The Hobby Lobby Decision: Its Impact on the Workplace
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Arthur S. Leonard

When Arthur Leonard first came to New York Law School in 1982, only one state banned discrimination based on sexual orientation, gay sex was illegal in half the country, and there were only a handful of lawyers actively litigating sexual orientation discrimination cases.

Today, he reports proudly, the situation has radically changed. “The field has expanded dramatically—the issue of sexual orientation discrimination is being litigated all over,” says Professor Leonard, who has been instrumental in chronicling the legal aspects of the lesbian and gay community with his publication of the widely respected Lesbian/Gay Law Notes, which is available on the New York Law School Justice Action Center website. The only publication of its kind in the country, it is extensively cited in law review articles and books as a key source.

At Cornell, Professor Leonard majored in labor relations and was editor of the Industrial & Labor Relations Forum. He was also a student composer and bass player, but decided to attend Harvard Law School, graduating in 1977. After five years in a New York law firm, he decided to enter academic life.

“Teaching has given me an opportunity to help shape the law,” says Professor Leonard, who in 1985 wrote an influential law review article on AIDS discrimination that helped form the nation’s legal response to the AIDS epidemic. “I found I could play a more constructive role as a legal educator than as a practitioner.”

Over the past 30 years, Professor Leonard has written numerous articles on employment law, AIDS law, and lesbian and gay law. A frequent national spokesperson on sexual orientation law, and an expert on the rapidly emerging area of gay family law, he is a contributing writer for Gay City News (formerly LGNY), New York’s weekly lesbian and gay newspaper, and has written for several other lesbian and gay newspapers in New York City. He also blogs on LGBT and AIDS legal issues.

Professor Leonard has held a variety of influential and activist positions in civic and legal organizations, including trustee of Lambda Legal, trustee of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the City University of New York, chair of the Section on Gay and Lesbian Legal Issues of the Association of American Law Schools, and chair of the Sex and Law Committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. He is chair of the Human Resources Committee and a trustee of the Jewish Board of Family and Children’s Services of New York.

At NYLS, he advises the LGBT student group and has been an effective advocate for change on lesbian and gay issues. In 2000, Professor Leonard was honored by the Law School at a symposium commemorating the 20th anniversary of the now-celebrated Lesbian/Gay Law Notes, and was again honored by them on the publication’s 30th anniversary. Professor Leonard received the prestigious 2005 Dan Bradley Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association in recognition of his significant contributions to the advance of LGBT rights under the law.