

A Fanele Publication



'Pride: Protest and Celebration' – Public Dialogue to Celebrate Heritage Day

Date: 23rd September 2006

Time: 2pm

Venue: Women's Jail Atrium, Constitution Hill

Refreshments will be served

On 23rd September, to coincide with Heritage Day on the 24th, The Gay and Lesbian Archives (GALA), Fanele and Constitution Hill will launch the new book *Pride: Protest and Celebration* with a public dialogue – part of Constitution Hill's popular words series. The dialogue takes the form of a conversation between Shaun de Waal – one of the book's editors – Beverly Ditsie and Edwin Cameron, and will be steered by Donna Smith. (Profiles of the participants are given below).

The event is part of this year's Pride heritage celebration at Constitution Hill and coincides with an exhibition of photographs and extracts from the book on exhibit between September 25 and October 2nd at Constitution Hill's Women's Jail Conference Room A.

About the book: *Pride: Protest and Celebration* is a history of South Africa's gay pride marches and parades over the last 16 years. It brings together a host of valuable and rare material: pictures, documents and personal testimony of activists, organizers and participants of Pride since 1990. It also tells the stories of gays and lesbians who celebrate the role of Pride in their lives against the backdrop of the struggle for human rights in South Africa.

Press clippings are also used in this beautiful collection, to trace how Pride has been reported over the years, helping to form both an historical record and a colourful, enjoyable scrapbook of memories of the most visible face of South Africa's gay and lesbian community.

South Africa's first-ever gay Pride march took place in October 1990, just as the liberation movements including the ANC and the PAC were returning home after decades in exile. That year, Pride pushed for the inclusion of gay rights in the human rights for which South Africans were then fighting. That dream was realised in the Constitution, ratified in 1996, which enshrines protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation – a Constitution unique in the world.

Since then, Pride has continually evolved. In 1994 it became a "parade", and in later years it came to include a mardi gras and other activities. Its focus moved from its campaigning of the early years to, increasingly, a celebration of freedom and gay/lesbian culture, as much a huge party as anything else. Yet it has been controversial within gay/lesbian circles as well as in the view of the larger society – and there are still rights (such as gay marriage) for which to fight.

About the participants

Beverley Ditsie: Originally from Soweto, Beverley helped to organise South Africa's first Gay and

Lesbian Pride March as part of GLOW. In the 1990's Ditsie often appeared on local television to speak on lesbian issues, inspiring other black lesbians by her example. She was threatened repeatedly with violence as result of her media presence. In 1995, Ditsie addressed the United Nations on lesbian issues at the 4th World Conference on women in Beijing, and in 1998 spoke at the UN Global Women's Tribunal in New York. Ditsie currently directs television programmes for the SABC including Survivor Panama.

Edwin Cameron: A respected South African advocate of human rights and labour rights. As professor of Law at the University of the Witwatersrand he helped to establish the AIDS Law Project within the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, and was a founding convenor of the non-government national AIDS Consortium in 1993, and a leading figure in the national AIDS Convention. He helped draft a Charter of Rights on HIV/ AIDS, and was influential in the drafting of the 1994 South African constitution's Bill of Rights, and the inclusion of sexuality in its equality clause. Cameron was appointed Judge of the High Court, Witwatersrand Local Division, in 1995. He was elected Chair of the Council of the University of the Witwatersrand in 1998. In 1999, prior to his appointment to the Constitutional Court, Cameron publicly disclosed that he was living with AIDS. His memoir *Witness to AIDS* was co-winner of this year's prestigious Sunday Times/Alan Paton non-fiction prize. Cameron currently serves on the Supreme Court of Appeals.

Donna Smith: Lesbian activist Donna Smith is the CEO of the Johannesburg-based Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW), a networking, empowerment and support organization for black lesbians based. Donna Smith also spearheaded the Rose Has Thorns campaign, which raised awareness of hate crimes against lesbians.

The Gay and Lesbian Archives (GALA): Established in January 1997, the Gay and Lesbian Archives of South Africa (GALA) is an independent project of the South African History Archive (SAHA), which forms part of the Historical Papers collection based at the William Cullen Library in the University of the Witwatersrand. GALA provides a permanent institutional home for the wide range of historical and archival material relating to gay and lesbian experience in South Africa. It aims to be a source of information to the public and to serve as a catalyst for generating other, previously silenced community histories and personal narratives.

Shaun de Waal: Born in 1965 in Johannesburg. He has worked for the Mail & Guardian newspaper (formerly the Weekly Mail) since 1989, having been literary editor from 1991 to 2005 and chief film critic since 1998. His books and arts journalism has been published there and elsewhere; his fiction has been published in journals and anthologies, as well as in book form (*These Things Happen*, 1996). His graphic novelette *Jack marks* was published in 1998. He edited several volumes of the M&G Bedside Book, and co-wrote a monograph on South African artist Steven Cohen (2003); a new collection of his short fiction is due out in 2006. He has won the Sanlam Award for his fiction and the Thomas Pringle Award (twice) for his criticism.

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