



Delaware Valley Legacy Fund honors its heroes

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With the presidential election rapidly approaching, LGBT Philadelphians continue to evaluate the slew of local, statewide and national candidates. And in this election season, the Delaware Valley Legacy Fund honored local LGBT leaders and politicians at its second annual Heroes party on Oct. 4.

Attendees gathered at Partridge Architects' offices in the Bell Atlantic Tower to honor openly gay Pennsylvania House candidate Kevin Lee [D-Lansdowne], Citigroup [Citibank and Smith Barney] and Planned Parenthood of Bucks County's Rainbow Room. DVLF executive director Perry Monastero opened the ceremony with the story of a lesbian couple who faces more than \$35,000 in medical bills because an uninsured partner developed kidney stones.

"She's been trying to get health insurance for her partner at work, but they don't make it easy," Monastero said. "I'm angry because this could put them in a huge hole, and it's all because we don't have the same rights and protections as everyone else."

Lee, who spent the morning knocking on doors in Lansdowne, received DVLF's "Hero of the Year" award. He was quick to point out he feels he is not a one issue candidate, but Lee added he wants to be a voice for LGBT Pennsylvanians in Harrisburg.

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Lee stressed he does not plan to introduce a bill to extend marriage to gay and lesbian Pennsylvanians. He added, however, he feels a step-by-step approach towards extending housing protections, domestic partner benefits and other pro-LGBT provisions in the Commonwealth is more viable.

"I certainly will work with the other legislators to make sure we have equality across the board," Lee said.

Openly lesbian House candidate Fern Kaufman [D-Thorndale] was another politician who turned out. She is campaigning to unseat incumbent state Rep. Tim Hennessey [R-North Coventry Township] in the 26th House District. Kaufman pointed to the expansion of gambling in the Commonwealth to fund education as one of her top priorities if elected. And she echoed Lee's position against the introduction of a gay marriage bill.

"Of course I am a supporter of gay marriage, but I also think that there has to be a reality to the cause," she said. "I can't walk in on day 1 and say I'm going for a gay marriage bill because we'll lose. Without



Openly gay House candidate Kevin Lee [D-Lansdowne], center, joins openly lesbian House candidate Fern Kaufman [D-Thorndale], right, and her partner Cheryl Cabin, left, at the Delaware Valley Legacy Fund's annual Heroes party in Center City on Oct. 4. (Source: Matthew E. Pilecki)

educating people on why this is an important thing and why changing the state's constitution to write in discrimination is wrong, without having those discussions first you're setting yourself up for failure.

DVLF honored Planned Parenthood of Bucks County's Rainbow Room as its Community Organization Hero. Paul Foster, education assistant at the Rainbow Room, joined the organization five years ago as a youth member. He helped to create Speak Out!, a peer-education program that examines homophobia and safer-sex curriculum in schools through theater.

"As for the future of Rainbow Room, I hope there comes a day when it doesn't need to exist because young people would be accepted in their families and in their schools," Foster said. "But until then, we're hoping to get more members, expand, and hold our meetings more than one day a week."