

July 2018

Volume 23

Issue 7

The next FFBC meeting is  
Friday, July 6,  
2018  
7:00 a.m.



FFBC Meeting Location:  
Hoyt Sherman Place,  
15<sup>th</sup> and Woodland,  
Des Moines, IA



R.S.V.P.

[JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com)

or phone

(515) 288-2500

by Wednesday,  
July 4.



FFBC Website:  
[www.ffbcia.org](http://www.ffbcia.org)



## The Myth of a Trade Imbalance

by Jonathan Wilson

First, a quick history lesson. The earliest settlers in what would become the United States of America, found indigenous inhabitants who had migrated here long before. Culturally, native "Americans" had territorial issues from time to time between tribes, but they had no concept of *ownership* of territory. Such *ownership* was a largely European construct.

The settlers, learning this cultural divide and the fascination of native "Americans" with mirrors, beads, and similar trinkets, gave those things to the natives. In return, the natives gave the settlers "Pennsylvania," and other lands. And that gave birth to land ownership in the New World. It was a heck of a bargain for those settlers.

Fast forward to a few decades ago; fast forward to the opening of serious trade relations between the United States and China (thank you Richard Nixon); fast forward to a dramatic disparity in the wages and working conditions of workers in the U.S. and China; fast forward to the investment by U.S. capital investors to build factories and infrastructure in China (capital always chases cheap labor, or vice versa); and fast forward to U.S. consumers with an insatiable appetite for inexpensive clothing, cameras, iPhones, jewelry, cars, steel, aluminum, and you-name it. That appetite for latter-day trinkets gave birth to our supposed trade imbalance.

A few years ago, I was at the White House for a briefing (before its current occupant was inaugurated). We were insightfully informed by the then-President's chief economic advisor that, despite the hype and media reports, there was no trade imbalance. He said there couldn't be. At first blush, that sounded like good news, until he explained why the Chinese weren't just accumulating U.S. dollars in a big pile like someone might unwisely bury their treasure in the back yard. No, they were using the excess U.S. dollars buying assets in the United States. They were giving us "trinkets" and we, in return, have been giving them "Pennsylvania." Any money the Chinese weren't using to buy U.S. property and U.S. companies, they have been investing in U.S. Treasuries. They now hold about **\$1.2 TRILLION** in U.S. Treasuries. Roughly 1/3 of the entire federal budget. Japan holds even more.



[continued on page two]

Like it or not, those two countries "own" us. We haven't learned the lesson from the interactions of those early settlers with the indigenous inhabitants. There was no trade imbalance then either.



Enter President tRump, the withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and a threatened trade war with China that could disproportionately burden exporters of soybeans and pork (read: Iowa and the heartland). When was the last time you thought it would be a good idea to pick a fight with your principal creditor? When was the last time you had a really bad idea and acted on it?

As simply as selling off U.S. Treasuries, China could force the U.S. to pay higher interest to get others to buy the Treasuries (which they are doing, by the way, and Russians are buying). That, in turn, raises interest rates in our domestic market and reduces the strength of the U.S. dollar. That, in turn, makes foreign imports more expensive in U.S. dollars, raising prices for U.S. consumers and aggravating our outflow of U.S. dollars to foreign holders.



To say the least, international trade and currency valuation are extremely complex and interconnected in ways that appear to be beyond the comprehension of President tRump. This arena is fertile ground for violating the law of unintended consequences. Don't believe me? Ask a native "American."

## Mark Your Calendars!

Future FFBC Speakers Announced:

August:

**Teree**

**Caldwell-Johnson**

(Board Chair,  
Des Moines Public Schools)



September: **Brad Clark**

(Executive Director of the Gill Foundation)



Mark Your  
Calendar

July's Speaker:

**Tom Vilsack**



Our speaker in July will be Tom Vilsack, 40<sup>th</sup> Governor of Iowa and former United States Secretary of Agriculture. You won't want to miss this. You are encouraged to invite your friends to attend!!

**It is no  
wonder seeing  
people wicked; the  
wonder is seeing them  
unashamed.**

Jonathan Swift  
(paraphrased)



# Capital City Pride Fest

by Rick Miller

It takes many people to build an LGBT+ community in Des Moines, and we see it in all its diversity during Pride events.



The FFBC Scholarship Breakfast in June is just one. If you include donors, there were over 125 people that contributed or worked on committee assignments to make it all come together and happen. Thanks to chairmen Byron Huff and Tim Schreck for their incredible work. This does not include all the scholarship recipients, their school counselors and administrators, and all the supportive parents and family members that attended the breakfast.

Another high-profile event for FFBC was the Pride booth that we host each year. Many members of the board of directors and members-at-large participated in staffing the booth during Pride Fest 2018. Nearly 20 people spent an hour or more -- sometimes in very hot conditions -- to tell those attending about the wonderful work that FFBC does. We almost certainly picked up some new members. A special thanks to Jonathan Wilson, Scott Kuknyo, and Phil Williams for setting up and striking the tent.

Although the parade was canceled due to rain and police scheduling, those who attended on Sunday were much cooler and a little wetter than most Pride events in the past. Thousands of LGBT+ people and their supporters still showed up for a good time. Thanks Pride Fest. Keep up the good work.



## Briefs ✓ & Shorts:



Thanks to Marcus Turnage for introducing our June speaker, Nate Monson, Executive Director of Iowa Safe Schools. Thanks to **Brian Taylor Carlson** for his work on the FFBC website. Thanks to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter production editor. Thanks to **Ryan Weidner** for his work as our technology guru. *Thanks to all our contributors to the monthly newsletter!*

A special thank-you to those FFBC members who have chosen to designate FFBC through the Donor Direct program of United Way. The contributions through United Way are tax deductible.


The next copy deadline for the FFBC newsletter will be **July 16, 2018**. If you have something on your mind, put it on paper and get it to me by the copy deadline. It'll be interesting, good therapy, or both. Caring is sharing.

Be sure to peruse the front table for a book you might like to read. **Book donations are always welcome.** Thanks to **Scott Kuknyo** for helping coordinate the book exchange.

**Consider a tax-deductible contribution** to the FFBC scholarship fund, or a tax exempt testamentary gift, or both. We awarded eight scholarships this year. We've awarded more than \$250,000 in scholarships to deserving Iowa high school students.

We're all going to die,  
and we can't take it with us.

Contact  
Jonathan  
Wilson for  
details  
about  
legacy giving.



**Tax  
Deductible**  
Donation Processing

**"The essential humanity of men can be protected and preserved only where government must answer not just to the wealthy, not just to those of a particular religion, or a particular race, but to all its people."**

*Robert F. Kennedy in a speech in South Africa two years to the day before his assassination.*



# A New Gay Epidemic

by Jordan Duesenberg



The very first time I ever experienced gay life outside of Iowa was in Minneapolis. At that point in my life I was 22 and was pretty much clueless when it came to the gay scene. I remember logging onto Grindr and chatting with some “gentlemen” and a couple of them mentioned how I should come over and hang out with them and Tina. Clueless as I was, I responded something along the lines of “I don’t know her,” and not in the Mariah Carey kind of way; I legitimately had no idea who they were talking about. They (thankfully) immediately stopped responding to me.

Later that night I went to Saloon with some friends and the doorman asked me if I was “family” and I responded, “I don’t think we’re related.” He laughed and let me in for free. Clearly, I was on a roll, so once inside I started talking to some guys. One asked me if I wanted to go do Tina with him in the bathroom. At this point I was curious to know who this mystery woman was, who everyone seemed to know, and so I flat out asked, “WHO IS TINA?!?” and this guy looked back at me and stated, “Honey, its crystal.” Horrified, I said something along the lines of how meth is disgusting and fled to find my friends. This was my introduction to some of the darker sides of the gay sub-culture.

Drugs aren’t something that are new to the gay scene, but the prevalence of certain drugs in the gay scene is shocking, particularly drugs in the “chemsex” or “party & play” (PNP) category – mostly meth, mephedrone, and GHB/GBL – drugs used to enhance sexual activity or sensation. If you use apps like Grindr or Scruff, you may have noticed in profile names or bios people saying something along the lines of, “Looking to parTy,” capital “T’s” (for Tina a.k.a. meth), capital “Gs” (for GHB/GBL), “PNP,” anything mentioning chems, and a variety of other terminology that I don’t care to keep up with. Here in Des Moines, it is not as prevalent, at least that I’m aware of, but go to a bigger city and its shocking just how common it is (also, for more information, watch the terrifying 2015 BBC documentary called “Chemsex”).

# CHEM SEX

I was recently in New York City for work and met up with an old acquaintance I hadn’t seen in a number of years, and some of his friends on a night out. We met at a bar in Manhattan and everyone was treating me oddly because I was drinking a beer. I even offered to buy everyone a round of drinks, but they all wanted only ginger ale (which, in retrospect, was much better for my wallet). I soon found out it was because they were all doing GHB, which can be deadly when mixed with alcohol, which explains the initial animosity towards me. They all left and went to a chem party – I went back to my hotel.

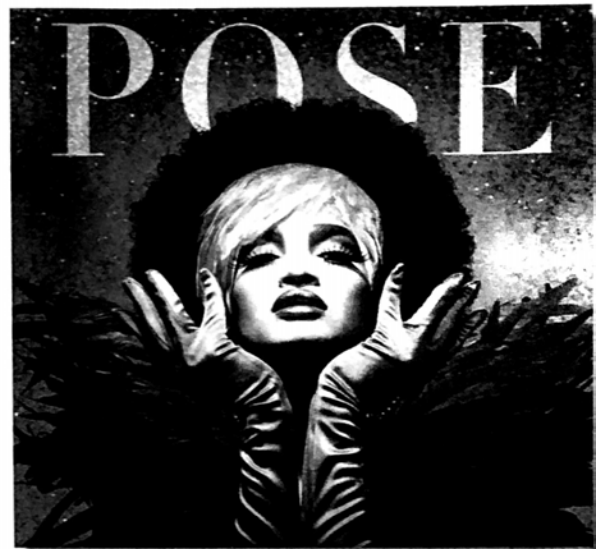
You may recognize the name GHB because it is often used in date raping situations. Someone discovered that, when not mixed with alcohol, it can have a relaxing, euphoric feeling, which is why it is popular among gay men. It also doesn’t result in a hangover the next day and is completely out of your system after a couple of hours (which is why it is becoming increasingly popular). Despite the fact that there is a slim amount of research available about GHB, however, overdoses and deaths are becoming more and more common (it is rumored that George Michael was into the chem scene and died as a result of too much GHB, which would make sense, because his toxicology report didn’t show any drugs in his system). Talk to any friend that lives in a big city, and I’m sure they’ll have something to say about the topic.

I’m not here to say that people that take these particular drugs or who participate in chemsex are bad people. All I am here to say is that I am nervous about its prevalence in the gay community. Thankfully, my generation of gay men never had to experience the darkest days of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. I hope we don’t experience an epidemic of a different kind and proportion. Are these drugs becoming increasingly popular not just because of the euphoria and enhancements they provide, but is it possible that many people still have shame regarding sex and this removes the barrier? Is it because, with the rise of apps and the online experience, there is a loss of community like once before existed, and this provides just that? I think there are a number of reasons and, unfortunately, we may never have a definitive answer, I just hope that the chemsex scene doesn’t become as big here in Des Moines as it is in bigger gay metropolises.

# Pose

(FX Miniseries)

Movie Review by Mark Turnage



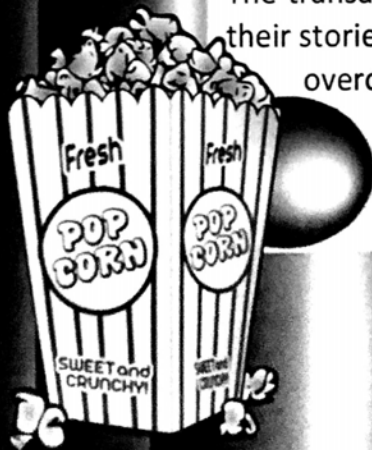
"Know your history." It's a phrase heard often around Pride. We hear it between generations, cultures, and sometimes as a "read" to someone ignorant of the rich diversity, struggles, and crises that make celebrating Pride that much more poignant for LGBT persons. Ryan Murphy's latest miniseries *Pose* puts a spotlight on ball culture, a world of runway competition, LGBT people, and communities of color, heavily appropriated by gay culture but seldom acknowledged.

Set in 1987 New York City, *Pose* follows Blanca (MJ Rodriguez), a late 20s/early 30s trans\* African-American woman under the "evil stepmother" thumb of the matriarch of House Rodriguez (Dominique Jackson) and one of five runaways who survive the streets of New York by day and vogue by night. Minorities of the LGBT community play large roles here: trans\* women, Latinx queens, and HIV-positive characters come to life with fresh faces and unknown actors and actresses who create something three-dimensional out of what could easily be portrayed as stereotype.

That's not to say that *Pose* has its stereotypical moments--it is, after all, a drama with some soap bubbles. But Murphy is smart to take those expectations and push them a little further--maybe subvert them in a few instances. Damon (Ryan Jamaal Swain) is a 17 year old who is kicked out of his house when his father discovers gay erotica magazines under his bed. His mother stops his father from beating him unconscious, then throws him a day's worth of clothes and tells him to get out, using (surprise) religious justification. But her last words before leaving him alone on their front lawn are, "You will never find happiness." And when one family abandons him, eventually, the homeless Damon discovers Blanca, whose newly formed House Evangelista accepts him fully and empowers him to overcome his low self-esteem through performance.

Class struggle and poverty are illustrated ironically with Trump Tower as both setting and metaphor for the divide between whites and persons of color, rich and poor, and heterosexual and homosexual communities. The characters of Stan (Evan Peters), a family man with a wife (Rooney Mara) and two kids, and his coke-fueled wolf of Wall Street boss (an entertaining turn by James Van Der Beek) approach the fringes of the ball culture community through their daylight survival, whether it's as john/prostitute or drug dealer/drug buyer. Yet their depersonalization of the trans\* people of color with whom they interact in public is contrasted with their genuine moments of humanity when they are alone. The transactional treatment of trans\* people of color by whites speaks volumes, and with their stories also come many moments of strength and power in the ways they choose to overcome that depersonalization.

*Pose* is a fictional story about an influential time of LGBT history that extends through past and present, and holds captivating stories that speak to our future as a community as well, while offering solid entertainment value. See it, and know your history.



# More Safety Coming to a School Near You

by Bruce Carr

## Thank You!

iowa  
safe  
schools



iowa  
safe  
schools

Nate Monson is a graduate of Clarke University in Dubuque, which he attended from 2003 to 2007, and where he earned his BA in History. He was a student activist at Clarke from day one, joining the Human Rights Action Group, College Democrats, serving as coordinator of the Multi-Cultural Center and on the Career Services Advisory Council and eventually as President of the Student Body. Immediately upon graduation, he took up staff direction of Iowa Safe Schools (founded in 2002), following the passage of the state's anti-bullying law and the extension of the Iowa Civil Rights Act to include gender identity and sexual orientation. Iowa Safe Schools works to create safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environments and communities for Iowa LGBTQ youth through education, outreach, victim services, and advocacy, and under Nate's direction has now become one of the largest statewide LGBTQ organizations in the country (their substantial website lists a staff of six and a volunteer board of eight, in addition to an impressive roster of effective programs and resources.)

Nate's commitment to impact positively the lives of others is also reflected in his service to the community on a variety of boards and commissions. In 2010, Nate was appointed to the Iowa Department of Human Rights Board, and he serves as the Chair of the Iowa Pride PAC, the state's LGBTQ political action committee. Nate has won several awards for his work including most recently being named the 2018 Pride Man of the Year by Capital City Pride. He is a sought-after speaker on school climate, culture, and LGBTQ issues around the country, serving as a keynote speaker for conferences, colleges, and corporations. His illuminating presentation for a Tedx Talk titled the "Post-Modern Queer Youth Experience" can be found at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDCaLog5QnQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDCaLog5QnQ)

Nate and his best-dog friend, Lucy, live in Des Moines. He can be contacted via Facebook, Twitter, and at [nate.monson@iowasafeschools.org](mailto:nate.monson@iowasafeschools.org). Iowa Safe Schools can be reached at P.O. Box 703, Des Moines IA 50303; telephone 515/381-0588.

Our guest speaker on Friday morning, June 1, 2018, was Nate Monson, Executive Director since 2007 of Iowa Safe Schools. Nate's message was simple: yes, marriage equality is finally the law of the land – but there's lots more we need to do to oppose discrimination against LGBTQ persons and keep our Queer Youth safe (as vividly illustrated in the Supreme Court's "Masterpiece Cakeshop" decision handed down three days later).

All students need a safe, supportive atmosphere in which they can learn, Nate said, including especially students that are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. But bullying, harassment, and discrimination against LGBTQ students continues to occur in our schools. As these students face verbal and physical harassment, educators, policy-makers, parents, and other students are hampered by the lack of quality information and resources to protect LGBTQ students. Iowa's Safe Schools Law made protecting students in schools not only an ethical, professional, and moral obligation, but a legal one as well. Still, laws are only good if enforcement and education follow.

Monson said that as many as forty percent of homeless youth identify as gender-queer, but support and fundraising of the kind that helped make marriage legal for LGBTQ adults is less available to youth. "Youth don't or can't vote, and they don't donate," he reminded us. But it's vital – life-saving – for our young people to have access to the very services that Iowa Safe Schools provides: clear affirmation of their identity and existence, and frank insertion of their issues into all forums that try to govern their lives.

***You can hear, or re-hear, a complete audio recording of Nate Monson's talk and the Q&A which followed by going to our Website, <[ffbc-iowa.org](http://ffbc-iowa.org)>, and clicking on the "Speakers" tab.***



***Photo by Gary Moore***



# First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

FFBC



## Dorothy Anderson

In a first for the FFBC scholarship program, we have a set of twin recipients! Dottie stood out for her insistence on communication and connection among people, especially when it comes to understanding not only what it means to be LGBTQ, but also the entire spectrum of gender identity. In her junior year, she co-led her Gay-Straight Alliance at Dubuque Hempstead High School. Dottie took the discussions beyond posters and public messaging to invite members to share their challenges, discuss their gender identity experiences and feel safe in the GSA space. Dottie fiercely defies ignorance, and as her teacher stated, "She will not tolerate the intolerant." Dottie plans to study biomedical engineering at the University of Iowa, and to continue sharing her story with the world.



## Marcella Anderson

Marcy Anderson stood out as a student focused on the issues and realities of gender fluidity. As she stated in her application, early in life Marcy was not sure what she was, she just knew she was not "a girl" in the traditional binary gender identification. From that early awareness, Marcy joined the GSA at Dubuque Hempstead to represent and support the genderqueer community. Her advocacy was delivered through a range of speeches, presentations, and poetry in classroom and public settings during her high school years. Marcy hopes to communicate about gender fluidity, using her words, in a "calm and digestible way." Her teachers see her as socially aware, hard-working, dedicated and organized. We see her as amazing! Marcy plans to attend Iowa State University for a degree in software engineering with long-term plans in the field of astronomy.



## Mercedee Doty

Mercedee is from Ft. Madison and a graduate of Ft. Madison High School. She and her friend started the Gay-Straight Alliance, and this year, Mercedee served as the president of the club with 25 members! The GSA has become an integral part of the Ft. Madison school community, promoting messaging against bullying, and acceptance of LGBTQ kids as equals. This young leader is dedicated to reducing bullying and to calling out the bullies. She insisted that school administration acknowledge LGBTQ targeting and take action, and makes it a point to address issues with individuals by asking, "What if it was you?" on the receiving end of marginalizing comments. Mercedee will attend Capri College with the goal of becoming an esthetician, and eventually a movie makeup artist. Her long-term dream is to have a home, a wife, a cat and a dog and a couple of kids playing in the yard, in a space that truly is their own.



## Abbie Eastman

Abbie comes from Nevada and attended high school in Ames. Abbie was a member of the Ames High School Youth Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which fights homophobia by addressing all discrimination. She also was leader of Spectrum, the school's GSA. Abbie created opportunities for interaction with the local Planned Parenthood chapter to access information about safe sex practices in the LGBT community. She led a contingent of Ames High students at the annual Iowa Safe Schools conference and was a member of the School Improvement Advisory Committee which allowed for direct communication with the school board regarding LGBTQ student safety. Abbie plans to attend the University of Iowa to study political science and international relations. This past year she was the teacher's assistant in AP Government and Politics class at Ames High, so we know she's off to a great start in her future career.

# First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners



## Logan Eaton

Logan began her application essay with the simple sentence, "When I was younger I always knew I was different." In time, inspired by media and cultural events, Logan came to understand that she was transgender. And at the end of her junior year in high school, with the support of her parents, the administration team at Mt. Ayr High School, and Iowa Safe Schools, Logan came out as a transgender female at an all-school assembly. She announced that she would be returning for her senior year as a female and has had an amazing final year of high school! In this past year, Logan has learned that she "has to advocate to be who she is." We have dubbed this scholarship the unofficial community award for the year, and Logan is this year's recipient of the **G. David Hurd and Trudy Holman Hurd Scholarship**. The courage and determination Logan and her family demonstrated could not be denied. In a school with a senior class of 47 students, not only was Logan accepted, she was elected to the homecoming court! While there will always be bullies, the broader community of Mt. Ayr has accepted Logan for who she is! Logan will attend NW Missouri State University with intentions of becoming a lawyer.



## Lane Kunzie

Lane grew up in Corydon, a small conservative town in southern Iowa. He knew he was gay in first grade but also understood that people historically have not come out in towns like his. After going through some difficult times, including abuse, Lane found writing, and in his sophomore year, the courage and inner strength to come out as gay. In the process, he confronted and revealed his abuser, rightly challenged discrimination by authorities at his school, and started the Gay-Straight Alliance. Not only was Lane accepted by family and friends, he was voted Homecoming King last fall. He has written five books, three published, and he was #1 in his class. We also just learned that he is the recipient of a World Food Prize summer internship and will be leaving for Malaysia in a week! Lane is this year's recipient of the **Jim and Roxanne Conlin sponsored scholarship**. He plans to attend Iowa State University and study biology and global systems. While his story is truly inspirational, the thing that impressed us most about Lane is that he is simply someone who wants to live where he lives, as the full person he is. Lane is living that life, as he stated in his essay, "I have shown many people that being yourself will reward you with the best life."



## Hannah Mitchell

Hannah has identified as bi-sexual since her sophomore year in high school. That year after experiencing a difficult bullying incident involving her and a transgender friend, Hannah became a strong advocate for the LGBTQ community in the Johnston Community school system. She worked with the school's Gay-Straight Alliance to educate the nursing staff in the district about transgender medical needs. Also, Hannah assisted in introducing LGBTQ history into civil rights curriculum. On personal level, she continued to share her experiences as a bi-sexual individual, knowing that more people become aware of issues faced by a community, once they know someone in that community. Hannah will attend the University of Iowa, with a goal of working in the psychology field. She also intends to remain politically active, focusing on LGBTQ adverse issues such as conversion therapy and religious freedom legislation.



## Bailey VandeKamp

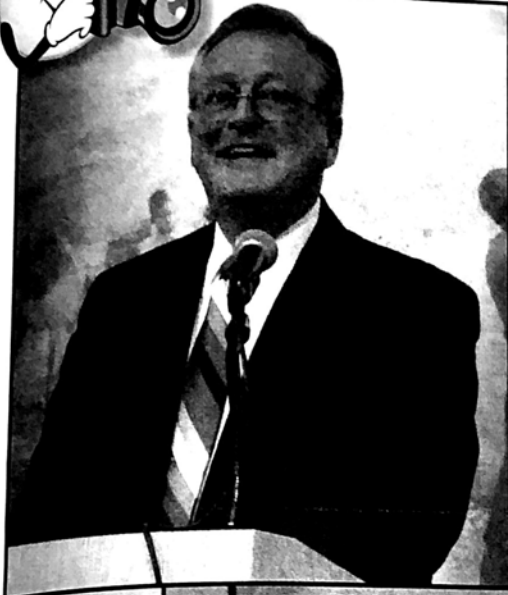
Bailey was a standout student at Knoxville High School. Her activism was motivated early on by seeing the fear many have felt about being labeled as "gay," leading to ridicule and ostracism. She believes it is her responsibility to be as "out as possible" for those who are not or feel they cannot be open about their sexuality. Bailey understands that the most important element of any person's journey may be that first moment of self-acceptance and understanding. Bailey came out her freshman year in high school and helped change the environment at Knoxville High School without the "safety net" of a Gay-Straight Alliance. She simply was true to herself and became a safe space for many in her school experiencing the uncertainties of self-acceptance along the LGBTQ spectrum. In college, Bailey plans to study economics and computer science.





# FFBC Scholarship Photo Gallery

All Photos by Gary Moore



FFBC President  
Jonathan Wilson  
Greets the  
Scholars and Their  
Families



Tanner Mote, former FFBC Scholar  
Helps with Presentations



Tim Schreck,  
Chair of the  
FFBC  
Scholarship  
Committee



The 2018 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholars



**"Why is  
it that, as a  
culture, we are  
more comfortable  
seeing two men  
holding guns than  
holding hands?"**

-- Ernest Gaines

## First Friday Breakfast Club's Mission:

FFBC works to eliminate prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We seek to achieve this through discussion forums and media designed to educate ourselves, opinion leaders, and the general public.

# Farewell to a Friend

by Steve Person

A few nights ago, Turner Classic Movies showed *The Wizard of Oz* as their featured movie for the prime-time slot. Of course, I watched it for the umpteenth time because it never grows old. It also reminded me of the unanticipated task of writing a memorial for my longtime friend, John Tompkins.



John and I were friends for 54 years, and we both loved *The Wizard of Oz* along with other movie musicals including, but not restricted to, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. John died unexpectedly on May 16, in Phoenix, Arizona, his home since his retirement from the Des Moines Public Schools in 2011.

I first met John in 1963 when we were sophomores at Roosevelt High School. We were in the same swimming class. Calling it a "class" is somewhat of a misnomer. The "teacher," in reality the boys' swimming coach, started the semester off with these instructions: "Move your arms and legs simultaneously while moving through the water." That was it. From then on, he left the class in the charge of the varsity upper classmen swimmers. We were not allowed to wear swim trunks. Everybody had to be in the water naked. The varsity swimmers armed themselves with foam paddleboards, and anyone not in the water and attempting to swim or at least staying afloat got paddled on the buttocks by these waterborne jocks. It was a kind of heaven for pubescent-closeted gay boys, of which John and I were two. We survived that experience and became fast friends, although it wasn't until 1979 that we actually came out to each other as gay men.

John and I traveled a lot together during and after high school from New York City to San Francisco; London to Paris; Florida to Niagara Falls and all kinds of places in between. We each met our life partners, and even though living separate lives, kept our friendship thriving. We would get together every winter break for lunch and review the events in our lives, and we did that for more than 30 years until John moved to Phoenix after his partner Mike's death. We always got together for birthdays and at occasional dinner parties.

I persuaded John to become a member of the FFBC, and through the years, he not only became a valued member but also served on the board of directors. After his move to Arizona, he continued his newsletter subscription and donated money every year to the scholarship fund in Mike's memory. Mike died in 2009.

John met his new husband, Mitch, in Phoenix and the two were married in Hawaii five years ago. The last time I saw John was when he and Mitch came back to Des Moines for our fiftieth high school reunion in August 2016. We continued to keep in contact mainly through texts. My last text to him was on May 14 when I asked him if he would like me to make reservations for him and Mitch for the June 1 scholarship meeting. He replied that they planned to attend, and that he would take care of making the reservation. [Ed. John did make that RSVP reservation.] He died two days later.

So, my old friend, I say to you those famous last words from *The Wizard of Oz*: "There's no place like home." Rest in peace.

