

# Event to discuss LGBT marriage equality

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The Chancellor's Commission for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender People is hosting an event on marriage equality.

The event will be held in the University Center's Shiloh Room Thursday, Oct. 16. It begins at 7:30 p.m. and will feature an iMovie presentation, discussion, and a reading and signing of "Courting Equality: A Documentary History of America's First Legal Same-Sex Marriages" by the book's co-authors, Patricia Gozemba and Karen Kahn, a legally married same-sex couple from Massachusetts.

Roger Weaver, Co-Chair of the Communications Committee for the Chancellor's Commission for LGBT People, said, "The iMovie supplements the book and contains personal interviews and stories of same-sex couples and others involved in the marriage equality movement in Massachusetts. It conveys the impact of this struggle in a very personal and moving way."

George H. Hoemann, chair for the Chancellor's Commission for LGBT People, said the talk will touch on issues many people don't generally discuss.

"There are so many attributes of marriage

that most people don't think about — the right to speak for one's spouse in medical

"Marriage is the way that this society recognizes and affirms relationships,"

**This is an important topic of current political debate, especially given the Connecticut Supreme Court's recent decision legalizing same-sex marriage in Massachusetts.**

— Roger Weaver speaking about the importance of the discussion as it leads to many other factors of current debate

situations requiring emergency decisions is an obvious example — that are unavailable to those people who are partnered but who do not have a legally recognized relationship," he said.

Hoemann said the institution of marriage was an important part of society.

Hoemann said. "It is, going back to common law, a 'contract' between two adults who enter into a legally binding relationship with mutual benefits and obligations. This is what marriage as a legal constitution is all about and this is precisely what many same-sex couples want."

Weaver said Gozemba and Kahn's book focuses on the marriage equality movement in Massachusetts from its beginning to the legal recognition of same-sex couples.

"The authors will also be speaking on the same-sex marriage movement across the country, its relevance to Tennessee and its impact on the upcoming national election," Weaver said. "This is an important topic of current political debate, especially given the Connecticut Supreme Court's recent decision legalizing same-sex marriage in Massachusetts."

Weaver said the marriage equality movement is "part of the broader civil rights movement" for LGBT people.

"It is an issue in the national elections and the cause of political debate in many states," he said. "In fact, it resulted in a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages here in Tennessee. Any person interested in issues of basic fairness should attend this event."

Additional information about the UT Knoxville Commission for LGBT people can be found at the Commission's Web site at <http://lgbt.utk.edu/>. More information about the Library Diversity Committee can be found at their Web site at <http://www.lib.utk.edu/diversity/>.

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