

Show hopes to end discrimination S

Victoria Wright

Student Life Editor

In an effort to dissolve discrimination, one woman is using her camera lens to capture LGBT people, as they are.

Documentary filmmaker and photographer iO Tillett Wright will visit Knoxville to photograph LGBT students and other individuals for her nationwide project titled "Self-Evident Truths." Wright held her first portrait session on Sunday at Lox Salon in the Old City and will be in Knoxville until Tuesday.

Wright, who qualifies herself on the LGBT spectrum, will also host a reception on the lecture on Monday, March 12, at 6:30 p.m. in the Clarence Brown Theatre. UT's Commission for LGBT People and Ready for the World wrote a letter to sponsor Wright's visit to UT.

Amid a planned appeal for the ban of gay marriage in California,

lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgendered social issues have slowly turned into a modern civil rights movement.

"Between all these different things that are happening, I think there's more community than there ever has been," Wright said. "I think it's come to a crisis point where it's going to break now. There's just too many of us."

While about 15 million Americans qualify themselves on some area of the LGBT spectrum, an exact number for UT students is not conducted. According to the commission, the university does not ask students to declare their sexual orientation, and for some students, participating in Wright's project is an act of "coming out."

Jennifer Moshak, commission co-chair and associate athletic director for sports medicine, said the event is an effort for the commission to eliminate bias and discrimination against LGBT students.

See TRUTHS on Page 3

3.12.2012

TRUTHS

continued from Page 1

"When we saw what she was trying to do with the project, we really felt that we believed in her mission," Moshak said. "Through the simplicity of a photograph, all people are equal. That's exactly the message we want to send on this campus."

For Moshak, the event is more personal. She and her partner plan to participate in Wright's portrait project on Monday.

"I think it means a lot (to participate in the project)," Moshak said. "I think it means being a part of something that is very special and a movement and sharing a message. It's a very proud experience."

Wright said in addition to religious influences, most discrimination comes from misinformation.

"I think it comes from a lack of understanding and fear that usually repels people in discrimination," Wright said. "Largely, what I've seen unfortunately is that it's a face-based reality. Usually people are just misinformed."

Wright doesn't use Photoshop or artificial lighting for her portraits. Instead, she depends on natural lighting and the honest courage of her subjects to convey her message.

Wright hopes the honesty of her portraits

will help people outside of the LGBT spectrum to dissolve.

"They think that they don't know any gay people," Wright said. "I don't think people would be as discriminatory if they knew us — if they had a good look at us. I knew all these beautiful and wonderful people, and if I could see them, then I thought, 'Let me try to show them.'"

Wright has photographed over 1,000 individuals across the nation and hopes to obtain about 8,000 to 10,000 portraits by the end of her project. Since Feb. 24, Wright has photographed people in the South as a part of her Southern tour. Knoxville is her last stop for this trip.

Moshak hopes the event will serve as a catalyst for more events and resources for LGBT students and ultimately eliminate discrimination against LGBT students on campus.

"When you realize it's your neighborhood, child, cousin, suddenly there's a name to it," Moshak said. "You can say, 'They're not that bad of a person, why are we discriminating them.'"

Students and others interested in having their pictures taken for the project should e-mail selfevident2011@gmail.com to reserve a spot. The portraits will be shown 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, March 12, and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, March 13, at the OUTreach Center in Melrose Hall, Room F103.

2/10/2012

S
SG
one
Mo
the
div
con
awa
Wil
said
We
that
Nei
We
Mo
vari
with
with
T
be h
a m
tuse
wan