



First Friday

News & Views

Iowa's LGBTQ+ Newsletter of the First Friday Breakfast Club

Scholarships

Edition



July 2024 | Volume 29 | Issue 7

No July Meeting
**FFBC Donor
Recognition &
Member Party
July 13**

Location
Home/Gardens of
John Schmacker
3724 Hunter Avenue
Des Moines 

Free Event
6:00 – 9:00
Beer, wine, food!
* More details on
page two.

Website
ffbc Iowa.org



Vision & Mission

by Byron Huff, Board President

We move forward with optimism as we celebrated Pride during June with so many wonderful events across Iowa, highlighted in Des Moines with PrideFest, one of the largest celebrations in the Midwest. So many people showed up to celebrate diversity which gives us all hope for a future where our community is not the focus of political attacks.

Looking back at the January 2024 newsletter, I covered the history and evolution of FFBC bylaws as we moved to a more inclusive statement for membership, which now includes **“LGBTQ+ community and their allies”** (approved at the December 2023 Board meeting). This month I would like to discuss the Board’s work to create our **“Vision”** and **“Mission”** statements and to update our **“About”** statement that summarizes who FFBC is.



Prior to our update approved in May, we had the following **“About”** statement:

First Friday Breakfast Club is an educational group for the LGBTQ+ community and their allies who gather monthly in Des Moines for breakfast, fellowship, and a speaker. We provide a safe and supportive environment for all members and guests.

The Board significantly changed and updated our **“About”** statement to be:

Founded in 1996, First Friday Breakfast Club continues to evolve and to serve as a safe haven for all LGBTQ+ members, allies, and guests. What began as a few friends deciding to meet regularly for breakfast, soon grew into one of Iowa’s largest breakfast clubs, focused on creating an inclusive community through education, outreach, and awarding scholarships to graduating Iowa high school seniors.

[continued on page 2]

["Vision & Mission" continued from page 1]

A **mission statement** defines the organization's business, its objectives, and how it will reach the objectives. With that in mind, the FFBC Board approved the following:

First Friday Breakfast Club is an educational forum that embraces the LGBTQ+ community and its allies as members, nourishes meaningful dialogue through monthly speakers, and cultivates young advocates for equity and inclusion by awarding leadership scholarships to graduating Iowa high school seniors.

A **vision statement** details where the organization aspires to go (i.e. what we would like the future to look like building upon our mission). With that in mind, the Board approved the following:

First Friday Breakfast Club envisions an inclusive environment to become well-informed LGBTQ+ members and allies for a world without prejudice or discrimination and to empower young leaders in outstanding efforts to counter homophobia by promoting acceptance in Iowa schools and communities.

The Board of the First Friday Breakfast Club believes these formalized statements will help guide our organization and will help everyone better understand who we are, what we do, and our vision for the future as we continue to evolve and grow.

FFBC Annual Summer PARTY & Donor Appreciation Event

This is a free event!



Serving beer, wine, non-alcoholic drinks, appetizers, and food.



The annual member party and donor appreciation event is Saturday, July 13, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the home of John Schmacker (3724 Hunter Ave. Des Moines; north of University Avenue on 39th Street, east on Hunter to the last house on the right).

Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to **Brad Holland** for introducing our amazing June Scholarship Breakfast speaker, **Sarah Brown Wessling**. Thanks to **David Cotton** for managing our website, to **Nicholas Williams** for managing our Microsoft IT infrastructure, and to **David Wilfahrt** for managing FFBC's finances. Thanks to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter editor. *Thank you to all our newsletter contributors!*

The **deadline** for the 2024 **August newsletter** will be **July 22**. If you have something on your mind to share, type it up and email it to Wade (wadecpetersen@gmail.com) by the deadline.



Fundraising efforts are ongoing to fund our scholarship program. As of 2024, we will have awarded over **\$495,000** for scholarships to Iowa high school seniors who have done remarkable, courageous things to reduce homophobia and teach about LGBTQ issues in their schools and communities. Please consider a tax-deductible **contribution** online or by sending a check.



A **special thank-you** to those FFBC members and friends who have chosen to designate FFBC through the **Donor Direct** program of **United Way**. 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.





Lack of Symmetry is Part of the SCOTUS Problem

by Jonathan Wilson

The United States Supreme Court has been much in the news lately. Some of that is as it should be; its current term is drawing to a close, and SCOTUS will be handing down consequential decisions. There will inevitably be those pleased and displeased with those decisions. As SCOTUS is presently constituted, those in the two groups are aligned against each other along partisan lines in a nation deeply divided. I have been admitted to practice before the SCOTUS for over fifty years; I tend to watch its activities with somewhat greater scrutiny than many, particularly non-lawyers. It is largely apparent that the current justices are readily identifiable as leaning conservative or leaning liberal. It should not be that way, but it is. It has not happened overnight.

Here are some facts: (1) the Constitution makes appointments to the federal judiciary (including the SCOTUS appointees) life-time appointments (during good behavior); (2) the sole basis for removing any federal judge from office due to misbehavior, including SCOTUS members, requires impeachment by the House of Representatives, and conviction by the Senate with at least 60 votes; (3) getting confirmed for an appointment to any federal judgeship, including SCOTUS nominees, *used to* require a similar vote in the U.S. Senate; that was changed several years ago so that confirmation required only a simple majority vote. At first, that change to the confirmation threshold applied only to appointees to federal judgeships **other than** SCOTUS. Appointments to the SCOTUS were later also changed to requiring a simple majority.

Therein lies part of the problem; there are almost countless members of the federal judiciary, including at the trial court level and the circuit court level. At both, cases are mostly assigned randomly to a judge or a panel of three judges, without consideration of politics. That made it difficult for lawyers like me to “shop” for what may be perceived to be political bias in favor of the client. With the SCOTUS, there are only nine justices, and every case that is appealed to the SCOTUS, and accepted for appeal, is to the full court. If it is perceived that your client would benefit from a biased SCOTUS, it will influence the decision to seek appeal to the SCOTUS. If you are disappointed (politically) by a lower court decision, and you perceive that the SCOTUS is otherwise biased politically, you are much more likely to file that appeal. With countless decisions on appeals being made, over time, the perception that the SCOTUS is biased “conservatively,” will result in the established law to tend toward political conservatism. Accordingly, that leads to more appeals to the SCOTUS targeted toward a “conservative” outcome.



It is tempting to conclude that such bias is misbehavior (which it is), and that’s not a problem because the Constitution provides for removal from office for misbehavior.

Some additional facts: (1) in the entire history of the United States, something like **eight** federal judges have been removed from office by impeachment; (2) in the entire history of the United States, there has **never** been a member of the SCOTUS removed from office by impeachment/conviction – that’s what you call “job security.” That fact also explains the partisan evolution of the SCOTUS.

Getting onto the Court requires a relatively low (political) threshold of a simple Senate majority vote, and removal requires a super majority of the Senate. That lack of symmetry is part of the problem – it’s easier (politically) to get onto the SCOTUS, and virtually impossible as a practical (and historical) matter to get removed.

Against this background, enter associate justices Alito and Thomas. Thomas’ conduct has been particularly egregious. He has accepted millions of dollars in gifts from his multi-billionaire “friend” Crow. He has said that it was simply a matter between “friends.” Purchasing lunch reciprocally between friends is a mark of friendship. Receiving multi-millions of dollars that could not possibly be reciprocated financially, isn’t a mark of friendship – it’s the mark of **ownership**. My assessment is that if Thomas weren’t an Associate Justice, that purported “friendship” would not have continued based on Thomas’ magnetic personality. He has reciprocated by what else he has -- offering up the ownership of his position on the SCOTUS.

I worked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. Such conduct by the judge I worked for would have been a clear violation of the applicable code of judicial conduct. He could then have easily become the ninth federal judge in U.S. history to be removed by impeachment/conviction. As a practical matter, the egregious behavior of Associate Justice Thomas cannot be similarly rectified. With a nearly evenly divided U.S. Senate, there is no realistic way for an impeachment to go on to conviction and removal.

The Bible tells the story of the Good Shepherd, in which a good shepherd who has 100 sheep, leaves 99 of them (hopefully in the care of some assistant shepherds), and goes in search of and found the lost sheep. Most people hear that and

[continued on page 4]



["Lack of Symmetry" continued from page 3]

get a lesson about a "good shepherd." I also get a message about getting lost. The lost sheep didn't just run off and get lost; it nibbled its way. Eventually, it lifted its head from nibbling and found out that it was lost. It was in a place that it definitely didn't want to be.

So it is also when it comes to the loss of symmetry between what is required to get onto the SCOTUS and what is required to remove a member of the SCOTUS. It's that nibbled loss of symmetry that has produced our partisan SCOTUS.

It took awhile to get where we clearly are. To fix it will not be easy, or quick. A constitutional amendment to impose term limits, for example or, without a Constitutional amendment, to increase the number of justices, which is within the power of the Congress to do, but unlikely in the near term, would be challenging. Changing the Senate majority for confirmation to a super majority, as used to be the case, would be a step in the right direction, but it would not likely get done given the narrow partisan divide in the Senate. A super majority required to obtain Senate confirmation would mean that nominees would have to be perceived **by both parties** to be middle-of-the-road politically – and therefore an even-handed jurist. We should be so fortunate.

Associate Justice Thomas' admitted misbehavior will not result in his rightful removal from the SCOTUS -- leaving me with the embarrassment of my admission to practice before an ethically compromised SCOTUS.

For starters, I would support Congress, within its existing powers, to require SCOTUS members to enter the SCOTUS building only through the front door over which is engraved in stone four words, "Equal Justice Under Law." A daily reminder for the justices couldn't hurt.



PRIDE
SPORTS LEAGUE
OF CENTRAL IOWA

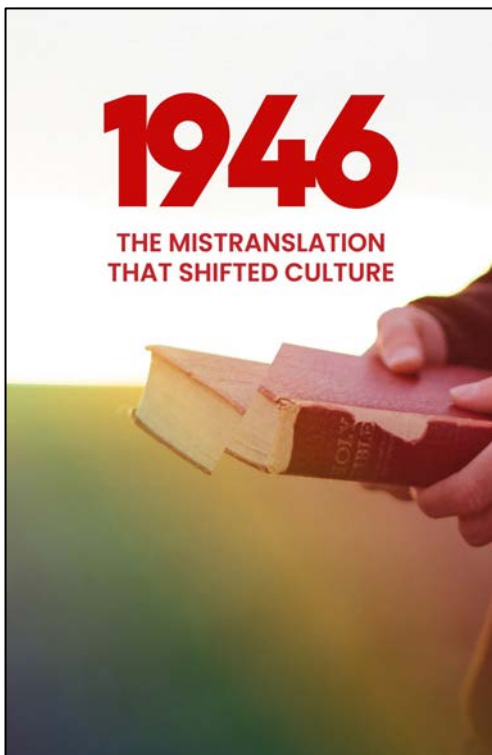
SAND VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

MONDAY NIGHTS 6 -10PM

JULY 29- SEP. 16

Campbell Recreation Area
Teams and Free Agents Welcome
Recreation and Competitive Leagues

35\$ per person. Sign up @ pridesportsleague.org



1946: The Mistranslation That Shifted Culture

Varsity Cinema (1207 25th Street | DSM)

Sunday, July 21; 1:30 PM (with 30-minute panel discussion)

Sunday, July 28; 1:30 PM (with 30-minute panel discussion)

Run Time: 92 min. Release Year: 2022



Seeking to uncover the origins of the rabid homophobia of the conservative church, a gay seminary scholar and a straight activist make a shocking discovery: In 1946 an erroneous translation of the term **homosexual** in the Bible that has been weaponized against the LGBTQIA+ community ever since.

Varsity Cinema, the Affirming Congregations of Greater Des Moines, the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa, and Capital City Pride bring you this documentary that reveals how the first use of the word homosexual in the Bible in 1946 was the "mistranslation that shifted a culture." Join us to learn how this error occurred and how it spread. Then, stick around for a 30-minute panel discussion with local religious leaders who are actively working to build acceptance of LGBTQ+ people with a message of full welcome and inclusion. **The panel will be moderated by Wes Mullins, Executive Director of Capital City Pride.** (The Affirming Congregations of Greater Des Moines: Downtown Disciples, Capitol Hill Lutheran, Covenant Christian Church, the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa, Grace United Methodist, Heartland Presbyterian, New Beginnings Christian Church, Plymouth Congregational, St. Andrew's Episcopal, St. James Lutheran, St John's Lutheran, St. John's United Methodist, St. Paul's Episcopal, St. Timothy's Episcopal, Urbandale United Church of Christ, and Walnut Hills United Methodist.)

Common Love

Queer & Clothed



Common Love is a queer resource for the Des Moines community that is partnering with The Supply Hive for our initiative **Queer & Clothed**, a monthly pop-up for people of all ages, races, sizes, and abilities to explore/find clothing that is gender-affirming and brings joy. We know there is a need in Des Moines (and Iowa) for trans, non-binary, and queer people to access **gender-affirming clothing** in a judgment-free space that prioritizes accessibility.

Get involved with the project!

- Follow them on Instagram or Facebook @commonlovedsm
- Email them at hello@commonlovedsm.com
- Shop their next pop-up on **July 6, 2024**, from 1-3 p.m. at **Park Fair Mall (100 East Euclid Avenue), Suite #107**
- **Donate:** www.pledge.to/queer-clothed
- They accept donations of binders, tucking garments, and underwear. They accept some clothing based on size (currently sizes 1x – 6x).
- They really need volunteers to help set up and tear down the pop-up each month and to help sort/organize clothing!



LGBTQ+ Allies Award
Reading in Public

Volunteer Award
Lauren Benjamin & Alex Campbell

Generation Q Award
Unitarian Church | Trans Lives Fest

Leadership Award
Bethany Snyder | Central Iowa Rainbow Families



www.desmoinespridecenter.org

FFBC Membership

FFBC membership is open to all members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies.



We welcome **everyone**, regardless of sexual orientation or gender.

Meetings are held the first Friday of every month from 7:00 AM - 8:15 AM at Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines. The following membership rates help us cover our food and facility costs.

In-Person Meeting Rates

Annual Rate: \$180
(12 consecutive meetings)

Quarterly Rate: \$48
(3 consecutive meetings)

Month-by-Month: \$18

First Time or One-Time Attendee: \$15

Full-time Student: \$8

No charge to attend via Zoom

Payment Options

Cash or check at the meeting
Credit card prior to the meeting at www.ffbc Iowa.org; visit the "Membership" tab

Regular Meeting Schedule

6:30 AM - Doors open

6:45 AM - Breakfast service begins

7:00 AM - Meeting begins

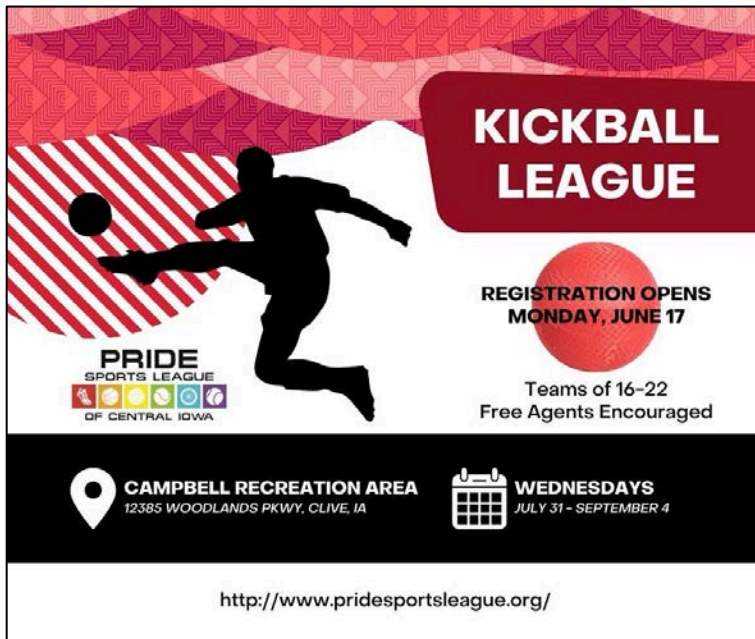


UP DOWN COINS FOR A CAUSE

JULY 17 @ 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM



Join **Capital City Pride** at the Up Down Arcade Bar in the heart of the East Village on July 17 from 5pm to 10pm when all token sales will be donated to Capital City Pride to help support all our ongoing programs in each of the **Five Pillars of Pride!** Come out and "arcade for a good cause!"



KICKBALL LEAGUE

PRIDE SPORTS LEAGUE OF CENTRAL IOWA

REGISTRATION OPENS MONDAY, JUNE 17

Teams of 16-22
Free Agents Encouraged

CAMPBELL RECREATION AREA
12385 WOODLANDS PKWY, CLIVE, IA

WEDNESDAYS
JULY 31 - SEPTEMBER 4

<http://www.pridesportsleague.org/>

Future Speakers



August 2:

Daniel Zinnel

C.E.O. Proteus

September 6:

Connie Boesen

Mayor of Des Moines

October 4:

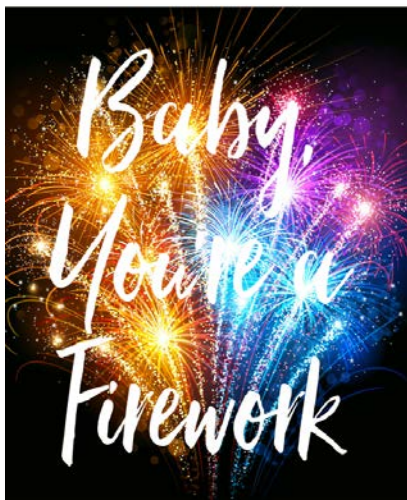
Coming Out Panel

Various Speakers

November 1:

John & Terri Hale

The Hale Group | Advocates Working
for Better Lives for Iowans



"I see each and every one of you. The things that make us different, those are our superpowers — every day when you walk out the door and put on your imaginary cape and go out there and conquer the world because the world would not be as beautiful as it is if we weren't in it."

- Lena Waithe



National Teacher of the Year Addresses FFBC and Its 2024 Scholars

by Gary Moore

The year's largest crowd of FFBC members, along with its sixteen 2024 scholars, families, and allies, had the pleasure of hearing **Sarah Brown Wessling**, the 2010 National Teacher of the Year, Director of the National Teacher of the Year Program, and current high school English teacher in Johnston, Iowa.

Sarah started out by thanking members of the First Friday Breakfast Club for the support that they are showing, not only to the community, but for the support that they are showing to our young people. No one can learn until they know that they are cared about. They will not feel cared about unless they feel seen and safe. Creating community is about making sure that we see people.

"If you are a person who has ever felt like you didn't belong, I guess that some healing has had to happen or some healing needs to happen. And I think the way we heal is through connection. We heal through belonging. We search for those that we belong with. Some of that ritual includes what you wear, but there is nothing more important than belonging to yourself. Belonging doesn't require you to change who you are. It requires you to be who you are.

"When we find ways to tell stories about us, we create communities."

"When we find ways to tell stories about us, we create communities so my hope, especially for the young people in this room, is that you will tell stories. We need your stories. There are people who are younger than you, who need your stories. There are people who are older than you, who need your stories. Your courage in telling them and owning them will light the way. You are lighting the way."

Later Tim Schreck and Ken Hanson for First Friday Breakfast Club would note that, as they presented the scholarship awards, we are seeing and acknowledging the stories of these 16 young people. "We celebrate you today for being exactly the stellar individuals you are meant to be."



**Board Member,
Brad Holland,
Introduces the Speaker**



Sarah Brown Wessling, 2010 National Teacher of the Year, Speaks at the June 2024 Scholarship Breakfast

"It doesn't mean that you have to be perfect, but it does mean you have to be honest. And when we are honest with ourselves, we can belong to ourselves. When we can belong to ourselves, we can belong to other people.

"I firmly believe that connection and belonging and being seen are all held in our stories. I teach storytelling to all the state Teachers of the Year across the country when I teach them how to advocate. I teach storytelling to my students when I ask them to learn to listen to the stories of each other. I remind them that when we tell a story about ourselves, we are extending trust.



FFBC President, Byron Huff



First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarships

2023-2024 Scholarship Committee

Ken Hanson
(Chair)
Kevin Chorniak
David Cotton
Jim Flansburg
Aria Huizenga
Paul Richardson
Chris Russell
Tim Schreck

At the FFBC meeting on June 7, 2024, people gathered to celebrate this year's group of **16** Iowa high school seniors who have distinguished themselves with efforts to reduce homophobia and educate about LGBTQ+ issues in their schools and communities.



Each scholar will receive a scholarship of **\$3,000**, in two installments, to be used for *any* expenses incurred during their post-high school educational endeavors. It matters not whether that endeavor is in college somewhere or a technical school. The scholarships are awarded to deserving students, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, or other personal characteristic. Thus far, more than **\$495,000** has been awarded, thanks to the generosity of FFBC members and LGBTQ+ allies. **One hundred percent of the money raised goes to the scholarships**; contributions are not used to raise the money, a somewhat unique thing that can be said about the FFBC scholarship program and fundraising. The more money raised, the more money given.

This year we honored: **Delaney Clark, Trinity Gillis, AJ Keeler, Elliot Martin, Faith Miller, Shamiyah Morgan, Luke Mueggenberg, Claire Opdahl, Brody Petig, Tyler Pittman, Owen Schriever, Rebekah Schurz, Remi Shaffer, Meredith Sherer, Lauren Wessling, and Jasper Wirth.** As you can see from their brief backgrounds on the following pages, their collective efforts have reached all across the state of Iowa.

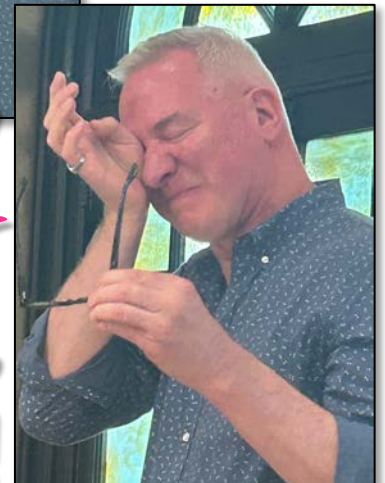


Scholarship Chair, **Ken Hanson**, and Scholarship Committee Member, **Tim Schreck**, Introduce our **16** Scholarship Winners.



Ken Hanson thanks **Tim Schreck** for his **10 years** on the Scholarship Committee as Tim prepares to move to Santa Fe.

We'll
Miss
You,
Tim!



2024 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Delaney
Clark**

DSM Roosevelt High School



Delaney is a graduate of Roosevelt High School in Des Moines. Delaney is the recipient of the scholarship underwritten by the Polk County Betterment Grant. At an early age, they experienced homophobia within their family, witnessing an uncle being rejected for being gay. As she grew and presented herself as openly queer, she found a mix of positive and less supportive responses in her family. But on the rugby team, it's all good. Delaney played for three years and was captain of the girl's rugby team their senior year. As captain, they made it their mission to create a safe space for other queer team members, as well as every other player on the pitch. Through team dinners, open conversations and shared experiences, Delaney and their teammates created a welcoming community. People may not understand rugby, but Delaney, we understand you made it a safe place for all to be part of!

**Trinity
Gillis**

Spencer High School



Trinity is a graduate of Spencer High School. She identifies as gay and "agender." Trinity is the recipient of the scholarship underwritten by Phil Brawner and Ted Johnson. What we saw in Trinity is a "will do" attitude. Their freshman year, Trinity completed a writing assignment on her chosen topic about the impacts of homophobia on queer kids, and how a GSA can make a difference. Then she thought, "we need a GSA." So she approached a trusted teacher, who then involved school administration, and in their sophomore year helped to form the first GSA at Spencer High. Trinity worked with other students to create a thriving organization, focusing this past year on establishing a chain of leadership for the GSA to continue. Soon Trinity became a resource for others in the community. The library reached out about creating LGBTQIA safe spaces, and the junior high is working on their own GSA. One reference put it best – Spencer is a better place for having a GSA.

**AJ
Keeler**

Bondurant-Farrar High School



AJ is a graduate of Bondurant-Farrar High School and identifies as a nonbinary aromantic lesbian. Sadly, bathrooms are still a topic of debate in our schools, so AJ fought for access to the single stall bathrooms in her school. That's the GSA-involved advocacy part of AJ's story. They also found their strongest voice as an aromantic individual, presenting the topic in a State Speech competition, and receiving a "1" rating. This led to creation of a "zine" focused on the topic, and sharing information that helped friends and others to feel seen, understood, and authentic. A teacher described AJ as being unafraid to participate in discussions about LGBTQ+ rights. That sounds like the type of fighter we need in our corner, and it might help that they love weightlifting! In the future, AJ hopes to make a career as an actor.

2024 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Elliot
Martin**

Cedar Falls High School



Elliot identifies as a trans male, and is a graduate of Cedar Falls High School. By the age of 13, Elliot understood that he is transgender. His circle of family and friends were very supportive, but beyond that circle there were challenges. Elliot faced them directly with confidence and courage. Over the next few years Elliot held a lead role in the school's GSA, fought for a gender-neutral bathroom at the school, and participated as a member of the school district's Equity Committee. Elliot became a public face for the local transgender community, sharing the day-to-day realities of life as a transgender person, as well as the burdens and impacts of legislative decisions. Speaking to community groups, at local Pride events, and with the Governor's Conference on LGBTQ+ Youth attendees, Elliot is driven by his sense of equity and advocacy for the entire queer community.

**Faith
Miller**

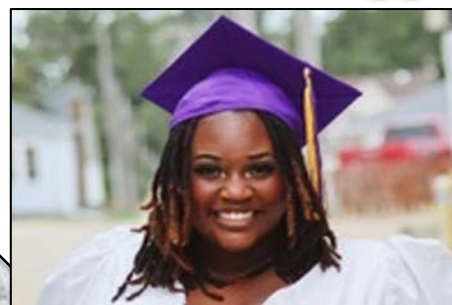
Lisbon High School



Faith recently graduated from Lisbon High School. Being a lesbian in a small eastern Iowa town can feel isolating, but Faith was driven by her sense of equity to join the JOY Club, Lisbon's diversity student group. A mighty gang of 8-9 students advocated for safety and better conditions in the women's restroom, and for wider acceptance of all students at Lisbon. Membership in the JOY Club led Faith to understand her individual power and to be their true self for all to see. She let her light shine! One of Faith's references told us that he chose to write the letter for Faith before she even asked because he witnessed the difference Faith made in the halls of Lisbon High School, calling them a "safe space" for any student who is in need of support, acceptance, and belonging. We see it too Faith, and we see great success for years to come.

**Shamiyah
Morgan**

Central DeWitt High School



Shamiyah (Miyah) Morgan identifies as a lesbian and graduated from Central DeWitt High School. As a person of color, Miyah is extra attentive to her surroundings, of the biases that can present themselves, and of her response to them. She has also faced personal challenges with her birth family. Through it all, Miyah's leadership simply could not be held back. She spent four years on the school Student Council, the last two as Vice President and then President. She is an executive committee member of the Dewitt-Camanche Youth Drug Prevention Coalition and represented the organization at a drug use prevention summit in Washington D.C. And while this was all going on, she earned her high school diploma and an Associates Degree in May! Taking on all the leadership roles Miyah has, while coming to terms with her sexuality over the years, sounds daunting. But for Miyah, that's just leadership.

2024 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Luke
Mueggenberg**

Linn-Mar High School



Luke is a graduate of Linn-Mar High School and identifies as asexual. For two years, Luke led the Spectrum GSA group at Linn Mar, and brought great impact to the halls of the school. When other students tore down posters celebrating Transgender Visibility Week, Luke and the Spectrum members created more posters. Then they organized a school protest, joined by over 200 staff and students, and showed the haters that they would not have their way. Luke's advocacy and impact came through in many ways through his essays and his references. In addition, our scholarship committee appreciated having our eyes opened to some of the realities of Asexuality. Luke reminds us to exercise caution when putting any member of the LGBTQIA community into an assigned box. Thanks Luke, for being an advocate and a teacher.

**Claire
Opdahl**

Sioux Center High School



Claire is a graduate of Sioux Center High School and identifies as bisexual. Claire is the recipient of the scholarship underwritten by Trudy Holman Hurd. At a very young age, Claire saw the inequity of social and religious messaging reducing members of the queer community to second-class citizens, or worse. In high school, Claire became an advocate for all members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Her advocacy, which she calls her moral dogma, came through various writing projects, including a hero essay on pioneering queer leader Marsha P. Johnson and a slam poem criticizing Florida's "don't say gay" legislation. Claire is courageously public in her advocacy for all marginalized communities. Her references celebrated Claire's drive to "go against the grain of a rural northwest Iowa community." In a land where the negative messages can weigh down on so many, Claire has been a steadfast beacon of light, might, and right.

**Brody
Petig**

Grinnell High School



Brody identifies as queer and joins us today as a graduate of Grinnell High School. Brody is the recipient of our scholarship underwritten by David Cotton. Growing up in a home focused on education, advocacy, and equity, Brody was exposed to, and absorbed, some valuable early life lessons. And ran with them! Brody acted on every opportunity for advocacy and leadership, participating in the Student Council for three years, Student Body president his senior year, and captain of the soccer team his junior year. Through his GSA involvement, Brody initiated a school protest day against the Iowa legislature, inspiring many students and staff to wear black clothes and pink triangle pins as a sign of solidarity. Two referral comments say it best – Brody is an "Activist's Activist," and justice is one of Brody's deepest motivators.

2024 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Tyler
Pittman**

Waukee Northwest High School



Tyler graduated from Waukee Northwest High School and identifies as Trans nonbinary. Tyler took on leadership of the school GSA as a sophomore. Their first years were spent building membership and creating a safe space for all students. In 2023, after applying for and receiving substantial grant funds from the It Gets Better Project, Tyler led creation of the Pride Outside festival held in October. This event was a first for the city of Waukee, bringing together LGBTQIA supporting organizations and providing a safe space for students and community members to meet, share, and learn about queer-focused opportunities. This was the crowning achievement in Tyler's work to create a more inclusive environment for the Waukee Northwest student body. Tyler also led the school newspaper which was recently awarded a top prize from the Iowa High School Press Association.

**Owen
Schriever**

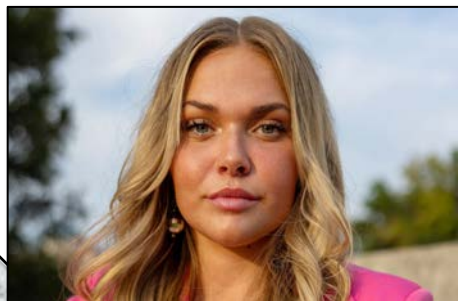
Ogden High School



Owen is a gay man who graduated from Ogden High School in a class of 61 students. Owen is the recipient of the scholarship underwritten by John Charles and David Nelson. Owen came out as gay on a youth mission trip, to the loving surprise and support of his pastor parents. He is a successful football player and musical performer. Owen also was a leading member of Ogden High's Alliance Club, focused on equity for all, and making it safe for other kids to join. He is a frequent participant in protests, hearings, or other political activities related to the legislative actions harmful to the queer community. Mostly, he is a respected member of his high school community and beyond, having demonstrated that you can be all the things you are, or choose to be, including a proudly open, sporty, musical, artistic, literate, and empathic member of the LGBTQIA community. We're glad you're on our team!

**Rebekah
Schurz**

Carlisle High School



Rebekah joins us as a recent graduate from Carlisle High School, and identifies as bisexual. Rebekah is awarded the scholarship underwritten by Jane Ann Cotton. Rebekah will challenge and confront you, not in a threatening way, more in a "let's make sure you have all the facts before you spew hate" kind of way. She has been the advocate's voice in the halls of Carlisle High school, rooting out inequity and bias. Beyond that, she has been a featured speaker at the 2023 protest rally at the capital, has testified in legislative hearings, and convinced her school board and community to remove book banning members. One reference celebrated Rebekah's "belief in supporting the queer and other marginalized communities, her integrity, and her natural ability to lead." I don't think you'll find any arguments here Rebekah, we are on your side.

2024 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Remi
Shaffer**

Algona High School



Remi is a recent graduate from Algona High School and identifies as queer and non-binary. Remi began their high school days in a small western Oklahoma town, with only one other friend who identified as queer. Moving to a new state and a new school their sophomore year felt like a lot as a nonbinary 16-year old, but what they found was a welcoming environment. From day one, Remi presented their true self and helped Algona staff and students come to understand all of the complexities of being a nonbinary individual. They got involved in all of the activities, and they grew to be a confident presence in the classrooms and hallways of Algona High School. One of their references stated that, “Remi is one of the toughest and nicest students” and that it has been a “privilege to watch Remi grow into the person they are today.”

**Meredith
Sherer**

Woodbine High School



Meredith is an openly queer, non-binary graduate of Woodbine High School, with a graduating class size of 37 students. Meredith was blessed by queer members on both sides of their family, so while coming out seemed somewhat natural, identifying as non-binary took a little more time. And outside their family, Meredith did not find much queer community in their town or school – they found community through opportunities in nearby Omaha/Council Bluffs. What they did realize though was a necessity to be an openly queer model for younger kids and classmates. They express themselves through their award-winning art, music, and theatrical involvement. Per Meredith, “Being out is more than just living as your true self.” They believe there is a responsibility to be a resource, to be seen and to be a safe space for anyone who needs it. Sometimes being yourself is the most impactful accomplishment!

**Lauren
Wessling**

Johnston High School



Lauren graduated from Johnston High School and identifies as queer. Lauren is today’s recipient of the scholarship sponsored by Brad Holland and Joe Raetz, in memory of Bonnie Holland. Coming to understand her sexuality helped Lauren to become an extreme advocate for the LGBTQIA community. In school, Lauren led the CORE (Community of Racial Equity) student group, and ensured that there was awareness of the intersectionality between BIPOC and queer issues. When the school district actively shut down DEI initiatives, the CORE and GSA groups surveyed students to identify inequities facing queer and BIPOC students. These groups also created a student walkout day to protest Iowa legislative actions. And Lauren was able to provide firsthand updates on these legislative measures, working as a Senate page this past session. We see you there, in the front lines of the fight.

2024 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Jasper
Wirth**

Algona High School



Jasper identifies as a trans man and is a graduate of Algona High School. A supportive group of friends and family, willing to learn all they could about Jasper, has helped him to be the confident, accomplished person that he is today. But with no GSA group at Algona High School or LGBTQIA community mentors, they decided that their path was a solo path, and to, quote “spread the word just by being myself.” Jasper, with family assistance, found the clothes that felt right, participated in all the things he loved to do in school, and found a great job working at a daycare center. He’s Jasper, in a conservative community, and he is well-known, appreciated for the work he does, and seen as a member of that community. The daycare kids and their parents have grown to love him. That is community impact, just by being yourself.



2024 FFBC Scholarship Winners



Not pictured: Remi Shaffer (who joined by Zoom) and Jasper Wirth (who had to leave early due to an academic commitment)





Delaney Clark



Trinity Gillis



AJ Keeler



Elliot Martin



Faith Miller



Shamiyah Morgan



Luke Mueggenberg



Claire Opdahl



Brody Petig



Tyler Pittman



Owen Schriever



Rebekah Schurz



Remi Shaffer



Meredith Sherer



Lauren Wessling



Jasper Wirth



Scholarship Awards Photo Gallery

Photos by
Wade Petersen



114
in
Attendance!

The Last American Gay Bar to Feature Des Moines' Blazing Saddle



The Last American Gay Bar, a six-episode docuseries highlighting the people behind *The Blazing Saddle*, will premiere on OUTtv July 3, 2024.

The series follows 10 men integral to the iconic gay bar's survival through a drastically changing political landscape over the last 40 years. Follow as the bar's founder, Bob "Mongo" Eikleberry, and other LGBTQ+ community members come of age in a predominantly conservative state, serve in Vietnam, and survive the AIDS epidemic while living in the closet.

The cast includes the following First Friday Breakfast Club members:

- **John Schmacker**, prominent local gay rights advocate
- **Rick Miller**, local artist
- **Gary Moore**, longtime Blazing Saddle bartender

The independent production was led by Kristian Day Media and a crew of Iowa filmmakers. Day describes *The Last American Gay Bar* as "if the Harvey Milk story took place in the world of William Friedkin's cruising."

Weekly episodes will be released beginning July 3 on OUTtv.com, the OUTtv Apple TV Channel, OUTtv on The Roku Channel, and OUTtv on Comcast and Cox.



Board Member Deb Madison-Levi Represents FFBC in the Pride Parade with her Vintage Ice-Cream Bicycle (photo by Gary Moore)

Oprah's Pride Month Tribute to Gay Brother Who Died of AIDS



Oprah Winfrey posted a tribute during Pride month 2024 to her gay brother, Jeffrey Lee, on Instagram. Lee died of AIDS in 1989.



"It was 35 years ago that my younger brother, Jeffrey Lee, died from AIDS. He was 29 years old. The year was 1989, and the world was an extremely cruel place, not just for people suffering from AIDS, but also for LGBTQ people in general. I often think if he'd lived, he'd be so amazed at how much the world has changed, that there actually is gay marriage and a Pride Month. How different his life might have been had he lived in these times. In a world that saw and appreciated him for who he was rather than attempting to shame him for his sexuality.

"I believe that every single person has the right to love who they want to love and be the person they most want to be. And my hope for you is that you are living a life that feels authentic to you and that you have the support around you to do so, no matter your sexuality. And whether or not you're celebrating Pride this month, or always, I wish for you the continued freedom to rise to the truest, highest expression of yourself as a human being."



Pride Fest

FFBC Booth



Board Members **Ken Hanson** and **Wade Petersen** represented FFBC at Ankeny Pride on June 22.



Consequential Supreme Court Ruling on Abortion



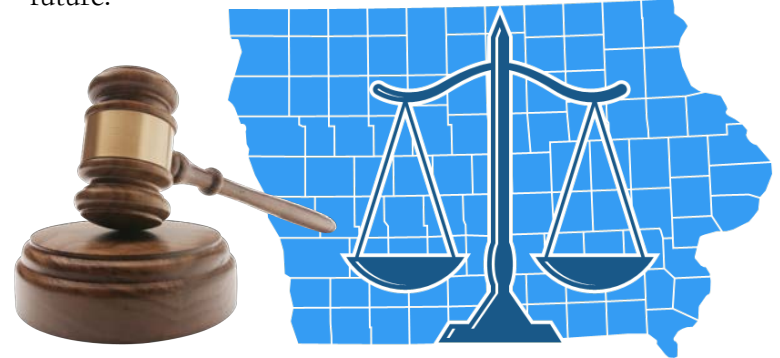
by Supervisor Matt McCoy
Polk County, 1st District

At the time of this writing, we're days away from one of the most consequential abortion decisions which will have an impact across the State of Iowa. The decision before the Iowa Supreme Court is the revised version of the fetal heartbeat bill. In essence a six-week abortion ban which would ban all abortions in most, except rare cases impacting the life of the mother at six weeks. The Iowa Supreme Court has rejected this similar ban twice, but since the governor has fully packed the Iowa Supreme Court with anti-choice Republicans.

The Republicans have been marching towards becoming an anti-abortion state even convening a special session following a 2023 Iowa Supreme Court decision that left an injunction preventing the law from taking effect on a 3-3 vote. The new six-week abortion ban will ensure that women will be placed in difficult and dangerous situations, most times before they even know they're pregnant. Obviously, women with resources will travel to one of the

14 states that do not have abortion bans. Whereas poor and marginalized women and minors will be forced into either carrying the pregnancy to term or pursuing other dangerous means of terminating the pregnancy.

Once again, the consequences of GOP-dominated policies and laws severely impact those least able to explore other options, and the consequences will be deadly for women who will lose control over the making the most personal and private healthcare decisions impacting their future.



Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus Joins Forces with San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus for "All You Need is Love & Music" Concert

The Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus is thrilled to announce a special partnership with the renowned **San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus** (SFGMC) as part of their "Love Tour." This collaboration will culminate in a powerful and uplifting concert titled "All You Need is Love & Music," set to take place on **July 9, 2024, 7:30 PM**, at the Lauridsen Amphitheater and Killinger Family Stage in Des Moines. The concert is open to the public and is free of charge – no tickets or registration necessary.

The "Love Tour" by SFGMC aims to bring their message of unity, love, and hope to various communities in the heartland. From July 7-9, 2024, the 300-member Chorus, led by Artistic Director Jacob Stensberg, will tour Iowa and Nebraska, partnering with local LGBTQ choruses and advocacy groups at each stop. The tour will conclude with a headline performance at the 2024 GALA Chorus Festival in Minneapolis where the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus will also be performing.

In Des Moines, the SFGMC will join the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus on stage, creating a vibrant and inclusive musical experience. This concert will not only feature exceptional musical performances but also highlight local LGBTQ+ nonprofits, including Iowa Safe Schools, which will help create a VIP Experience for children and ensure a memorable event for all attendees.

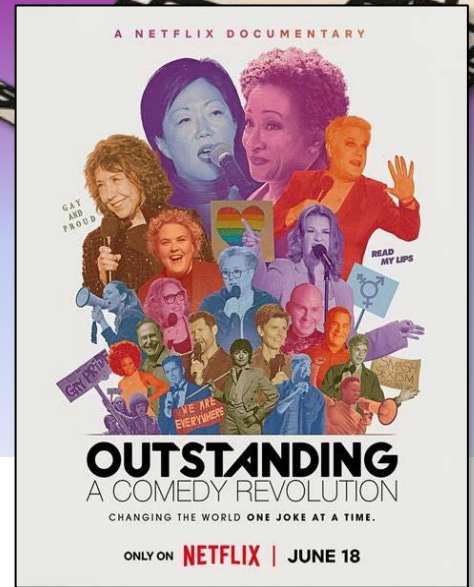
Tuesday, July 9

7:30 PM

Lauridsen
Amphitheater &
Killinger Family Stage
at Water Works Park

Outstanding

A Netflix Documentary Review by Mark Turnage



Continuing the theme of Pride into my July review, this month, I also wanted to examine a film with a brighter, more uplifting tone. Director Page Hurwitz's documentary was recommended to me by a co-worker, and charts the history of queer comedy in the United States leading up to *Stand Out*, a stand-up comedy special uniting 22 LGBTQ+ comedians onstage in Los Angeles at The Greek Theater in May 2022. Using the lived experiences of its own star comedians and a wealth of archival footage, the documentary paints queer comedy as not only speaking truth to power, but as a force of generational healing and inspiration running parallel to queer politics.

Comedians Lily Tomlin, Sandra Bernhard, Bruce Vilanch, Wanda Sykes, Margaret Cho, Eddie Izzard, and Fortune Feimster all contribute stories and perspectives on their own careers and influences; while the present generation of artists look to the performers of the 80s and 90s as inspirations, the LGBTQ comedians of those eras and before often found themselves breaking their own ground as they gained a cultural following and came face-to-face with the conservative political powers that opposed them. In interlude backstage footage spliced between interviews, some present-day comedians meet their influences for the first time (and whose composure would be like some of us in the same circumstance). It's touching and relatable parts like these that are "blink

and you miss it" moments, but keep the film's tone uplifting through its exploration of historical pushback to the LGBT rights movement. Many of the queer comediennees who were the loudest and bravest were women like Robin Tyler, the first out lesbian comedienne on television (1977). After a TV monologue where she analogized, "Anita Bryant is to Christianity what Paint by Numbers is to art," her network contract was pulled. Following her contract's cancellation, Tyler worked alongside Tomlin as a gay rights activist and artist.

Outstanding also touches upon intersectionality issues within the gay rights movement. Tomlin recounts a 1977 gay rights benefit she was invited to host where she was asked by the producers to invite Richard Pryor: "If you ask for Richard, you're gonna get Richard," was her fair warning. Pryor's set opened with candid, biting humor before pointing out the lack of Black audience members and the mostly white audience's complacency towards Black gay rights and activism. "People think just because you're all gay, you've all have everything in common," comedian Gina Yashere adds; "That's not the case. There are gay misogynists. There are gay racists. Comedy helps us reckon with that." Writer Roger Q. Mason praises Pryor's and other comedians' bravery in speaking truth to an audience of allies: "Any comedian that uses their work to call out the bigotry and hate that limits and polices

our possibilities is an activist." Wanda Sykes' segment explores her comedy's subjects of lesbian domesticity, Black female identity, and interracial relationships.

The documentary also exposes early sets of famous comedians like Mel Brooks and Eddie Murphy that were deeply homophobic and capitalized on public fear and misunderstanding of LGBT people, and concludes with its own Black transgender comedians' responses to transphobic platforms like Dave Chappelle. The editing chillingly connects "jokes" from those sets with yearly news clips from 2017-2022 with the same headline: "20XX is the deadliest year on record for trans Americans," and it's powerful enough that it doesn't need to give men like Chappelle any additional discourse. What meets opposition like this, *Outstanding's* comedians urge, is giving greater audiences to transgender comedians and talent.

See *Outstanding* streaming on Netflix, and enjoy an uplifting perspective on queer comedy and its pioneers.



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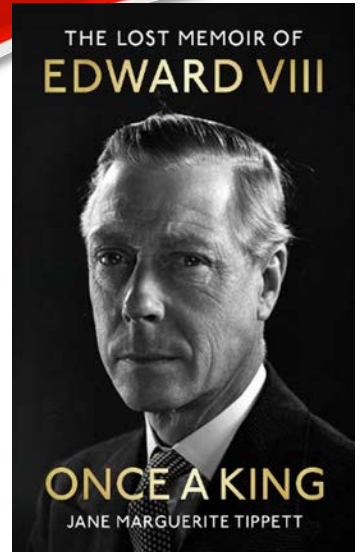
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Once a King

The Lost Memoir of Edward VIII

by Jane Marguerite Tippet

Book
Review by
Steve Person



The writing process includes many steps, and the first one is to think about what is going to go on paper. Jane Tippet says in her Introduction, “This is not the book I intended to write. In the summer of 2022, I was in the second year of writing what was to be an in-depth examination of the personal and political consequences of the thirteen crucial months in the life of Edward VIII following his abdication on 11 December 1936 to marry the twice-divorced American, Wallis Simpson.”

Fate intervened. Tippet contacted royal biographer Andrew Morton and asked him to send her his files for his 2018 biography of the Duchess of Windsor, *Wallis in Love*. One of Morton’s sources was Charles J.V. Murphy, an American journalist and writer for *Life* magazine. Murphy ghost wrote both Edward’s 1951 autobiography, *A King’s Story* and the Duchess’s 1956 autobiography, *The Heart Has Its Reasons*. Morton relied heavily on Murphy’s papers as part of his research. Tippet found Murphy’s papers at Boston University’s Howard Gotlieb Research Center. Of the seventeen boxes of papers, four of them were directly related to the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Tippet abandoned her research of 1937 once she discovered that the duke was actually a writer!

In an interesting editorial note, Tippet employs two different typefaces used in her book. “To assist the reader in distinguishing my voice from the voices of the various individuals who lived the story I tell, their words are printed in a larger and different font.” Much of the Duke of Windsor’s writings concentrated on his early years as Prince of Wales and were incorporated in his autobiography. He scrupulously avoided any criticism of members of the royal family. It wasn’t until decades later that he made his true feelings of his family’s persecution of him made public.

In 1979, Charles J.V. Murphy and J. Bryan III, published their book, *The Windsor Story*. By that time, the Duke of Windsor was dead, and the Duchess of Windsor’s mental state had declined to the point where she was mostly bed-ridden and unable to live a quality life. She either had dementia or what is now referred to as Alzheimer’s disease. After I finished reading *Once a King*, I dug out my old copy of Murphy and Bryan’s book. I read it when it initially came out in 1979 and enjoyed it immensely. I re-read it now and discovered I had forgotten much of it. Murphy, in his years of interviewing the duke and duchess, became friends with them, and despite finding both of them sometimes difficult to work with (the duke was notoriously oblivious to deadlines), he respected them. Bryan, on the other hand, criticized them sharply and had little good to say about either of them. Like Murphy, he wrote for *Life* magazine.

Once a King came out in 2023, but for some reason unbeknownst to me, it was not available in this country until March 2024.

