

RSVP

FUND-RAISER AT CENTURY PLAZA

Gay and Lesbian Center Marks 20th Year

By KEVIN ALLMAN
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Wilson may be able to veto a bill, but he can't veto us," declared Torie Osborn, executive director of the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center, at the center's 20th anniversary ball held Saturday night at the Century Plaza.

Osborn was referring, of course, to Gov. Pete Wilson's veto of Assembly Bill 101 barring employment discrimination, an action that galvanized L.A.'s lesbian and gay community and underscored the fund-raising event. (In what Osborn called "a minor historical irony," the Century Plaza had been the site of one of the most vigorous demonstrations when Wilson stayed there.)

The center's 20th anniversary coincides with acquisition of a new four-story building on Hudson Street in Hollywood, which will open next summer. The target fund-raising goal was \$3 million; organizers announced at the banquet that they've reached a total of \$1.65 million.

The evening began with a silent auction. After a cocktail hour, guests sat down for dinner and welcoming remarks from dinner chairman Eric Shore, center board member Alan Acosta and board co-chairs Rose Greene and Mason Sommers.

Lily Tomlin kicked off the show,



THEODORA LITSIOS

Torie Osborn welcomes actress Judith Light to the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center ball at Century Plaza.

in character as Ernestine, who seems to have left her job with the phone company to operate the center's switchboard. "When Ma Bell went to pieces, so did I," she explained, as the crowd gave her an ovation. The targets of Ernestine's abuse ranged from Clarence Thomas to Orange County. ("May I

help you?" she snorted to one caller. "You're calling from Orange County? I'm not sure you can be helped.")

The evening was the largest in the center's history. Among the more than 1,400 in attendance were actors Dick Sargent and Sheila James Kuehl, who publicly

declared their homosexuality in ceremonies held last week for National Coming Out Day. Also there were Richard and Jeramie Dreyfuss, Judith Light, Sharon Gless and Barney Rosenzweig, and Ali MacGraw.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Ed Edelman, who personally contributed \$100,000 to the center, led the list of politicians in attendance. Among them were Lt. Gov. Leo McCarthy, State Sen. Herschel Rosenthal, Assemblyman Richard Katz, L.A. City Councilman Zev Yaroslavy and L.A. Unified School District board members Jeff Horton, Roberta Weintraub and Julie Korenstein.

After a performance by folk singer Holly Near, Osborn spoke, telling the crowd: "We're the latest great civil rights movement, and we are not going back."

The evening concluded with 15 minutes of vintage Tomlin, which the comedian topped off by placing a rose between her teeth and dancing the tango with another woman while the audience cheered. ("Oh, what the National Enquirer would do for that photograph," commented one guest.) Then the band struck up a Whitney Houston tune, and those that didn't head for their cars spent the rest of the evening dancing.

Many in the crowd vowed they'd be back to the Century Plaza soon enough, as Wilson is scheduled to appear in the same banquet room on Wednesday night.

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