

Board of Directors

Bailey Bloom, President
DeWitt Ellinwood, Vice President
Don Odell, Secretary
John E. Keevert, Treasurer
The Rev. Dr. Lynn Ashley
The Rev. Steve Clunn
Sarah Birn, Esq.
Rabbi Bernard Bloom
Kenneth Bollerud
Ann Brandon
The Rev. Tom Davis
The Rev. Dr. Richard S. Gilbert
Eileen Hamlin
Ruth S. Klepper
Harsey Leonard
Damaris McGuire
The Rev. Dr. Harlan Ratmeyer
The Rev. Paul Rees-Rohrbacher
Ruth Sabo, Ph. D.
Niels Schulz
Judy Schwartz
The Rev. Sam Trumbore
Barbara Zaron

Clergy Advisory Board

The Rev. Kaaren Anderson
The Rev. Kenneth I. Applegate
Rabbi Henry Bamberger
The Rev. Johanna Barrett
The Rev. Michelle Bogue-Trost
The Rev. Ben Bortin
The Rev. Stephen C. Butler
The Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Chulak
Rabbi Matthew Cutler
Rabbi Jerome K. Davidson, D.D.
Rabbi Joshua M. Davidson
The Rev. Larry A. Deys
The Rev. Linda Dolby
Rabbi Debora S. Gordon
The Rev. Paula J. Gravelle
Rabbi Daniel Gropper
The Rev. Margaret Hart
Rabbi Alan J. Katz
The Rev. Naomi King
Rabbi Lawrence A. Kotok
The Rev. Robert C. Lamar
The Rev. William A. Lasher
The Rev. Christopher Luedde
Pastor Alexandra S. Lusak
Rabbi Linda Motzkin
The Rev. Dr. Hugh Nevin
The Rev. Larry Phillips
Rabbi Daniel Polish
The Rev. Judith Quarles
The Very Rev. David Robinson
Rabbi Jonathan S. Roos
Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld
Rabbi Jonathan Rubenstein
Rabbi Scott Shpeen
The Rev. Bruce Southworth
The Rev. Dr. Charles H. Straut, Jr.
The Rev. Raymond E. Strawn, Jr.
Pastor Scott Taylor
The Rev. Wade Wheelock
Rabbi Michael A. White
The Rev. Robert A. White

Executive Director

Robb Smith

**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF
MARRIAGE EQUALITY FOR SAME-GENDER COUPLES**

Interfaith IMPACT of New York State affirms that the civil right of marriage should be available in New York State regardless of gender for all otherwise qualified couples.

We urge the Assembly and Senate to stand for equality and justice and offer same-gender couples the civil protections of marriage that other families enjoy by passing A8590/S5884. We believe this bill will strengthen communities and benefit all the people of New York.

There is a great deal at stake for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) couples in their search for equality. LGBT families are barred from 1,138 federal and at least 500 New York State rights and responsibilities, because they are denied access to marriage. These are life and death protections that most families take for granted, such as the ability to make health care decisions for each other, inherit property, be eligible for government relief--including Social Security and Workers Compensation death benefits--and jointly adopt children.

Many of these protections are accessible only through marriage and cannot be secured through any protective action a same-gender couple might take, such as drawing up wills, powers of attorney or contracts. Incremental bills that give LGBT families civil rights piece by piece are helpful. Bills signed into law in the last few years, such as the law giving domestic partners control of a loved one's remains after they die, or the law giving domestic partners the same hospital visitation rights as spouses, are important steps in the right direction, but more is needed.

Religious marriage and civil marriage are different, and each religious group should be free to define marriage in its own way. People of faith and goodwill can and do disagree about what constitutes marriage; however, imposition of a single, religiously-biased definition of marriage in New York law goes too far. Public policy should be based on public interest.

Interfaith IMPACT of New York State is a statewide coalition of congregations and individuals from Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Reform Jewish and other faith traditions advocating from progressive and liberal religious points of view for compassion, reason and social justice in New York State public policies. Our shared faith traditions call upon all people to participate in the ongoing work of perfecting the world.

June 4, 2007