



October 12, 2017

On National Coming Out Day (October 11, 2017)

I did not want to let yesterday pass without calling to our attention this important opportunity to reaffirm our responsibility and our most deeply held value to support our LGBTQ community—as well as ourselves—in declaring our authentic selves. National Coming Out Day is not just for others but for each one of us, since life is really about little else than the journey to achieve our true identities, our authentic selves.

As an English teacher, I have tried all my life and too often failed to lead my students to develop their unique voices. Over the years a few of my courageous students came out in their essays, a joyous moment for both of us. Today, I realize much better the voice I really was trying to achieve was my own. National Coming Out Day is for all of us.

I include this link to more information from the Human Rights Campaign that could be of help to you or to someone near you:

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/national-coming-out-day>

On this day I also want to thank in particular Dr. Ardel Haefele-Thomas, our colleague and Chair of the department of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Studies. Ardel's leadership is a gift to us all and has been nationally recognized. Ardel appears in a documentary just released, *Coming Out: A 50 Year History*. Ardel has kindly provided this link to the film. The Vimeo password is "rainbow":

<https://vimeo.com/233699947>

Finally, I want to congratulate our award-winning *The Guardsman* for its excellent reporting on the City College transgender community in this week's issue. The report accurately describes how much more work we have to do to arrive at a safe and secure community for all.

Mark

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