

PFLAG community center named for retired Baylor prof_50304

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WACO-Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays recently opened a community center in Waco named for a retired Baylor University religion professor and his wife who have a homosexual son.

The center is named for Eddie Dwyer, 92, who taught in the Baylor religion department 37 years-including six as interim department head-and his wife, Velma, who was a credit manager in the university's financial aid office 31 years.

Paul Dwyer, a Baylor alumnus who has worked the last 30 years as a specialist in the Congressional Research Service in Washington, D.C., told his parents 13 years ago he was gay.

After his son's disclosure, the father began extensive research about scientific findings and psychological studies, as well as theological and philosophical writings, on homosexuality.

He concluded homosexuality an innate condition in some people, not a choice.

In researching the Bible, Dwyer decided the scriptural references to homosexuality as an “abomination” were cultural prejudices rather than unchanging principles.

For example, he saw the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah not as consensual homosexual relations, but rather the inhospitable nature of people who abused aliens among them by placing them in sexually subservient positions.

In a paper on the Bible and homosexuality Dwyer wrote 10 years ago, he said: “A spirit of living by faith and a motive of love are primary concerns of Christians, rather than living by a system of legalistic rules.

“In light of Paul's view of God as revealed through Christ and his major emphasis on God's plan for universal redemption, I am convinced God does not judge a person on the ground of his or her inborn nature. God measures an individual by the kind of person he or she is and by the quality of the life that person lives.”

The naming of the Eddie and Velma Dwyer Community Center came not long after an openly gay student at Truett Seminary lost his scholarship and the student newspaper was censured by the administration for an editorial supporting the legalization of same-sex unions. The Dwyers maintained the timing was coincidental.

“This is not retaliation against Baylor. I set out my views long before this cropped up in the Baylor administration,” Eddie Dwyer said.

Baylor Spokesman Larry Brumley said the university had no response on the issue. “It's not a university matter,” he said. “It's a personal matter.”

Terri Jo Ryan of the Waco Tribune-Herald contributed to this report.

in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.