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**REMARKS AT HORIONS’ ANNUAL GALA**

**OCTOBER 7, 2017**

**ROGER DOUGHTY**

**GOOD EVENING!** I am so delighted to welcome you to Horizons’ annual gala, an evening always so very special to all of us at the foundation . . . We have the great gladness of seeing all of you, a moment to come together, to recommit ourselves, to celebrate, to dance, to raise a glass or two or – if you have a designated driver – maybe three . . . and to recognize exceptional leadership and achievement – as with this evening’s honorees.

Cleve, I remember learning about you when I was barely out of the closet, devouring a book while holed up in a tiny rented room in a sketchy part of St. Louis, stretched out across a futon on the floor – I had no chairs then – and the book was *The Mayor of Castro Street,* Randy Shilts’s great biography. I’d never have thought that, all these years later, I’d be standing on the same stage as you, saluting your lifetime of activism and history-making. Thank you for leading and inspiring so, so many of us to rise.

Kris, and all of your colleagues at TLC: what a privilege it has been for Horizons to support your courageous work. When TLC was founded 15 years ago, it was visionary, both long overdue and far, far ahead of the curve. The lives touched, bettered, saved by TLC number are innumerable. Thank you for changing the world for *all* of us.

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I don’t usually start off these remarks by talking about myself. But I hope you’ll forgive me if, just for a minute, this time I do . . . because seventy-one days ago something splendid happened to me. My partner of many years, Royce, and I were married near Lake Tahoe. We didn’t lose the rings. A towering thunderstorm that threatened our outdoor event slid by just to the east. Even the bear that later that same night tore apart a neighbor’s car had the courtesy to stay away during the celebration.

Royce and I lived in something of a happy bubble for a little while. Even better, we took a short honeymoon to a place where internet connections weren’t always great. But somehow, news still found us . . . and we’d hear about nuclear saber—rattling . . . the sudden announcement – via a tweet, for god’s sake – that transgender recruits would be barred from military service. Rumors about the fate of the DACA program. Then, just before we returned . . . Charlottesville, with not only the horror of torch-lit, hate-filled marches, but a president who soon made it clear that he sees scant moral distinction between white supremacists and those with the courage to stand against them.

And back in our favorite bubble of all – this, our fair and beloved city – we arrived to the hard-to-believe news that neo-Nazis and white supremacists were heading to San Francisco, to Berkeley – to *these* towns, *our* towns.

These are difficult and in so many ways frightening times. Our community and our country have been through many hard days, but that does little to soften the blind cruelty, the kind of overt animosity and sheer meanness of spirit that we’re witnessing today. And our community has not been silent. That is not our nature. That wouldn’t be who we are. We weren’t silent when Anita Bryant went crusading . . . when Harvey was assassinated . . . when a whole generation was dying . . . when we lost Prop 8. We did then what we’re doing now – what we *must* do now: Stand up. Lock our arms. Raise our voices. Act up. Fight back.

Now, two hundred and sixty long days since January 20, here’s the question: is the resistance is working? Obviously not nearly well enough: the damage and the suffering are already and self-evidently enormous . . . and compounding daily. The outrages accumulate, as recently as the past two days’ of pronouncements about transgender rights and religious exemptions from Jeff Sessions’ Department of Justice . . . an oxymoron if ever there was one. At the same time, I invite us to think of what resistance – *your* resistance, *our* resistance – has helped make happen. We’ve stopped any sweeping anti-LGBT executive order. We’ve slowed and partly blunted the anti-Muslim travel ban. We’ve thwarted ploy after malicious, dishonest ploy to rip away the protections of the Affordable Care Act. Even DACA was not terminated outright.

Whatever success – partial as it is – that we’re having against what felt at first like an unstoppable reactionary juggernaut, we’re having for one simple reason: *because we’re standing up for each other*. We’re not looking after only our own group’s interests. When the ban on transgender military recruits was tweeted out, yes, LGBT voices – and especially T voices – led the outcry – but protests came from veterans groups, civil rights groups, even from 56 retired admirals and generals. In the wake of the Charlottesville outrage, not just African Americans and Jews took to the streets, but countless others, too. When women marched on the day after the inauguration, many men and other allies marched alongside.

That’s why I’m so humbled by and so proud of the role Horizons played with NoHateSF, saying, unequivocally, “*No, not here, not now, not ever*.” The white nationalists and their lot menaced the *entire* community – and that’s why our response *as the LGBTQ community’s foundation* had to be for multiple communities as well.

Our power to resist comes from our standing together. We must protect our LGBTQ Dreamers – and that means defending *all* Dreamers. We must shield access to health care for every LGBTQ person – and that means guaranteeing access for *everyone*. Separated, we can all fight our brave and just fights, but we will each very likely fail. Together, we have a chance – a chance not only to resist, but a precious chance to hold high a vision of this world – to hold high a vision in the midst of this darkness – a vision that is about love over hate, compassion over greed, hope over fear, union over division . . . a vision of justice and dignity – simple human dignity – that is for *all* people.

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A year ago when I stood in this ballroom, many of us thought we knew what was coming. We could be confident that the “right side of history” was triumphing. The great river that is our movement was flowing. We thought we could see the way ahead.

Yet here we are. What that tells us – what not just these past months but centuries of human history tell us – is that none among us can predict the future. We simply do not know what’s coming - not even a week from now, much less a month, a year, or a generation. We cannot see around the next bend.

What this means from a *community* perspective – from a *movement* perspective – is that we must create the capacity to respond to whatever needs and opportunities that unknowable future will bring. And that, that is precisely why Horizons Foundation is so thrilled to have entered into the second phase of our historic Now and Forever Campaign, our campaign to ensure our community’s future for generations and generations to come. As some of you know, through the generosity of scores of donors, we surpassed our ambitious goal in the campaign’s first phase by raising $3.7 million to invest in the foundation’s capacity over multiple years – especially in seizing the greatest opportunity that our community has ever had – or *will* ever have – to build its financial capacity to meet tomorrow’s needs – whatever they may be. And that opportunity lies in giving out of our estates.

Now, in Phase Two of the Now and Forever Campaign, we’ve put forward an even bolder goal, a goal beyond any in the history of our community: to identify a minimum of $100 million in legacy gift commitments by the year 2020 – Horizons’ 40th anniversary year.

Even more thrilling than *reaching* this second phase of the campaign is to let you know that – as of tonight – we have *already* surpassed the halfway mark . . . with more than $50 million committed by donors in future legacy gifts to the foundation and our community. And we’ve only just begun to open this opportunity to hundreds, to thousands, more potential donors – this magnificent opportunity for all of us to ensure the future for this community . . . this community that for all its many imperfections has been a haven, a hope, and a home for so many of us – this opportunity to be part of something so much larger than ourselves.

It is with the funds from *these* future gifts – from the generosity and vision of *these* donors – gifts from you and from me and from thousands of others, gifts of all sizes . . . it is with the funds from these gifts that our community will ensure *not only* that our fundamental rights are secure . . . *not only* that we’re prepared to protect those most vulnerable no matter *what* we face . . . but also that *every single day*our sick are cared for, our elders supported, our youth empowered, our culture thriving, our histories told, and our movement strong. Day in and day out. Year in and year out. For all of us. For future generations. For good. Forever.

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When Royce and I got married, we felt not only joy, but overwhelming gratitude. Our day came about only because so many in our gloriously diverse movement have done so much, so often against the steepest, even the most absurd, of odds.

And standing here tonight, I once again find myself feeling overwhelming gratitude . . . seeing all of you, and feeling the love and strength and power of our community.

That is why, despite all that is happening in our country, I am so confident about our future, about where our river goes. I’ve seen what we – together – can do, what we can defeat and what we can create. And we will get through this – and we will continue to create a world in which LGBTQ people – in which *all* people – can live lives of pride, dignity, justice, and joy.

We will create that world – and we will create it together. And for that I thank every one of you here with us tonight. For every time that you refused to give up, refused to accept anything less than full equality, *thank you*. For every time you’ve taken to the streets, marched, agitated, organized, protested –  *thank you* . . . every time you’ve stood with those in harm’s way . . . that you wouldn’t shut up and go home; that you wouldn’t take “no” for an answer . . . that you just kept coming back, again and again and again. And for every time you’ve given – and given again and again and again – *thank you*.

And for your presence here tonight, at this wonderful night of celebration, from the bottom of my heart and from all of us at Horizons Foundation, thank you, thank you, thank you.