Gay Seattle

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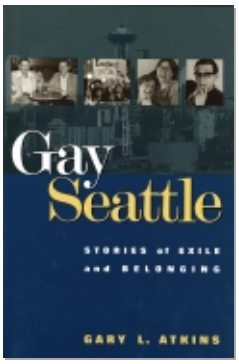

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Cal's Conscience

In the late 1960s, when Cal Anderson was sixteen, he lived in Tukwila, a small working-class town south of Seattle that was dotted with metal foundries and Boeing aircraft hangars. He used to swim in the polluted Duwamish River. Compared to the usual Northwest portrayed on postcards, Tukwila was the wrong side of the tracks, but that gave Cal a passion for change, even as a teenager. When his father, Robert, complained that Tukwila needed more parks for children, if only to keep them out of the river, Cal urged his dad to become a candidate for the local city council. Cal managed the campaign himself. The teen wrote letters to every voter in town, in the end snatching a narrow victory of four votes for his father. The tightness of the contest fueled Cal's almost addictive enjoyment of politics. His mom would later say that he was a fun-loving kid—if fun meant inviting the Young Democrats over for a planning session. Cal's pictures of his teenage years show him at campaign rallies, staffing tables covered with Democratic Party signs.[1]

He had already realized he was gay. Because he thought that his homosexuality would prevent him from ever running for public office, he targeted behind-the-scenes political work instead. "Quite frankly," he said in a later interview, "I thought that being gay did you in."[2] After he graduated from Foster High School in 1966, Cal found a job working as a secretary for Jeanette Williams, then King County chair of the Democratic Party and later the Seattle City Council member who helped add sexual orientation to the city's antidiscrimination laws. Then he was drafted into the army. He decided not to check "yes" next to the question asking whether he was homosexual. He later told a *Seattle Times* reporter, "I thought if I scratched that 'yes,' next day in the paper, there'd be a headline: 'Cal Anderson, Jeanette Williams's secretary, is a fairy.'"[3]

Eventually, he did tell a first sergeant. Instead of being upset, the sergeant ordered him to go back to work, and the army sent him to Vietnam with the Twenty-third Infantry Division. He became a court reporter assigned to gather depositions in combat zones. When the initial investigation of the 1968 My Lai massacre began, Cal got the assignment to be lead court reporter. The quality of his court reporting won him two Bronze Stars. In 1971, the army assigned him as the senior court reporter in the My Lai–related trial of Captain Ernest Medina. That got him one of his four army commendations.[4]

Meanwhile, at nineteen, Cal also found his first male lover among his fellow soldiers. When he returned from the war, he resumed his other love. "Politics," he would say, "is the best way for one person to help a lot of people."[5] For some, that would be a cliché, but Cal seemed to believe it with all the innocent, gee-whiz idealism a kid from the 1960s could muster. He believed it so much that he could make others believe too. Seattle mayor Charles Royer, who would employ him a decade later, once said of Cal that "he's a very sincere guy, almost to the point that you think, gee Cal, are you really that sincere? Are you really that nice?"[6]

Part of his persuasiveness and charm was his appearance. Even when he grew older, Cal stayed short and roundish, like a kid who never lost his baby fat. He always wore suits that looked a size or two too large and oversized black-rimmed glasses that dwarfed his face. He looked like a wide-eyed ten-year-old forever teetering on the edge between the realities of the adult political world and his continually enthusiastic and mischievous boyhood. That's why everyone seemed to call him only by his first name; it seemed odd to ever be too formal with Cal.

In 1988—the same year the state legislature would consider the AIDS Omnibus Bill and Steven Farmer would face a mandatory blood test—Cal achieved his political goal. He became the first openly gay state legislator in the history of Washington State.

His rise in Seattle politics went like this. When he returned from the army, his father had died, so he sought a job instead of going to college. From 1975 until 1983, he worked as an administrative assistant for Seattle City Council member George Benson. Then he became Royer's appointments secretary. He engaged in continuous trench work with the local Democratic Party, and although he served on the steering committee for Citizens to Retain Fair Employment during Initiative Thirteen, he avoided any highly visible role. After being mentored by Harvey Muggy—that longtime gay Democratic activist on Capitol Hill—Cal began to think about actually taking his passion public and running for state political office himself, an inspiration Muggy had given him. Compared to Muggy, Cal had the advantages of being more photogenic and having established insider credentials—and he was not at all shy in public.

The most logical place for a gay representative, of course, would be the Forty-third District that included Capitol Hill. The opportunity came in 1987, when state senator Jim McDermott decided to temporarily leave politics, setting off a domino effect that left the Forty-third's state house seat vacant. Since the vacancy would be filled by appointment, the crucial factor was the recommendation from the party's precinct chairs. From his years of behind-the-scenes work, Cal knew many of them, and when he submitted his name, there was little contest. For the first time, Seattle and Washington had an openly gay state legislator. The fact that he was from a district that, at least in its gathering places and history, remained so symbolically Catholic did not seem to matter at first—eventually, though, it would bedevil him.

The curiosity of having an openly gay legislator was something the news media would always emphasize with Cal, the phrase almost always attached to his name. Overnight it seemed, he had become the new leader of the city's gay and lesbian community, the new Charlie Brydon. Problem was, few people in the city's gay and lesbian community had ever heard of him. As had been true of Brydon, his appointment tapped into all those long-standing tensions between the downtown insiders and hill activists. Even Muggy, who himself had been working within the Democratic Party, told the *Seattle Times* after Cal was appointed that "the only problem that some of us had is that he's not as radical as some of us wanted." Muggy, though, at least allowed that "that's what's going to make him a good representative. He can represent the diversity of our district."[7]

One of Cal's closest political buddies, Ed Murray, remembered his first months as the new "gay spokesman." "Cal was a typical guy, not a very demonstrative guy, controlled in how he came across. I knew him privately to be a person who loved to go out to bars, loved campy humor, and liked having a typical gay guy's time in the 1980s. But you didn't see that face initially. Initially, he tended to be more of a system guy or establishment guy versus a community activist guy."

"At first, there was a dismissal of Cal as a lightweight. Every year he would ask to speak at the gay pride parade, and the organizing committee would vote no, and then they'd finally revote and let him speak. The wealthier part of the gay community would also dismiss him. In those early campaigns, Cal's greatest hurt and his greatest struggles were around being accepted by other gays and lesbians."[8]

Cal's paradox was that his new colleagues in the legislature looked at him as a gay man first of all, while many of his gay constituents saw him mostly as a backroom politico. For example, the AIDS Omnibus Bill posed a serious challenge for him as a freshman legislator. While gay activists liked its civil rights protections for those who were HIV-positive, many disliked the sections allowing even limited mandatory testing and making it a felony to knowingly spread the virus—especially with the Steven Farmer case pending. Faced with the compromises of politics, Anderson chose to vote for the bill and was embarrassed when the American Civil Liberties Union attacked the less desirable sections. Some AIDS activists, mistrustful of the gay legislator in the suit, started periodically trashing his house with graffiti. Others pointed out that in his first session Anderson had little success getting any publicity for the overall gay and lesbian civil rights bill that had been on the community's legislative agenda for a decade. They questioned whether he really could be the gay and lesbian champion they had hoped for.[9]

For his own part, Cal had little interest in pushing only gay-related legislation. Instead, he campaigned for easier voter registration, government reforms, gun control, and daycare insurance. One of his first committee appointments was to the house Government Operations Committee, where he became vice-chair. The first law he proposed was aimed not at gay rights, but at taking away concealed weapon permits of anyone arrested while drunk or using drugs. He managed to have it

pass, but only in the typical political fashion of compromise, agreeing to have the weapon taken away for one year instead of the five he had originally sought.

When Cal headed away for a brief vacation after his first session, Murray handed him a copy of Randy Shilts's *The Mayor of Castro Street,* a biography of San Francisco's first openly gay supervisor, Harvey Milk, who had been assassinated ten years earlier, in 1978. Milk had managed to effectively combine the roles of gay spokesman and nuts-and-bolts politician. When Cal returned, he began to adjust his own vision.

According to Murray, "He came back and totally embraced everyone. The leather community, the drag community. Cal the private gay man became the public gay man. He put on a harness at a leather event. He put on his boxer shorts at a bar party."

"As time went on and his legislative skills became apparent, then the gay and lesbian community really adopted him. They grew to love him for what he was able to do."[10]

Having been drafted into the army, Anderson had never made it to college. He always felt a little awkward about that, especially since his Capitol Hill district included so many Jesuit institutions and so much of Seattle's professional class. But his working-class background, his swims in the Duwamish River as a boy, and his father's death from a heart attack at age fifty-two had given him other strengths: an enjoyment of meeting different people on the street and in their living rooms, a willingness to not take himself too seriously, a sense of humorous timing, a desire to get on with the more important things in his life rather than holding grudges. That boyish innocence gradually became charisma.

During his first months as a legislator, Cal kept a weekly diary, some of which was eventually published in the *Seattle Times*—whose editors seemed somewhat taken with the idea of a young gay politician, since within a few months they published two full-page features about him. Here is Cal commenting on his appointment by the precinct chairmen: "It was wonderful. I had the best cheering section! My supporters were so organized! Can you tell I'm excited?" Here he is entering the legislature on his first day: "I walked into the room and looked up in the gallery to get a glance at my mom, Alice Coleman, and Eric [Ishino, his lover], and I thought I might lose it right there. It's really quite exhilarating—not the way 'Gosh, I've got power'—just that you're part of this team, this effort to do some good."

When he took the oath of office for the first time, he remembered, "It was quite overpowering when they lined all of us up to march into the session, taking my seat with my name on it."

January 29, 1988, a few days into the session, he wrote: "This morning I went to the Washington Cattlemen's Association breakfast. A cowboy sits down and says, 'What about this gay legislation?' It turns out he's a gay rancher! He came by my office and said how wonderful it was to have someone in the legislature." Cal learned how to handle the endless round of luncheons and receptions: "What hap-

pens is you kind of graze . . . a couple of chicken wings here, a mushroom cap over there. It's changed my eating habits and not for the better. But I'm lucky. I haven't gained weight. In fact, I may have lost a couple of pounds."

What emerges in the diary published in the *Times* is his wonder at being in the legislature. On the final day of the session, when he had to stay overnight at an Olympia hotel and checked in as "Rep. Cal Anderson," he reflected, "It's such a feeling. I still get goose bumps because it's quite an honor."[11]

That feeling would continue, especially as he grew more comfortable in the role. At a later session of the legislature, for example, he used humor to disarm those who felt uncomfortable with his homosexuality—a tactic that had also been used by Harvey Milk. Once he used a double entendre to introduce a resolution to make the apple the "state fruit" of Washington: "Fruits are of vital concern to many of my constituents," he said dryly, then waited for the response. After a moment, the other representatives erupted in laughter. During a Democratic caucus meeting when the party leadership wanted a woman to chair one of the house committees in order to have adequate minority representation, Cal quipped, "Will a sissy do?"[12]

One source of pride was a letter from a constituent that he kept framed in his office at the legislature. It said: "At age eighty-five, I had the traditional social attitude about sexual aberration. I would never have voted for you. But you have been an outstanding representative of my views. I have become a strong supporter of Cal Anderson."[13]

Cal also became a target. One person mailed him a news story about his appointment to the legislature and scribbled on it, "Someday you will pay the Piper! You get your sex in the sewer! I'd like to see all you 'gays' isolated from the human race!" On an "Action-Gram" where Cal solicited messages from constituents, one wrote, "How about a bill mandating prison sentences—unlimited—for all faggots of the 43rd District, including you?! For those unwilling or unable to obey the law, the bill should include severe penalties, including death." Another card said, "Your speeches on T.V. make me sick. . . . Have you considered moving to San Francisco? You'd fit right in there. Drop dead pervert!"[14]

The push for a statewide civil rights law to protect homosexuals from discrimination in jobs and housing had originally begun in the 1977 legislature, eleven years before Cal arrived in Olympia. That first hearing had featured an all-star cast testifying on behalf of the law, including Seattle mayor Wes Uhlman and Seattle council member Jeanette Williams talking about the successful adoption of such a law in Seattle, teacher Jim Gaylord explaining how he had been unjustly fired for simply attending meetings with other gay men, and the gay football star from the University of Washington, Dave Kopay. Thanks partly to the KIRO-TV editorials by Lloyd Cooney, the bill never made it out of the house Social and Health Services Committee.

In 1979, it was reintroduced. Assigned to the house Judiciary Committee that

year, it never even received a hearing, despite the impressive victory Seattle's gays and lesbians had just scored in repulsing Initiative Thirteen. In 1981, gay activists tried initiating the bill in the state senate. It died in the Judiciary Committee. Pushing the bill became a ritual of trying to make slight advances, perhaps to win a hearing in one chamber one year, then another the next. In 1983, the house Judiciary Committee actually agreed to a hearing, but then postponed a vote. In 1985, the same. In 1987, the same. The only bright spot in state protection came in 1985 when a Democratic governor, Booth Gardner, issued an executive order prohibiting discrimination against gays and lesbians in state hiring.

When Cal arrived in 1988, he began to steer the process himself. Behind the scenes, he could make the connections that others could not. "What I've always done is to look for common ground," he said in an interview. "If there was a very conservative, homophobic representative who was a Vietnam veteran—and I am a Vietnam veteran—I'd go over to him if there was military legislation going on. I'd say, 'Hey, would you mind if I co-sponsored this with you.' It just drove people crazy. They didn't know what to think." But it broke barriers.

"The biggest thing is just to be there," Cal said. "I provided an example that we're not monsters."[15]

In 1989, he managed to get the bill referred to the house State Government Committee and then, during the second year of the biennial session, through the committee. On February 14, 1990, for the first time ever, the house narrowly passed the bill, fifty-one to forty-seven, but it died in the senate. During the next biennial term of 1991–92, Cal decided to instead push a malicious harassment bill to increase penalties on those accused of committing crimes motivated by bigotry, whether because of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. The house eventually passed the bill seventy-seven to twenty-one, but then a state senator from Renton, Leo Thorsness, convinced the senate's Law and Justice Committee to remove the words "sexual orientation" from the legislation. Thorsness argued that while he was a prisoner during the Vietnam war, he believed some of the guards who had tortured him were homosexual. The house refused to concur in the senate's change, and the entire hate crimes bill died.[16]

In the fall of 1992, two crucial factors convinced Cal to try again in the next session for the civil rights protection in jobs and housing, as well as for the hate crimes bill. For the first time in years, Democrats took control of the state house and the senate as well as the governor's office that autumn. One of Governor Mike Lowry's first actions would be to strengthen the executive order that protected state employees from discrimination. Party leaders also promised they were ready to pass a civil rights bill to protect everyone, regardless of sexual orientation. In charge of the critical house State Government Committee, where the Democratic leader planned to assign the bill, would be its prime sponsor, Cal Anderson.

Also that fall, a virulently anti-gay organization in Oregon, the Oregon Citizens' Alliance (OCA), attempted to pass a ballot measure that would have amended that

state's constitution to require all government agencies, including the state's schools and libraries, to teach only that homosexuality was "abnormal, wrong, unnatural, and perverse." The constitutional amendment would also have outlawed any civil rights protections based on sexual orientation. The measure had been defeated, but, disturbingly, 43 percent of the state's voters had supported it, and activists in Seattle had begun to anticipate that the OCA's director, Lon Mabon, would export the initiative to Washington State as a way of overturning Seattle's civil rights protections as well as the governor's executive order. It would be Initiative Thirteen written statewide—as well as a repeat of the initiative strategy that the Ku Klux Klan had used in the 1920s, when it attempted to move its anti-Catholic momentum from Oregon into Washington.

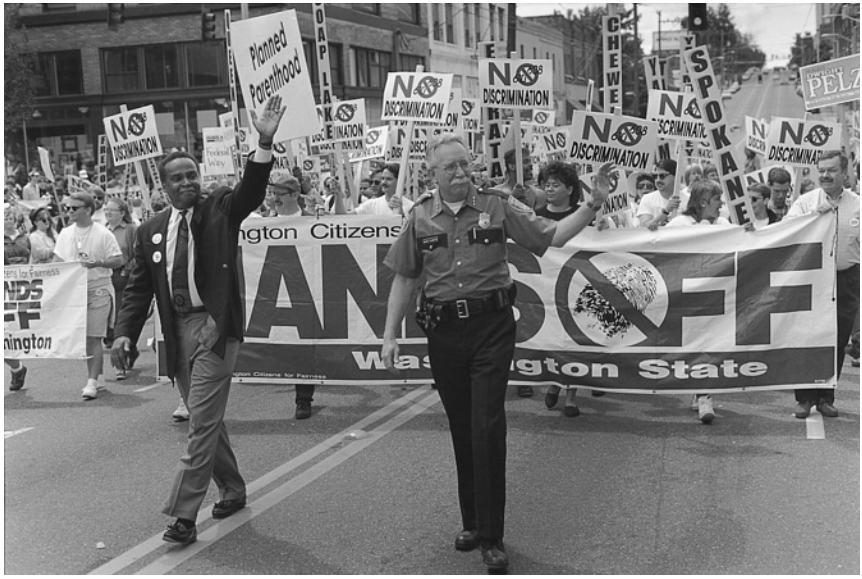
As had happened just before David Estes launched his anti-gay initiative in 1978, Charlie Brydon moved quickly to catalyze a response. In October 1992—even before the outcome of the Oregon vote was known—he sent a letter to Seattle lesbian and gay activists announcing that "a group of politically experienced women and men from our community" had already created a new organization called Washington Citizens for Fairness in order to oppose Mabon's expected invasion. The committee included Cal as well as lesbian and gay power brokers from the old Dorian Group and the gay business owners' organization, the GSBA. They had even already chosen a catchy slogan for the anti-Mabon effort: "Hands Off Washington."[17] It was a somewhat hopeful way of trying to seed the idea that the attempts to promote discrimination against homosexuals were alien.

One of the other strategies for doing that, in this year of Democratic control of the government, was to finally pass the civil rights law as well as the malicious harassment bill.

And so, as the 1993 legislative session began, both sides—gay and anti-gay—geared for confrontation.

On January 29, Lon Mabon called a press conference, symbolically situating it in the rotunda of the Capitol in Olympia, and announced that he would indeed press a similar anti-gay initiative in Washington State, barring the inclusion of homosexuals in civil rights laws, prohibiting schools from teaching anything positive about homosexuality, and forbidding the use of tax dollars to support homosexuality—such as through counseling or AIDS education. His new Citizens' Alliance of Washington would be headed by a resident of Vancouver, Washington, named Robert Larimer Jr. "I don't hate anybody," Mabon said, but homosexuals should not have "special rights."

Moments later, at a counter-conference, Charlie Brydon, Seattle mayor Norm Rice, and Governor Lowry denounced the Mabon campaign. Brydon, promoting the "hands off" sound bite, referred to the anti-gay leaders as "carpetbaggers" and added that "today, the OCA has oozed across the Columbia River to plant seeds of intolerance and hatred." Governor Lowry vehemently promised to "drive a wooden stake through the ugly heart of discrimination."[18]



New anti-gay initiatives in 1993 and 1994 forced the formation of a successful statewide "Hands Off Washington" campaign that drew widespread political support, in this case from Mayor Norm Rice (above, left) and Police Chief Norm Stamper, who joined the lesbian/gay pride march in 1994. Stamper was the first police chief in Seattle to do so. *(Geoff Manasse)*

The initiatives also spawned an activist "Bigot Busters" group. *(Geoff Manasse)*

Coincidentally, that year it had been exactly a century since the Washington legislature had adopted the state's first sodomy law. The rhetoric of "unnatural" and "perverse" that had led to the unquestioned adoption of that law was now, one hundred years later, to have its most intense clash yet with the rhetoric of equal rights for all citizens.

Also by coincidence, Cal Anderson scheduled the hearing on the civil rights bill almost one hundred years to the day after the state senate had adopted the first sodomy law.

On March 2, 1993, the hearing room in a building next to the state Capitol filled quickly, and the crowd spilled over, blocking the hallway outside. One man wearing a fluorescent green badge demanded that a security guard admit him to the room, fuming, "You've got to make room for God." In the hall behind him, others wearing green badges began chanting, "We want in! We want in! We want in!" The outnumbered guard retreated to his walkie-talkie and began calling urgently for help. "I need more security down here," he told someone at the other end.[19]

More and more green badges continued to arrive as the hour for the hearing neared, pouring from church buses from around the state in a protest organized by fundamentalist Christian ministers and Mabon supporters. Just as in 1977 Mormon women had worn blue and white ribbons at the women's conference in Ellensburg and had overwhelmed reform-minded feminists, the protesters at the Capitol wore the badges so that they could identify one another.

One hundred people could fit into the room that Cal had scheduled for the hearing, but by the time the state police responded to the call for help, seven hundred had already overrun the room and blocked the halls. Quickly, tactfully, Cal arranged to move the hearing into an unprecedented location—the house chamber itself. One hundred years after the sodomy bill had passed without public debate, there would finally be a conversation in the statehouse itself about granting equal citizenship to gays and lesbians. Witnesses and spectators poured into the seats normally occupied by legislators and then overflowed into the galleries above.

Cal's chief ally in organizing much of the supportive testimony for the night was Ed Murray, who by then was president of a statewide gay lobbying group called the Privacy Fund, itself a replacement for Brydon's now-defunct Dorian Group. Like Cal, Murray had developed a passion for politics as a young boy. Both had been raised by working-class parents, but Murray had a twist in his background that Cal did not. His family was Irish Catholic, and like many sons in such families, Murray had studied to be a priest. When he was a teenager, his mom had given him a copy of Thomas Merton's *The Seven-Story Mountain,* and, inspired by it, Murray at age nineteen had gone to Belfast to work in community centers teaching children, his real purpose to provide an American shield against bomb attacks.

Together, Cal and Murray had assembled an impressive array of witnesses to speak in favor of the bill. Murray went first with a speech carefully crafted of history. "My grandparents immigrated to this country to escape oppression," he said.

"They settled in Grays Harbor County, logged it, farmed it, and helped build Washington State. They came to this country to ensure that *all* of their children and grandchildren would have an opportunity for a home, a job, and a chance at the American dream."

Merritt Long, the director of the state Human Rights Commission, followed a few minutes later, and provoked the first response from the conservative Christians who dominated the chamber and its galleries. When Long said, "I philosophically support and conceptually agree with the bill," a man with a green badge sitting in a nearby legislator's chair stood, silently raised his Bible, and waved it in the air.

Both Cal and Murray had known that the statehouse would hear from the conservative churches, so they had prepared their own list of church witnesses. Scott Spurling, a rabbi, directly addressed the man with the Bible. "To no one's surprise, purveyors of hate do not distinguish between people of color, Christians, and sexual orientation. My family and my people stood with lesbian and gay people while they put on their pink triangles at Auschwitz and Dachau." David Serkin-Poole, a Jewish cantor, followed Spurling: "Three years ago, my partner and I adopted a child, and then another child. I am very hurt when others use and abuse religious scripture."

Shouts from the gallery began: "Shut up!" "Get out of here, you freak!"

"Homo!" someone shouted.

John Boonstra, executive minister of the Washington Association of Churches, testified next: "We don't speak with one voice as religious communities, but we do unanimously oppose discrimination against anyone."

Shouts: "Sodomy is an offense!"

"When does the next train to Auschwitz leave?"

A mother with a lesbian daughter started to respond: "This wave of intolerance hearkens back to the Salem witch hunts."

The green badges began chanting in unison: "Let the Christians talk, let the Christians talk."

Cal rose. He was short, but he could be imperious when the occasion demanded. He slowly and deliberately crossed his arms. The chanting continued. He simply stood. And finally, after what seemed an interminable time, the chanting stopped.

One of the next speakers would be the lobbyist for the state's Catholic bishops, Ned Dolejsi. Cal was counting on Dolejsi's statement to outweigh the antics of the fundamentalists and to give the bill a secure boost. After all, even with all the years of agonizing debate over dogma versus pastoral ministry to gay Catholics, the Washington bishops had steadfastly supported civil rights legislation ever since it had first been introduced sixteen years earlier.

Cal especially needed the bishops' support that night.

The Catholic Church's declarations on statewide political issues, such as the gay civil rights bill, are crafted by the three prelates in the state: the archbishop in Seattle

and the bishops in Spokane and Yakima. To ensure they speak together, the three meet in closed conferences to settle differences on any particular bills. In the 1970s and 1980s, Seattle's gays and lesbians benefited from the fact that two of the three, Hunthausen in Seattle and William Skylstad in Yakima, were appointed by Pope Paul VI and influenced by that pope's broad interpretations of Catholic doctrine. Even the bishop in Spokane, Lawrence Welsh, had been appointed only one month after the selection of Pope John Paul II, before the more conservative pope could have much impact on the selection of the hierarchy.

In 1990, Welsh had retired and Skylstad had relocated to Spokane, leaving the Yakima diocese open. To that central Washington area, populated heavily by Hispanic farm workers and white vineyard owners, John Paul II had sent a theologically conservative priest named Francis George.

A year later, Hunthausen had announced an early retirement. When he had reached his compromise with the Vatican in 1987, he had planned to stay for another ten years, one reason everyone had been comfortable with the idea of a coadjutor bishop being appointed. Such coadjutors usually serve only when bishops are ill or very close to retiring, and since Hunthausen was neither, most figured the coadjutor, Thomas Murphy, was simply a harmless part of the deal. Some priests had even worn buttons saying, "Hunthausen—No more fears, ten more years." But after only three years, Hunthausen had decided to turn his office over to Murphy.

At first, it seemed Murphy would continue Hunthausen's touch. Unlike Donald Wuerl, sent as the pope's personal representative during the troubled Vatican investigation of the Seattle archdiocese, Murphy was a Northwesterner who had developed a reputation much like Hunthausen's when it came to pastoral ministry. The epitome of a gray-haired, bespectacled Irish Catholic bishop, he had a good sense of humor and a willingness to let his friends call him "Gracie" instead of "Your Grace." He hosted pizza parties and, in Montana, when his budget could not support a diocesan weekly newspaper, he had published a monthly newsletter that he wrote, edited, and photographed himself. He seemed flexible and accessible. Typical of the response to Murphy's arrival in Seattle had been the statement from the Reverend Michael Ryan, who, as archdiocesan chancellor and the head priest of St. James Cathedral, was second in visibility in the diocese. He had told the *Seattle Times,* "I think he won our hearts very quickly—I think we saw him as one of us, someone we can walk the road with—happily."[20]

Yet Murphy had not been considered as prophetic and visionary as Hunthausen. He was not one to push the church or to try to "discern"—Hunthausen's favorite word—what God was calling church leaders to do. When he had arrived in Seattle, some priests had even wondered whether Murphy, like Wuerl, had any secret orders from the Vatican or whether Rome was planning other surprises for the archdiocese. One typical comment had been made by the Reverend Jim Moran, of Capitol Hill's St. Patrick's parish. He had told the *Seattle Times* that "I think a lot of people still feel another shoe is to fall, but they don't know who's holding it."[21]

In August 1991, Hunthausen had bid his farewell at St. James Cathedral. In his final speech as archbishop, he had still urged the message he had pressed for years. "Are we a church," he asked, "that includes gays, welcomes the divorced and separated, offers equal opportunity to women? . . . Are our doors sincerely open to the least of our brothers and sisters?"[22]

During the 1991–92 legislative session, the final one over which Hunthausen would set policy for the archdiocese, Cal had opted for pushing the hate crimes bill instead of the job and housing protection bill. He had had Hunthausen's support for that, and if the new conservative bishop in Yakima had objections, Hunthausen and Skylstad had been able to overcome them. For the 1993 session, though, Murphy was setting policy for the archdiocese, and Francis George was more firmly ensconced in Yakima. Not only that, but in July 1992, a new Vatican document on homosexuality had been leaked. In it, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger repeated his belief that homosexuality was an "objective disorder," but he also went even further and declared that discrimination against gays and lesbians could be just.[23]

That directly contradicted the distinction the Washington State bishops had long made—that whatever one thought of the sinful practice of homosexuality, homosexuals themselves still deserved civil rights.

After Cal silenced the fundamentalist shouts and unfolded his arms, Dolejsi moved to the microphone.

"We find ourselves in an awkward situation this evening," he began.

Cal frowned. It was not the start he expected.

"We might oversimplify serious questions," Dolejsi continued. "We are not in favor of harassment or discrimination. We advocate for those unjustly discriminated against."

Dolejsi was speaking slowly and, it seemed, painfully. "On the face of it, this bill is about prohibiting discrimination."

"But," he added. The conjunction lingered long enough in the air to be noticeable to everyone in the audience. Then, Dolejsi continued solemnly. "Procedurally, we think it might be a mistake. The original drive for civil rights was to protect people because of who they are or what they believe, not because of what they do.

"For a person who is homosexual by orientation only, discrimination is not a problem. But this bill protects whatever their behavior might be."

It was the same old argument that had long been used against gays and lesbians. If they stayed in the closet and did not act on their homosexuality, they would be protected. But if they came out or practiced homosexuality, they would lose the "protection."

Dolejsi was beginning to speak more rapidly, as if in a hurry to get through the unpleasant business. "What would happen to family law? To employment law? We may not want to be hurried into a broader acceptance of homosexuality." Finally,

Dolejsi reached the bottom line. The three Washington State bishops had suddenly and inexplicably opted for ellipsis.

"We cannot support the present legislation," he declared, "but we will not oppose it."

It was a stunning reversal. After a decade and a half of advocating for the bill, the Catholic bishops had declared neutrality.

Only those wearing green badges stood and applauded.[24]

Within hours, Ed Murray was busy trying to arrange a meeting with the archbishop as well as with Dolejsi to find out what had happened. The sudden change had caught both him and Cal off guard. Had Cal miscalculated and not seen the possibility of a switch? Communication between the two major constituencies on Capitol Hill had clearly broken down. Could the church's position be reversed? Did Murphy understand that the bill was the same one the bishops had supported for years?

At first the bishops' new neutrality did not seem to affect the votes. Cal had enough support to move the bill out of the State Government Committee the following day, seven to two , with some legislators even commenting to him that the catcalls on the chamber floor had given them a good demonstration of the kind of prejudice gays and lesbians faced in Washington State. Nine days later, the bill passed the full house by a comfortable fifty-seven to forty-one, and was sent to the senate Law and Justice Committee.

Knowing that Dolejsi would be back to lobby, Murray, Cal, and, for good measure, a gay woman who was a member of one of the archdiocese's most prominent Irish Catholic families, met the archbishop, along with Dolejsi and the archdiocese's press spokesman, John McCoy, on a Saturday night, drinking beer and soda in the mahogany-lined dining room at the archbishop's mansion.

"The discussion went something like this," Murray recalled later. "The archbishop would express a concern or Ned Dolejsi would express a concern—such as about this [bill] leading to marriage. And we'd answer it: The laws governing marriage are different from the laws governing discrimination. The archbishop would act very surprised." Another concern would be expressed about the law forcing churches to hire gays and lesbians. "We explained the law will not affect churches or small businesses. There are various exemptions."

"Every time, the archbishop acted surprised by this new information. Every time that would happen, we would feel closer to an agreement."[25]

To Murray, Seattle's new archbishop seemed ill informed, obviously unable to have shaped the state bishops' conversation about the bill with the same force Hunthausen would have had. The grapevine was already alive with word that it was Bishop George who had actually forced the new stance, taking his cue from the Ratzinger document leaked the previous July. At the time, Pat Roche, a Seattle

Catholic who had been national president of Dignity, had asked Murphy for a clarification, and Murphy had separated the Seattle archdiocese from the document, calling it an internal Vatican memorandum with no force. Murphy had promised Roche at the time that he would continue to "oppose any harassment, prejudice and discrimination against any member of the human family."[26]

Yet at the hearing in Olympia nine months later, all the "serious questions" Dolejsi had been raising seemed to come directly from the new Ratzinger document. So did all the questions being asked at Murphy's dining table.

According to Murray, the discussion lasted for hours and ended with the archbishop wanting more information. Once they had finished, the Privacy Fund board members divided up the research Murphy had requested, especially information on distinguishing between the state's marriage and antidiscrimination laws. The next morning, Murray delivered the package of information to Murphy. "I left it at his doorstep and then sent an official packet in the mail." For him, the discussion had been poignant. "I don't think I was ever happier to be a Catholic and a gay person than that night when we left. It just seemed like we were so close."

But then, nothing changed.

At the state senate, the Catholic line put forward by Dolejsi did not change. Once again, he turned up at a hearing, giving what Murray called "the most unneutral neutral statement I've ever heard." Some initially favorable Catholic senators faltered in the face of the hierarchy's "neutrality." Although the senate Law and Justice Committee eventually passed the bill by a narrow five to four vote, it was then referred to the Ways and Means Committee, ostensibly to determine what the cost of enforcing the new antidiscrimination provision would be. Cal knew immediately that the bill was in trouble, not because the cost of enforcing it would be substantial—there was plenty of indication it would cost little if anything—but because the maneuver seemed a way of stalling. Days passed, seven in all. Nothing happened in the committee itself, the chair, Nita Rinehart, refusing to bring it up for a vote because, she said, she could not find enough support to do so. Several conservative Democrats from rural districts had broken ranks and decided to side with the Republican opponents. Cal tried to persuade the Democratic majority leader in the senate, Marc Gaspard, to pull the bill out of the committee and get it to the senate floor, where he thought he could still win. Gaspard refused.

Murray remembers Cal angrily snarling at him, "Get your Catholic lobbyist out of here. Shut him up!" Years later, Murray would continue to feel that the change in the bishops' stance had been the single most important factor in killing the best chance the bill ever had of becoming law.[27]

By early April, the gay civil rights bill was, once again, dead.

Its companion legislation—the malicious harassment bill—fared better, offering lesbian and gay activists at least one victory, albeit a smaller one. Ironically, the very vociferousness of the opponents to the lesbian/gay civil rights bill seemed to

persuade some legislators that hatred of homosexuals was so deep that it justified the need for the hate crimes bill. It passed the house overwhelmingly, eighty-five to twelve, and the senate, twenty-nine to twenty.

For Cal, the civil rights failure was bitter—particularly since the defeat came from his own Democratic colleagues and from the Catholic bishops who had long supported the bill. When he walked onto the floor of the house to concede, he showed none of his usual humor. "I grieve for this loss," he said sadly. "Now I must go around this state and tell lesbians and gay men that they still can't enjoy equal rights or equal justice . . . simply because they are gay."

He looked around the chamber. "I have a dream," he said slowly, "that one day gay men and lesbians will be judged not by their sexual orientation but by their ability to do their job, to contribute to our society."

Then he walked off the floor, looking much older in his suit than he had ever looked before. He told a reporter the defeat had "taken a toll."

"Like having a friend die," he said.[28]

Cal knew his days in the Washington legislature would be brief. Always, he felt his own quests there would have to succeed in a very short time. A deadline stared at him.

As had so many other gay men, Cal had tested positive for the antibodies to the AIDS virus in the 1980s—indeed he had been HIV-positive during his entire time in the legislature. But few people knew. As Cal would say later, he wanted to be known as a legislator, not as an "AIDS poster boy."[29]

The good news for him in 1993 was that he was still healthy—and that Lon Mabon's Citizens' Alliance failed to organize quickly enough to secure signatures for a ballot initiative that autumn. That gave Cal and the other leaders of the Hands Off Washington campaign time to begin to organize statewide. Soon enough, bumper stickers sporting the slogan appeared on cars all across the state, and HOW "citizens coalitions" were organized in about two dozen towns and cities. Importantly, they were in places like Yakima and Spokane as well as in the western part of the state. By early 1994, HOW had twelve paid staff, had raised a half-million dollars, and was preparing to raise three million dollars more.[30]

As it turned out, HOW was going to have to fight two initiatives. Mabon's group, CAW, filed one called The Minority Status and Child Protection Act, repeating its previous demands while also barring homosexuals who got divorced from heterosexual partners from ever securing custody of their children. That would be Initiative 610. A second anti-gay group, the Washington Public Affairs Council, led by a man named Doug Burman, filed what would become Initiative 608, which basically repeated the prohibitions against government granting any antidiscrimination protection to homosexuals and against schools discussing homosexuality positively.

Meanwhile, in Olympia, Cal doggedly introduced the lesbian/gay civil rights bill again, although Gaspard was still signaling he did not want the bill to make it to the senate floor for fear supportive Democratic politicians would be put on the spot in a year of tense confrontation. Still, the bill moved quickly through the house, passing by January 28, and once again through the senate Law and Justice Committee and into the Rules Committee. This time, though, the Catholic bishops dropped even the pretense of neutrality and instead actively opposed the bill. Once five conservative Democrats then declared their opposition, head counts showed that the fate of the bill rested with two moderate Republicans, Shirley Winsley of Fircrest, who had two gay nephews, and John Moyer of Spokane, a physician and member of the governor's AIDS advisory board—and a Catholic with ten children. Both had initially said they favored some sort of antidiscrimination bill, but both had also suggested studying how much discrimination against gays and lesbians was actually occurring. Such a study, of course, posed a chicken-and-egg problem: Since no law protected homosexuals, discrimination usually was not reported, and most of those who had been harmed did not want to broadcast their sexual orientation since there was no law in place to protect them from future discrimination. And the hearings themselves had already generated anecdotal information. Still, despite intense lobbying from both sides—including visits by priests and nuns to Moyer—both senators refused to commit. Without the necessary twenty-five votes to pass the bill on the senate floor, Gaspard again refused to pull it from committee.[31]

Meanwhile, the two anti-gay groups had launched their effort to gain enough signatures to put Initiatives 608 and 610 on the fall 1994 ballot. But in a replay of what had occurred in the Initiative Thirteen campaign in Seattle, they soon found themselves confronted not only by the broad-based and "respectable" coalition that Charlie Brydon had helped catalyze, but by an aggressive grassroots "Bigot Busters" organization that pinpointed their signature gatherers, especially in western Washington, and immediately sent pro-gay activists into the field to talk people out of signing the petitions. When the deadline of July 8 arrived, neither anti-gay initiative had enough signatures to even try to qualify. Each had needed about 182,000 valid signatures from registered voters. Burman's organization had collected about that number of total signatures for I-608, but lacked the usual 15 percent extra "cushion" believed necessary to account for signatures from unregistered voters and for duplications. Mabon's CAW, so effectively labeled as Oregon "outsiders," had collected only about forty thousand for I-610.[32]

Two months later, in September 1994, Cal Anderson learned from his doctors that his immune system had declined enough for him to now be officially considered to have AIDS. Still, he told only his closest friends. He wanted to make one more attempt in his quest to win civil rights protections for lesbians and gays. And, he figured, if the state senate was the block—as it had been for several years in a

State Representative Cal Anderson (left, with his partner Eric Ishino) became the first openly gay legislator in Washington, shown here in the statehouse in 1993, a century after the state passed its first sodomy law. *(Geoff Manasse)*

row—then the state senate was where he would have to go for votes. Bravely—given his health—he declared his candidacy.

That October and November, he campaigned through countless meetings and speeches, always staying optimistic about again introducing a lesbian/gay civil rights bill. Given his popularity in the Forty-third District, there was never any doubt about the election outcome. Cal won an astonishing 81 percent landslide.

But it turned out to be the year of a nationwide—and statewide—Republican sweep. The Democrats lost the state house of representatives and kept their majority in the state senate by only one vote. Cal's hope for a win on the civil rights bill died the same night he was elected to the senate.

A few weeks after taking his new seat, Cal learned he had developed non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a complication of AIDS. His declining health becoming more visible, he sent each constituent a letter before the news became public. Characteristically, he said he planned to aggressively fight the lymphoma with chemotherapy. By then, though, most of his gay constituents already knew too well the inevitable course of the disease. Those with AIDS had immune systems so weakened already that the chemotherapy would neither cure the lymphoma nor send it into remission for very long.

By the time he died of AIDS in 1995, Anderson had been elected to the state senate and commanded wide respect for his legislative abilities. *(Geoff Manasse)*

Cal's own prognosis at the time: "Who knows? I've known people who've suffered greatly. Naturally I see myself as one of those who will live a long life. I have every intention of beating this. I'm thinking of how I can use this situation as an opportunity to educate."

Governor Lowry issued a statement honoring him. "Senator Anderson will continue to fight for fairness and individual liberty as he has always done," it said.[33]

Others took the chance to send hate messages. One person cut out a photograph that had appeared in the *Seattle Times,* showing Cal now bald from the chemotherapy, and wrote, "Pervert. Walking corpse. AIDS poster girl!" Another sent a letter saying, "Why don't you admit the mistake you made in sticking your cock into the assholes of other 'gays.' Your AIDS is your reward. It's not a mystery. One and one make two. You determined your own fate."[34]

To ensure that the Democrats could have their one-vote majority on crucial issues, Cal repeatedly made painful drives to Olympia. He maintained his sense of humor. Bald, he arrived late for a legislative meeting one day and joked, "I couldn't do a thing with my hair." He grew short of breath, drinking water constantly to wet his mouth and lips. At age forty-six, he took to walking with a cane. In June,

he skipped an appearance as grand marshal of Seattle's gay pride parade because of blood clots in his legs and lungs.

He began planning for the inevitable.

Ed Murray remembered: "Cal and I were discussing his funeral. He said, 'What should I do?' And I said, 'It'll probably be a big thing.'" Murray suggested he plan the funeral at St. Mark's, the Episcopalian cathedral on Capitol Hill.

Cal had another idea.

"He said instead," Murray recalled, "'I really would like to have it at St. James.'"[35]

Cal was not Catholic, and certainly after the 1993 betrayal by the Catholic bishops, he was not a friend of the local church hierarchy. But Cal's mother had converted to Catholicism a few years earlier and had even traveled to Rome, where she had a photo taken with the pope. Many of Cal's constituents were Catholic, of course, and they, Murray knew, "really liked him."

Even so, Murray was momentarily incredulous that the state's most symbolic gay leader would ask that his funeral be held in the spiritual center of the archdiocese that had caused his most significant defeat. Cal's own gay constituents would likely be furious. And who knew how the Catholic hierarchy would react. When the bishops helped scuttle the civil rights bill, they had triggered a public feud on Capitol Hill. Several priests and nuns who had been working in the gay and lesbian ministry publicly denounced their own archbishop's action and then quit the ministry, saying it was hypocritical for the church to pretend to compassionately minister to gays and lesbians while working against gay civil rights in Olympia. Even Father Michael Ryan, the head priest at St. James Cathedral who had welcomed Murphy's arrival in Seattle, had professed disagreement on the issue with the new archbishop.

Still, when drag performer Kris Anderson—Crystal Lane—had died of AIDS a year earlier, he too had requested and received a Catholic funeral at St. James. His had been presided over by the Reverend David Jaeger, one of the priests working in the gay and lesbian ministry. Jaeger had pointedly used the occasion to note that if gays were sinners, so was the Catholic Church.

If a drag queen could be buried from St. James, why not the state's leading gay politician?

Murray remembered answering Cal. "I said, 'Well, maybe you could have it there.' But I was thinking to myself, 'My God, I'm setting this guy up to be hurt. This is the Catholic cathedral.'"

Like an innocent boy, Cal said, "Could you ask?"

Hesitantly, Murray phoned the Reverend Jerry Stanley, the priest who had been in charge of the archdiocese's gay and lesbian ministry. Stanley had been one of those who publicly disagreed with Murphy's retreat on civil rights.

Stanley agreed to call Mike Ryan, the cathedral's pastor. It did not take long to

get the answer back, and it was yes. Stanley also told a surprised Murray that Ryan would like to preside at the funeral himself.

In late July, Cal granted what was to be one of his last interviews—perhaps appropriately to a student from the Jesuits' Seattle University, Jill Bateman. He had grown gaunt and tired, except when he talked of his parallel loves: for his partner, Eric Ishino, and for the state legislature. Once again, his favorite quotation turned up:

"Politics is the best way for one person to help a lot of people."

"I really see that," he added. "My being the first openly gay member of the legislature really opened some eyes. They've got to see that we care about education, transportation, all the issues." Among his proudest accomplishments, he said, were the more technical pieces of legislation that had helped widen participation in elections by making it possible for anyone to request an absentee ballot or to register to vote while renewing a driver's license.

"It's fun to have been in the battle and been able to get things done."

His message? Bateman asked.

"Continue on with the effort . . . We'll get it. We'll get it."[36]

On Friday, August 4, 1995, Cal Anderson died at the age of forty-seven. Two nights later, more than six hundred men and women walked silently along Broadway, their hands cupped around candles against a brisk August wind.

In the days that followed, even Cal's political opponents would acknowledge his impact. One of his most strident critics had been a conservative Republican newspaper columnist in Seattle named John Carlson. But after Cal's death, Carlson crafted perhaps the best eulogy. Writing in the *Seattle Times,* he told those in his own party to "approach politics the way Cal Anderson did" if they wanted to gain respect.

"This would seem surprising advice," Carlson wrote. "Anderson was a liberal Democrat from Seattle's most liberal district. His most cherished political goal in his eight and a half years in the Legislature was a gay rights bill that I oppose. But his short time in political office . . . was guided by qualities and a sense of character that are timeless in defining the virtuous public servant."

"Anderson," Carlson continued, "entered public life believing in something bigger than himself. His work carried a mission statement that was backed up with a clear political agenda aimed at something more meaningful than his own career. . . . Anderson was honest. As a former lobbyist told me, 'He voted on what he ran on and ran on how he voted.' No wonder why he was viewed as one of the top half-dozen lawmakers in the Legislature. . . . Being on the opposite side of many issues, I could argue that society is better served if it resists most of Anderson's liberal political views. But I can argue at least as persuasively that American society—all of us—are better off for his being here. Much better."[37]

Similarly, the *Times* lauded Anderson's career in politics, and stories noted that

in a poll of legislators, his colleagues had ranked him as one of their most effective.[38] The gifts of an openly gay man were being acknowledged—openly.

When the day for the funeral arrived, more than two thousand people completely filled the seats and the aisles of the cathedral that had become such a symbol of the gay struggle to win public acceptance in Seattle. The crowd flowed outward onto the plaza overlooking the mudflat. It would virtually be a state funeral, Cal's body lying under the dome, his own most personal attempt to advance the conversation between Capitol Hill's two dominant cultures made dramatically clear.

The governor and the leaders of the legislature arrived and sat to one side of the casket. It had been draped with an American flag in honor of Cal's service in Vietnam and with a red ribbon for those who had died of AIDS. Family and friends sat to another side. Behind Ed Murray was William Sullivan, the Jesuit president of Seattle University, surrounded by a crowd of priests. All the top hierarchy of the archdiocese were present—except the archbishop. The *Seattle Gay News* reported that only Anderson could have inspired such diverse mourning. "Legislators, judges and local officials sat near leathermen." When the drag queens of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence entered wearing their full habits and winged white nun's caps, the newspaper reported, one person said "Now it really is divine."[39]

Father Ryan rose to the pulpit. Not everyone buried from the cathedral had his eulogy spoken by the cathedral's head. Once again, the symbolism was clear. What could not be said through dogma could be done through ministry.

Ryan talked about visiting Cal in the hospital. Like so many others in Seattle who had learned from those who died of AIDS, Ryan said that "before long, I felt like I was visiting a dear friend. Cal opened his life to me, as he did to so many."

"I am better for it."

Ryan compared Cal Anderson to John F. Kennedy, saying that both men had "great stature and great substance." "Cal believed that all people counted," Ryan continued, "the little as much as the great, the marginalized as well as the mainstream." That, he said, was as every Christian should. Then, pointedly, he reminded everyone that one day, Cal's dream would come true: Gays and lesbians would indeed have equal civil rights.

"It is a hero we have come to celebrate and remember today," he added. "With uncommon courage and uncompromising honesty, Cal Anderson made his mark on our city, our state, our country and our conscience."

"Most importantly, our conscience."[40]