

Staged drama to detail same-sex legislation

Staff Reports

The chronology of California's battle for same-sex marriage will be performed at UT. A reading of "8," a play written by Dustin Lance Black, Academy Award-winning screenwriter of "Milk," will be staged at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, November 5, at the Ula Love Doughty Carousel Theatre.

The one-night event is free and open to the public; tickets will be available at the door.

"8" details the aftermath of Proposition 8, the state of California's constitutional amendment that banned same-sex marriage.

The script draws from Perry v. Schwarzenegger (now Perry v. Brown), a case that challenged and overturned Proposition 8.

The event is presented by UT's Commission for LGBT People in partnership with the UT Theatre Department, Central Program Council's Issues Committee and Amnesty International. Dimi Venkov, senior in theatre, is directing the play.

Venkov heard about "8" earlier this year and wanted UT to be part of the play's reach.

"I read back in February about a high-profile reading of '8' in Los Angeles with

George Clooney, Brad Pitt and other famous names. I researched the play, and the website offered the opportunity to stage readings," said Venkov. "Because I have experience directing and producing plays on campus, I jumped at this opportunity."

But unlike the Los Angeles production, this one will consist of more than just actors.

"I wanted to include non-actors, non-students — anybody and everybody who is passionate about the case and the larger issue of marriage equality," said Venkov.

After the performance, the cast and marriage equality advocates will lead a question-and-answer session about the issue.

Ben Byers, chair of Knoxville's branch of Tennessee Equality Project, will be among the panel members.

"We need to take a close look at the circumstances surrounding Proposition 8, especially the thoughts and feelings of the people who voted for and against it," said Byers. "We need to better understand their values, fears, and attitudes so that progress can be made towards equality for everyone."

For more information about "8," visit the play's website.

For more information about the Commission for LGBT People, visit lgbt.utk.edu.

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