Ohio's antigay constitutional amendment invalidates the shared custody agreement the two women signed in 2001.

Advocating for persons with HIV, Taylor helped secure a favorable settlement in *Roe v. Westmont* for a highly qualified police officer who was

denied a job after the department discovered his HIV status in a pre-employment physical exam. In another HIV-related employment discrimination case, *TeVoert v. OSF HealthCare System*, Taylor obtained a settlement on behalf of an Illinois radiology technician. Taylor also has advocated on behalf of gay and lesbian parents eager to obtain accurate birth certificates for their children, and her work on this front played a significant role in reversing the Michigan registrar's prior policy of refusing to place the names of both same-sex parents on a child's birth certificate. Also, in a case that later was dismissed after Missouri's consensual sodomy laws were invalidated as a result of Lambda Legal's Supreme Court victory in *Lawrence v. Texas* (<http://www.lambdalegal.org/our-work/in-court/cases/lawrence-v-texas.html>), Taylor advocated for Missouri individuals prosecuted under those laws.

Prior to joining Lambda Legal, Taylor was a staff attorney with the Criminal Appeals Bureau of the Legal Aid Society of New York City. She represented indigent defendants on appeal before the New York Appellate Divisions, First and Second Departments, and the New York Court of Appeals. In June, 2002, Taylor won a ruling before the New York Court of Appeals in *People v. Arnold* that established strict guidelines in New York State for judicial intervention in criminal trials. Before her work with the Legal Aid Society of New York City, Taylor was a litigation associate with Shearman & Sterling.

Taylor received her J.D. from Columbia Law School and her B.A. From Yale College, and is currently an adjunct professor at Northwestern University.



Sarah Warbelow joined HRC in January 2008 as Senior Counsel for Special Projects and Justice for All Fellow. Since September 2009, she has been State Legislative Director responsible for working with state and local legislators and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender advocacy organizations in pursuing their LGBT related legislative priorities.

Before joining HRC, Warbelow served as the Program Manager for the American Association of University Women Foundation Legal Advocacy Fund, specializing in education and employment discrimination law. Warbelow is also an affiliated professor at George Washington University and Georgetown University teaching courses on civil rights law and public policy. She received her bachelors' degrees in social relations and women's studies from Michigan State University and her masters of public policy and law degree from the University of Michigan. Warbelow is admitted to the bar of Michigan.

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