

PAUL STICKLAND RECEIVES 2009 HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

Paul Stickland has throughout his adult life been committed to civil rights, particularly LGBT civil rights. Paul came out as a gay man when he was eighteen years old in 1980 and has never looked back. Since then, he has had a long career in education fighting for GLBT rights and raising the awareness of educators and the public-at-large regarding civil rights.

In the early 90's he was a trainer in the New Haven Unified district for the Invisible Minority Program which was a GLBT issue awareness training program for all the employees in the district. This was at a time when virtually no other districts were even discussing GLBT issues. He was a pioneer when it was rear for a teacher to come out of the closet. Paul has always felt that to be out puts a face on the fight for GLBT civil rights.

Later, Paul became a trainer for CTA's Gay & Lesbian Youth: Breaking the Silence High Risk Cadre Program. He helped to update the program four years after its inception, including the ground breaking four module model which enable the trainers to target their trainings to specific audiences. He is also a trainer for CTA's GLBT Leadership Development Program. Paul has conducted many trainings for the High Risk Program throughout California at conferences and school districts.

Many people do not know this about Paul, but he also received his law degree from Golden Gate University Law School in the late 80's. While he attended Golden Gate University, Paul formed LEGALS, The Lesbian and Gay Law Student Association. He was the Co-Chair of LEGALS for his three years at school. Among other things, the Association eventually endowed a \$10,000.00 scholarship for gay/lesbian students to attend law school. Paul also was the student chair on the Board of BALIF (Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom). BALIF is the nation's oldest and largest bar association of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered persons in the filed of law. Paul is proud to have served on such a distinguished Board in the legal community which focuses on the rights and promotion of GLBT people in the area of law and justice.

Initially, in the earlier years of his education, Paul became the Human Rights Contact for his local chapter, New Haven Teachers Association. He was instrumental in bringing in CTA's California Challenge Program and the High Risk Program for teachers in the district and he arranged with the New Haven Unified School District for teachers to earn units for salary column advancement by taking these courses. During this time, Paul served on, and was Chair of the GLBT Issues Advisory Committee to CTA Board of Directors. Paul's leadership and participation on the committee resulted in many recommendations to the board which were approved and implemented by CTA.

Paul is most proud of one of his own recommendations which resulted in the GLBT Safety in Schools Grant and Scholarship Program. He was the Chair of this program for four years while the program was designed to make our public schools a safe place for GLBT students and public school employees. After the program's first year, its effects can already be felt. One of the awards enabled an off school site theatre production of the Laramie Project after the school's administration had denied the use of its facilities. As word got out that this had happened, the original producer of the play came out to help in directing. Although Paul is not directly responsible for these events, one can see how the GLBT Safety in Schools Grant/Scholarship Program has, and will, continue to impact and promote safety for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people.

Paul through his activism, leadership and commitment to the struggle for GLBT civil rights has made significant contributions in making GLBT lives safer and better.

