

Sexuality, obscenity linked, lawyer says

By Matthew Truesdell
Staff Reporter

Promiscuity is the factor that makes homosexuality and obscenity a continuing societal problem, a Miami lawyer said Wednesday night.

Jack Thompson spoke to about 30 people about gay rights and obscenity during a lecture in the Nebraska Union.

Thompson was a key figure in arguing that rap group 2 Live Crew's "As Nasty As They Wanna Be" should be ruled obscene. The Florida Supreme Court in 1990 ruled the album was obscene in the first such ruling in the United States.

Thompson also was the Republican candidate for Dade County prosecutor in 1988. His opponent, who defeated him, was Janet Reno, the current U.S. Attorney General.

Obscenity in any form contributes to social problems, Thompson said. He said he was opposed to the music of 2 Live Crew because it contained violent, gratuitous sexual references.

Thompson said he had worked with rape victims where pornography was a factor and was able to see the severe damage that such obscene material caused.

The same forces that claim to champion freedom of speech, Thompson said, have attempted to silence him. 2 Live Crew lead singer Luther Campbell sued Thompson

in an attempt to keep him from speaking about the Florida obscenity case.

The gay rights movement in the United States also is tied to obscenity, Thompson said. Both obscenity and homosexuality celebrate promiscuity, he said, which is the cause of many social problems.

Thompson's speech, sponsored by the University Program Council, presented only one side of the debate on obscenity and homosexuality. Torie Osborn, a national gay rights activist, will present opposing viewpoints Oct. 11 in a speech at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Thompson said his feelings about homosexuality were based on Christian beliefs and acceptance of the bible.

An audience member at the lecture asked Thompson whether he thought AIDS was a curse from God on homosexuals. Thompson said he believed God created the world in such a way that there were consequences for all sins, but that AIDS was not actually created by God specifically to punish homosexuals.

Thompson said an organized movement existed in the United States pushing for acceptance of homosexuality.

Although he feels homosexual behavior is wrong, Thompson said he does not hate homosexuals. Thompson said homosexuality was a chosen, learned behavior that stemmed from good intentions.

Encouraging homosexuality also is wrong because it is self-destructive, Thompson said. In addition to sexually transmitted diseases, Thompson said, homosexuals are more likely to commit suicide.



Thompson

Civil rights activist speaks

By Catherine Blalock
Staff Reporter

Civil rights activist Lela Shanks said on Wednesday that her experiences and efforts against discrimination would help young minorities in the future.

"The civil rights movements paved the way for your generation," she said.

About 60 students and faculty members gathered in the Wick Alumni Center on Wednesday to hear Shanks give a lecture titled "Black History and the Civil Rights Movement: An Activist's Perspective."

Shanks has been involved with civil rights movements for more than 50 years and in organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People chapter in Lincoln.

In 1993, Shanks received the Alice Paul Award from the Lincoln/Lancaster Commission on the Status of Women for her lifelong achievements on behalf of women and minorities.

In the past, she said, the achievements of African Americans have been ignored.

During the lecture, Shanks displayed two paintings by 19th-century African Americans, posters of an African map and newspaper clippings of her involvement in protests.

Shanks also talked about African-American inventors and scientists. She said information like that had been kept from history books.

"We really need to know these things," she said.

There is much more African-American history that the rest of the country doesn't know, Shanks said.

Shanks said the first Africans who came to North America were explorers, not slaves. And between 1865 and 1900, 22 African Americans were elected to Congress, she said.

Others' ignorance about history is what Shanks said she had to get past to achieve greater equality.



Michelle Paulman/DN

Lela Shanks speaks about African American history to students and faculty at the Wick Alumni Center Wednesday. She said she first became aware of the discrimination that African Americans faced when she was about 9 years old, and her mother told her not to forget to sit in the back of the streetcar.

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