

FFBC

First Friday News & Views

Monthly Newsletter of the *First Friday Breakfast Club, Inc.*

December 2019

Volume 24

Issue 12

The next FFBC meeting is
Friday, December 6,
2019
7:00 a.m.



FFBC Meeting Location:
Hoyt Sherman Place,
15th & Woodland,
Des Moines



R.S.V.P.

JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com

or phone (515) 288-2500

or the website
by Wednesday,
December 4.



FFBC Website:
www.ffbciaowa.org



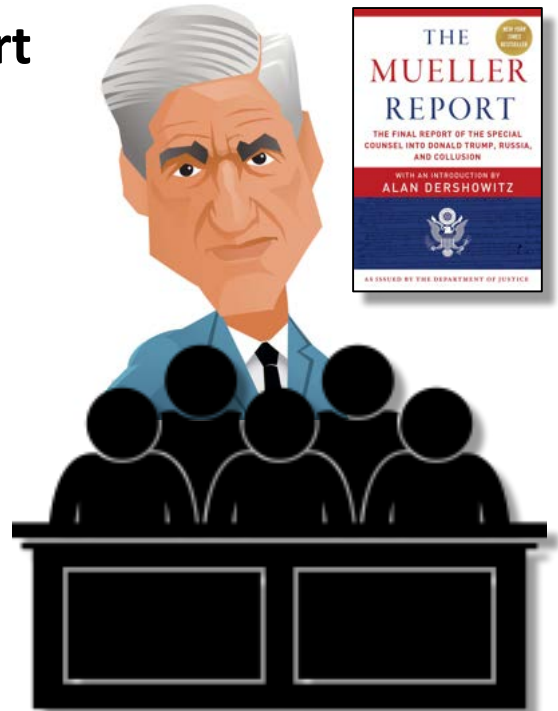
The Jury in the Court of Public Opinion

by Jonathan Wilson

Okay, I've read the Mueller Report. In the entire country, I'd bet fewer than a thousand people can honestly say that -- and that number doesn't include the President of the United States. I've read the news accounts that characterize the Report's conclusions regarding conspiracy (sometimes colloquially referred to as "collusion" -- they are essentially synonyms), and regarding obstruction of justice. As to the latter, the Report left to the Attorney General the call regarding the criminality of obstructive behavior by Trump that every conscious person in the world with a television had already observed in broad day light, and repeatedly. Mueller deferred to DOJ guidelines that indicated that a sitting president could not be indicted. Attorney General Barr decided to defer to those guidelines also, and the preference for impeachment as the better approach for holding a sitting president accountable to the law.

Those guidelines need to be revisited. Otherwise, politics trumps legal accountability (pun intended). Relying solely on impeachment serves to protect any president who has a sufficiently committed base of *political* support to sustain senators who refuse to convict an impeached president over obvious wrong-doing. Politics should not override the rule of law or protect a lawless president from accountability.

As to the question of conspiracy, those who have read the Report know that there was actually lots of evidence indicating a conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia, but the Mueller team made the judgment call that a conspiracy could not be proven in court beyond a reasonable doubt. No exoneration whatsoever, just some doubt about the burden of proof and the defense of ignorance. Based on what the Report documented in excruciating detail, I conclude that such doubt says more about the perceived inability of federal prosecutors to meet their prosecutorial burden than it says about innocence.



As a trial lawyer, I have greater confidence in the prospects of conviction and that a jury should get the opportunity to decide. Try for yourself to connect these dots: (1) Mueller concluded beyond a reasonable doubt that the Trump campaign welcomed Russian help during the election; (2) Mueller concluded that during the election cycle, pre-inaugural period, and thereafter, beyond a reasonable doubt, there were more than one hundred contacts directly between campaign and Russian operatives; (3) when Donald Jr. was invited to the June 2016 meeting with Russian representatives for the purpose of getting dirt on Hillary Clinton, he replied, "If it's what you say I love it, *especially later in the summer (emphasis added);*" (4) Jared Kushner tried to get the Russian ambassador to set up a secret back-channel line of communication between Trump and the Kremlin outside the purview of US intelligence services; (5) during the course of the election, Manafort, Trump's campaign chairman, met with a known Russian operative and shared the campaign's *internal* polling data which would (and did) allow Russian hackers to plant targeted, divisive Facebook and other social media posts that would be most advantageous to the Trump campaign; and (6) when the June 2016 meeting became known publicly, Trump personally dictated a lie about the purpose of the meeting (it wasn't about "Russian adoptions" as was claimed in the written statement that was issued), and then (7) Trump also lied about his role in authoring the false statement.

Connect those dots -- they are all established beyond a reasonable doubt -- and then, as a juror in the court of public opinion, ask yourself, "Who lies about innocent behavior?" The Russian help in the election was not simply welcomed by the campaign, it was coordinated with the campaign -- see items three and five above for starters. Coordination is the essence of criminal conspiracy. It doesn't take a genius (stable or otherwise) to figure this out, and it wouldn't take a federal prosecutor worthy of his/her salt to present it in a compelling way to an actual jury.



Because almost no one has actually read the Mueller Report, and the Report is so detailed and broad-ranging in its scope and mischaracterized by partisans seeking to protect the president, it hasn't "stuck" with the American electorate. So long as that's true, Trump can dodge yet another political controversy of his own making that would have taken down just about any other political figure. That's about to change.

The revelations about the president trying to extort help from the Ukrainian president using taxpayer money in order to get a domestic political advantage, lie directly at Trump's own feet. The essential facts are virtually admitted beyond a reasonable doubt; and I know a confession when I see/hear one. So do the American people. You don't have to read a 400-page report to understand what happened, and perhaps more importantly, this wrong-doing is undeniably wrong-doing that directly implicates the president. He had other operatives trying to help with the wrong-doing, as is more typical of a mob boss's behavior and Trump's behavior during the campaign, but Trump himself has been caught actively participating in the extortion of the Ukrainian president using taxpayer money. That is a serious slip-up. That arrogance should be his undoing in the court of public opinion, and long deservedly so.

To mix a metaphor, it is said that it's not over until the fat lady sings. She hasn't sung yet, but I think I can hear her warming up.

**Mark Your Calendar**

December's Speaker:
Matt Unger



Our speaker in December will be Matt Unger, from the Des Moines Area Religious Council. You won't want to miss this. You are also encouraged to invite some of your friends to attend!! Provide the name(s) of any anticipated guest(s) so we can have name tags for them at the registration desk.

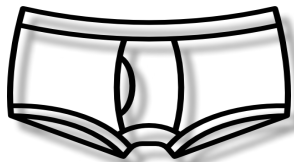
*You are invited*

May your balls sparkle this Christmas!



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Briefs ✓ & Shorts:



Thanks to **Ken Hanson** for introducing our November speaker, **Dr. John Carstensen**. Thanks also to **Jordan Duesenberg** 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 and friends who have chosen to designate FFBC through the Donor Direct program of United Way. The contributions through United Way are tax deductible. Those who have chosen this means of supporting FFBC have gone to the trouble of completing their United Way campaign worksheet by designating FFBC as the beneficiary of their generosity. FFBC is an eligible recipient of such funding designations.

The next copy deadline for the FFBC newsletter will be **December 9, 2019**. 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 **\$275,000** in scholarships to deserving Iowa high school students. Our annual fundraising drive is currently in progress.

Don't Miss the
DEADLINE!



A Tough Spot

by Jonathan Wilson



Charles Kupperman is in a tough spot. He's the former deputy national security adviser who listened in on President Trump's infamous, extortion-laden telephone call to the Ukrainian president seeking interference in US elections. Kupperman's been subpoenaed by House committees conducting the President's impeachment inquiry. He's asked a federal judge whether or not he must comply -- like there is any serious question about that. The ask was made simply to drag things out and buy time. The Presidential exercise in "rope-a-dope."

The tough spot is this: if he testifies and doesn't tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, he risks criminal charges for perjury; if he testifies and tells the truth, he will alienate the President of the United States and compromise his future career.



Under the Trump Administration, everyone with talent, intelligence, and *integrity* is in a tough spot.

It's a paradox that a self-described "stable genius" has been so consistently at odds with the intelligence community or, more accurately, the intelligent community.



The Doctor Will See You Now: UnityPoint's LGBTQ Clinic

by Bruce Carr



UnityPoint Health

Our guest speaker on Friday morning, November 1, 2019, was Dr. John Carstensen, a principal physician in Unity Point's newly opened LGBTQ Clinic. Dr. Carstensen outlined for us the mission of the clinic and some recommendations we all need in seeking professional medical care.

The clinic opened officially about six months ago at Methodist Medical Center, and right now serves just over 100 patients – 20% of whom are under 18 years of age. The UnityPoint Clinic LGBTQ clinic offers dedicated health care services for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and queer communities in a comfortable and welcoming environment. Every member of the clinic team has had LGBTQ-specific training, provided through One Iowa's Safe Zone Training. The staff offer a variety of services including physical and wellness care, cancer screenings, sexually transmitted disease and sexually transmitted infection testing, mental health assessment, pre-surgical and post-surgical care for people having gender-affirming surgery, and trans-affirming gynecological care.

Currently, Dr. Carstensen said, the professional staff comprises two internal medicine doctors, two pediatricians, a family care specialist, an OB/GYN, and a dedicated pharmacist. (He recalled that, during the initial planning, organizers had worried about whether there would be enough work for an OB/GYN – and now it turns out that she is the busiest of them all.) The clinic is open from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month, but there are plans to expand that availability. Availability is also enhanced through a dedicated Compassion Fund which the clinic maintains to aid patients with limited ability to pay for services.

Dr. Carstensen outlined several topics of particular concern to the LGBTQ clinic as it attempts to care for whole persons rather than just their illnesses: these include suicide; homelessness; lesbianism; HIV and other STDs – especially among people of color; transgender people; elderly people; and abuse of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. Then focusing on the audience in front of him, he urged us all to be completely honest and detailed with our physicians about our own sexual practices, in order that they can have the fullest information on which to base a care and treatment plan. It was indeed a most enlightening morning.

You can listen to an audio recording of John Carstensen's complete remarks by clicking on the Speakers tab at our Web site, <ffbc-iowa.org>.



Photo by Gary Moore



*Ken Hanson introduces the
November speaker
Photo by Gary Moore*

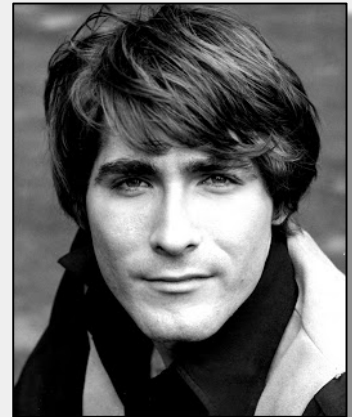
John Carstensen grew up in Iowa, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree (in aerospace engineering – a career field deserving explanation “on another day,” he said) from Iowa State, and his M.D. from the University of Iowa Roy J & Lucille A Carver College of Medicine in 2000. Board-certified in internal medicine, Dr. Carstensen practiced outside the state for some years, but returned to Iowa in 2009 and is now affiliated with Iowa Methodist Medical Center. Carstensen is known, personally and professionally, to a number of FFBC members present at his talk. He lives in Wyoming, Iowa, with Scott, his partner of 14 years, and can be reached at Unity Point Clinic LGBTQ – Methodist Plaza, 1221 Pleasant Street, Suite 200, in Des Moines; phone 515/241-7397.

Like an Eagle: Dennis Parker and Wade Nichols

By Jordan Duesenberg

Sometimes one-hit wonders leave a lasting impression beyond other far more skilled musicians of their time. When I decided to start writing monthly articles about LGBTQ musicians of the past, I wanted to stick with musicians with a decent body of work that made a lasting impression. However, I realized I wanted to write about Dennis Parker/Wade Nichols after finishing watching HBO's *The Deuce*, which wrapped up at the end of October of this year. If you haven't watched the show I highly recommend it; it's about the rise of porn culture in New York City throughout the 70s and early 80s, but it's so much more than that (trust me)! There's a great amount of LGBTQ representation, and if that can't sway you, there's cute boys and man-on-man action as well! Anyway, after the finale I couldn't stop thinking about the show and some of the rich characters who I grew to love. This got me thinking of one of my favorite porn stars turned disco sensations, and I'm not talking about Andrea True (although I love me some "More, More, More"). I'm talking about a porn star who was not only male, but homosexual and insanely (and I can't stress this enough) good looking; his name was Dennis Parker (a.k.a. Wade Nichols in the numerous adult films he premiered in before his disco and mainstream acting career took off).

Dennis Parker, born Dennis Posa, went to art school in Philadelphia in the 60s where he first gained an interest in acting. He would drop out and move to New York City in 1968 to chase his dreams. In order to survive, he did carpentry work and also first dipped his toes in the emerging adult film business by premiering in what was then known as loops (essentially short pornographic film scenes projected in a continuous loop instead of an entire movie). He would also throw himself deep into the New York City gay underbelly of bars, bathhouses, and escorting during this time period. Eventually he started premiering in gay magazines as Wade Nichols in the mid 1970s and then landed his first pornographic film role in a film called *Boy 'Napped'* in 1975 (which also featured a rare gay appearance by porn legend Jamie Gillis who was openly bisexual). Strangely, after this appearance, Wade Nichols filmed mostly straight pornographic films (and he filmed a lot of them, becoming a high profile name).



In 1977, Parker/Nichols met superstar disco producer, Jacques Morali, and the two started dating which would prove to be lucrative to Parker's breakthrough to the mainstream. Morali promised Parker/Nichols that he would make him a star and initially was going to put him in a gay disco group he was creating which was soon to be known all over the world as The Village People, but ultimately they decided that Parker/Nichols would have his own solo career instead. After The Village People took over the world in 1978, Morali signed a deal with the infamous record label, Casablanca Records, for Parker/Nichols to make his first and only album, *Like an Eagle*, featuring the hit song "Like an Eagle," and also putting an official end to his pornographic career as Wade Nichols and an official launch to Dennis Parker.

"Like an Eagle" is slow, sexy, and kind of trippy. It's what is considered a Sleaze classic. Back in the late 70s and early 80s, DJs used to slow down their music selections in gay nightclubs in the wee hours of the morning (usually starting around 4 or 5 a.m. and ending around noon) to help ease the comedown of the drug-fueled Bacchanalia that made up gay discos across the US. This naturally encouraged breaks from hard dancing and promoted more "exploring" your dance partner(s). This is why it is called Sleaze or also Morning Music. In my opinion, "Like an Eagle" is the quintessential example of Sleaze/Morning Music (if you want more examples, message me and I'm happy to send over more songs, playlists, etc.). Also, watch the music video on Youtube for a good laugh to see (a still very sexy) Dennis Parker looking like a Castro Clone in a goofy silver jump suit in front of a silhouette of New York City. It's everything I hold near and dear to my heart about disco, and hot damn, if that song doesn't make you want to dance, you're inhuman! The only other decent song on the album is "New York By Night," which mentions cruising in the bushes and dancing at The Flamingo (a precursor to The Saint) among other gay subjects.

While Dennis Parker wouldn't continue making music (he actually disliked disco), he would fulfill his dream of acting in more mainstream work by joining the cast of the soap opera *The Edge of Night* in 1979 as Police Chief Derek Mallory. Parker would play this role until he fell ill in 1984 and discovered he had contracted HIV/AIDS. You could physically see Parker deteriorate on screen towards the end of his soap career, until he was written out of the show (which was then shortly canceled a couple of months after) as he was too weak to continue filming. He passed away in 1985 at the young age of 38. Although Dennis Parker was technically a musical one-hit wonder, he left his mark in so many other ways, whether that was as Dennis Parker or Wade Nichols. I've been at raves, leather bars, and parties across the world, and when "Like an Eagle" drops, the dance floor still ignites in ecstasy, and the separation between Dennis Parker the singer and Wade Nichols, the porn stud, unite for everyone to enjoy in mutual reverie.

The Autumn Shutdown

By John Schmacker

Today I started the annual chore of shutting my place down for the winter season. This is not a task I enjoy.

The spring cleanup, after removing the detritus of winter's past, is about planting, blooming, opening, and beginnings, all the while feeling the anticipation of warm weather, colors, and life. It doesn't seem like all that long ago I was enjoying all of that promise. But the autumn cleanup is about discarding, folding up, digging up, putting away, and endings, while feeling the approach of cold and a few months of silent, icy, white and gray. Mostly gray.

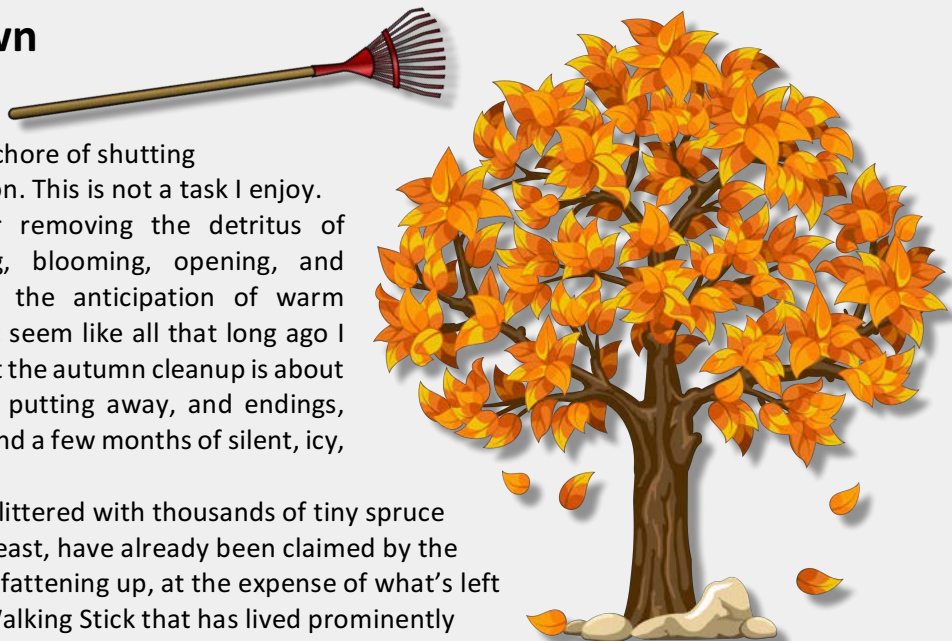
The driveway and deck are littered with thousands of tiny spruce cones. The acorns and walnuts, at least, have already been claimed by the squirrels. The meandering deer are fattening up, at the expense of what's left of my Hostas. The Harry Lauder's Walking Stick that has lived prominently east of the driveway for forty years has been dying for the past three years and has finally started to disintegrate – a sad end for an interesting plant. My garden produced another huge mass of vegetation this summer, and now that greenery gasps in agony and falls to the ground as the temperature descends to freezing. I will soon be dealing with that mess, but there is plenty to do before then.

I have piled the deck furniture under the roof and thrown a tarp over the whole lot. I have emptied all the containers whose occupants bloomed and expanded all summer and are now pathetic cold-nipped skeletons. I hauled loads of brush down to the creek, stored empty containers in the garage, tipped over the birdbaths, and drained the hoses. The expensive experts will be here in a couple weeks to shut down the water feature and pull the pump. Softie that I am, I have provided outdoor shelter for the feral black tomcat that has been getting handouts at my backdoor for the past few months. It is too early to move the snow blower into its winter position, but the season for sitting on the deck with a book, a drink, friends, and a cat is over for now.

Hundreds enjoyed my garden this summer during some amazing parties. I hosted tours for Hosta aficionados and for enthusiasts of mid-century modern architecture. The laughter and conversation still ring. I planted a few trees, and a few trees came down, messily unannounced. There is so much I didn't get done out there this summer, but it has been a fun one. There is so much I plan to do next spring. Maybe some of that will actually get done. Meanwhile, the firewood is stacked and the extra blankets brought out.

The days get colder and shorter. Halloween and All Saints' Day approach this week. Thanksgiving comes in just a few weeks, and then we hurtle into the frenetic holiday season. Sometime between now and then, the White Oaks will shed their leaves and create a foot-deep carpet I will need to sweep.

Everything in this place is on its own schedule.





Doctor Sleep

A Film Review by Mark Turnage

Making a sequel to a legendary film like Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* seems like an impossible task. Balancing a respect for the source material while also reframing it in refreshing and unfamiliar ways is a challenge that has sunk many would-be sequels to great films. Director Mike Flanagan, who also directed the superb Netflix series *The Haunting of Hill House*, provides *Doctor Sleep* with a faithful adaptation of Steven King's own sequel to his novel *The Shining*, bridging the gap between Kubrick's and King's visions that **almost** stands on its own. However, while the much-hyped return to the Overlook Hotel is visually stunning in terms of set design and a select number of scenes placed there, a strong first and second act are done a disservice by a third act that relies too much on fan nostalgia to succeed.

Flanagan's *Doctor Sleep* follows an adult Dan Torrance (Ewan MacGregor)--despite learning how to control and refine his "shining," he grows up to be an alcoholic traumatized by the events that took place at the Overlook Hotel nearly 40 years prior. He moves to small-town Pennsylvania, joins Alcoholics Anonymous, and finds work at a hospice, helping dying elderly residents "cross over" to the afterlife and becomes known to the residents as the titular *Doctor Sleep*. Flash forward 9 years later, and Dan becomes psychically linked to Abra (Kyliegh Curran, who excels in her feature film debut), a young pre-teen girl who is smart, well-adjusted, and extremely gifted with incredible psychic powers. Together, the two become targets of The True Knot, a group of vampire-esque cultists led by Rose the Hat (Rebecca Ferguson) who feed off children gifted with psychic abilities. It's a wild departure from the atmosphere and tone of *The Shining*, and yet it works in terms of standing on its own as both sequel and it's own story. MacGregor and Curran have excellent familial chemistry, and Ferguson's portrayal of Rose is fantastically charismatic, cocky and creepy. The film's plot is much darker than the book in terms of character fatalities, and as a result, the stakes for the main characters are elevated in creepy and effective first and second acts.

Yet what should be this film's crowning achievement--Dan and Abra using the condemned Overlook as a giant trap for Rose and The True Knot--ends up snowballing into nostalgic self-gratification of the original film, recycling iconic moment after iconic moment into rehash that fails the tone set by the majority of the film. The Grady Twins show up and ask if Danny wants to play forever and ever. The elevators open to a wall of blood. A bloody ghost lifts a champagne glass and asks, "great party, isn't it?" You get the picture. Yet not every scene in the third act feels retread. In the narrative high point of the film, Dan confronts the ghost of his father, now one with the Overlook and serving whiskey as "Lloyd the Bartender," in a powerfully chilling and emotional dialogue about sobriety where Henry Thomas' Jack Torrance steals the show. The nighttime drive to the Overlook and Dan's first steps inside are also tonally appropriate and goosebumps-provoking. The ending also deviates from the book considerably, but in a way that narratively sets the film back on track for its conclusion.

Is *Doctor Sleep* a worthy sequel to *The Shining*? It's a strong adaptation of the source material and a devoted love letter to the original film, but much like the Overlook, a fresh coat of paint would do wonders.

See it on DVD if you're a fan of Kubrick's masterpiece.



STEPHEN KING



Celebrating the Legacy of Iowa's LGBTQ Leaders

by Scott Valbert



On Friday, October 11, the LGBTQ+ community celebrated the 31st annual National Coming Out Day. It's a day focused on the power of being authentic and the bravery it took (and still takes) people to come out as LGBTQ.

I was a 17-year-old high school kid in small-town Eastern Iowa when the first-ever National Coming Out Day occurred on the anniversary of the National March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights. It would be five more years — after I'd graduated from Drake University and started my career in Greater Des Moines before I came out to anyone. It happened while walking with a college friend along Polk Boulevard on the city's west side. She listened and offered reassurance of her support and acceptance. Later, she admitted she wasn't sure whether I was about to come out or profess my love for her.

Coming out to my friend gave me the courage to start making friends in the gay community, but I still needed to come out to my mom. I tried to tell her several times during a shopping trip to Kansas City. With each attempt I had a strong urge to be sick. Finally, somewhere along I-35, I tested the waters by outing a friend. Sensing she was accepting of my friend's sexual orientation, I blurted out "Well I'm gay too!" Thankfully, she was immediately supportive. She just wanted me to be happy.

Then, rather unexpectedly, I came out to some coworkers at the small ad agency where I'd landed my first job. This was during the hotly contested and politicized Des Moines School Board election, where voters ultimately chose to remove recently outed board member, Jonathan Wilson. As a young gay man just starting out, I was crushed to witness his defeat. It was even more crushing to hear some colleagues applauding his removal from the school board. I let them know what they were saying was hurtful and harmful to gay people. Then I told them I was gay.

My revelation was met with apologies and questions. Ultimately, it helped forge some long-lasting friendships.

An Evolving City

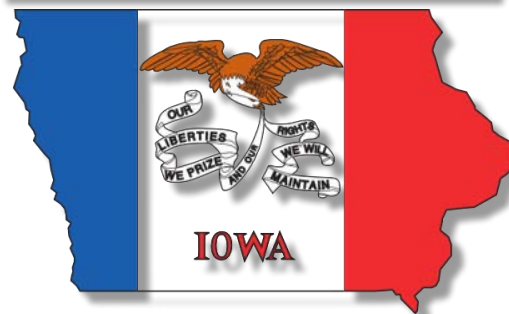
In the 25 years since I first came out here in DSM, I've watched the LGBTQ+ community grow and evolve. I've seen it confront challenges: the AIDS crisis, vehement opposition to marriage equality, and continued attacks on the transgender community. I've also watched it triumph. Most notably in 2009, when gay marriage became legal in Iowa. I've seen brave, passionate LGBTQ employees at several Des Moines companies establish LGBTQ resource groups and build bridges with leaders and allies. I watched as Des Moines City Hall flew a gay flag for the first time in 2016, and I've witnessed Capital City Pride grow to an event more than 20,000 people strong.

Today, I'm proud to work for a company that strongly values diversity and has earned the coveted Greater Des Moines Partnership Inclusion Award multiple times. I'm also honored to serve on the board of One Iowa, the state's leading LGBTQ advocacy organization. One Iowa, which was instrumental in the passage of marriage equality in the state, continues to focus on transgender rights, workplace culture, access to quality medical care and leadership development.

Last week, Jonathan Wilson, the outed (and ousted) school board member who inspired me to come out at work, received an inaugural LGBTQ Legacy Leader Awards. He was honored along with six other Iowans who continue to make a hugely positive impact on Iowa's LGBTQ community.

I'm fortunate that my experience as an out gay man in Des Moines has been overwhelmingly positive. I know that's not the case for everyone, including those who are still struggling to come out today. There's work left to do, which is why I remain active with One Iowa and celebrate trailblazers like Jonathan.

I'm confident Greater Des Moines — including employers, nonprofits, government entities, allies and brave LGBTQ individuals — will keep striving to ensure our community continues to become an even more progressive and inclusive place where all people can be authentic, happy and successful. It's a future, and a legacy, in which we can all take pride.



DSM Magazine's 2019 LGBTQ Legacy Leader Awards Honors Jonathan Wilson



Photo and article from DSM Magazine.

Editor's Note:

Although Jonathan would not want to call attention to himself (or to submit this article), this editor feels that we need to celebrate and to be thankful for the heroes we have in Des Moines, upon whose shoulders we now stand. Bravo Jonathan! And thank you....

Other 2019 Honorees:

George Belitsos
Karen Mackey
Sharon Malheiro
Sonia Reyes-Snyder
Georgia Robison
Terri Hale

It's been almost 25 years, but Jonathan Wilson vividly remembers the exact time he came out to the world: 10:24 p.m. The date was Jan. 25, 1995, and Wilson, a lawyer and Des Moines Public School Board member for 12 years, asked to address the standing-room-only crowd and cameras broadcasting across the state. The topic at the meeting that night: homosexuality in the public schools. The meeting was called in response to a curriculum proposal that included education about sexual orientation.

At 10:24 p.m., it was Wilson's turn to speak. He read his prepared statement, which included coming out as a gay man. In the hours leading up to the moment and in the time afterward, he assumed he'd have to wind down his law practice. What was the response from the community going to be?

Over the next few days, the support was overwhelming. His office phone rang nonstop. But one call still sticks with him. "A woman called me and said, 'Mr. Wilson, you don't know me, but my husband and I have a gay son,'" the now 74-year-old Wilson recalls. "She said, 'Because of what you did last night, we don't think he's going to kill himself.'"

Despite the immediate support, Wilson underwent a grueling reelection campaign against a Republican challenger, who had the support of GOP presidential nominees flooding into the state in preparation for the 1996 election. Wilson faced death threats and was escorted in a bulletproof vest. Police warned him to stay indoors. Wilson eventually lost the election in September 1995, which saw almost three times the normal turnout, despite winning three times before. But his mark was made.

After his loss, Wilson was motivated to start the First Friday Breakfast Club, an association of gay men and Iowa's largest breakfast club. To date, the organization has given more than \$250,000 in scholarships to high school seniors. "[The loss delivered] a wake-up call to gays and allies on the need to organize and build strength in numbers," says Rekha Basu, a Des Moines Register columnist who has long covered Wilson and the LGBTQ community. "Wilson was intrinsic to that effort, both as a symbol of strength and pride and by helping to start the First Friday Breakfast Club for gay men."

When Wilson grew up, same-sex intimacy was a crime in many states, including Iowa. He married a woman with whom he stayed for 25 years and had two children. A lot has changed in Iowa LGBTQ rights since that school board meeting, and Wilson is proud to have been a pioneer of change over the past quarter of a century. "It's an incremental progress," he says. "That's the whole deal. Create learning moments and keep educating people. That's been my approach."



dsm

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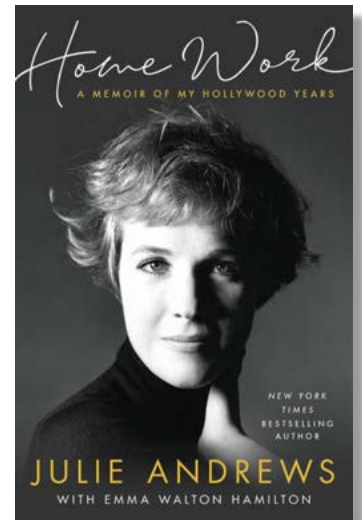
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First Friday
Breakfast Club, Inc.

Home Work: A Memoir of My Hollywood Years

By Julie Andrews

A Book Review by Steve Person



There is no doubt regarding the talent embodied by Julie Andrews. This book is a follow-up of her first memoir, *Home*, about her growing up years in England before, during, and after World War II. Hers has not been an easy life from her early years in the English music hall circuit to her rise to stardom first on the Broadway stage in 1954's *The Boyfriend* and then in 1956's *My Fair Lady*, and 1960's

Camelot. Her transfer to Hollywood came at the invitation of Walt Disney who wanted her to star in the musical version of *Mary Poppins*. The Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences awarded Andrews a Best Actress Oscar for her debut performance in *Poppins*. Many people (myself included) felt she received that Oscar for NOT getting cast in the film version of *My Fair Lady* which was in competition for Best Picture with *Mary Poppins*. *My Fair Lady* won the Oscar for Best Picture that year as did Rex Harrison for Best Actor in the award-winning film. Andrews said she was disappointed that she did not get to portray her Eliza Dolittle on the big screen but understood perfectly why Audrey Hepburn was chosen since she was a major movie star at that time. Hepburn was not nominated for Best Actress, but Andrews felt she should have been. Eventually, the two women became good friends.

While most people remember the films of Julie Andrews that were her most popular ones—*Mary Poppins* and *The Sound of Music*, I have always been partial to some others that were less popular but nonetheless extremely entertaining: *The Americanization of Emily* (her second film), *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and *Victor/Victoria*. Andrews says in the book that one of her favorites was the huge flop, *Darling Lily*. I, too, liked that film and still watch it from time to time on DVD. While Andrews made many big roadshow musicals in the 1960s, she became aware that a different type of cinema was changing audience preferences. Harsh realism took over the Hollywood of the Vietnam War era, and big musical pictures fell out of fashion.

While the book purports to be a memoir of her Hollywood years, much more of it is devoted to the *Home* in the title. Andrews's first marriage to set designer Tony Walton ended in an amicable divorce. That marriage gave the couple their daughter Emma Walton Hamilton who collaborated on the writing of this book. She eventually became friends with and later married Blake Edwards, a writer, producer, and director. The two collaborated on many films. During her marriage to Edwards, Andrews tried desperately to keep their combined families together, but the constant draw of work kept the family ties strained. In addition to her married life, her divorced parents in England kept her shuttling back and forth between California and England. It is no wonder that she sought help with an analyst.

Because she and Edwards did not children together, the pair adopted two Vietnamese orphans in the 1970s. Perhaps the most poignant part of the book is when Andrews went on a fact-finding trip to Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam in connection with the charity, Operation California. What she witnessed there haunts her still to this day. It is a fascinating book that gives the reader pause that a glamorous life on screen doesn't always transfer to the personal side.