



# arizona DEMOCRATIC PARTY

June 7, 2011

It is with great sadness that I share with the LGBT Caucus Members, Supporters, and friends, the passing of our Treasurer and Friend, Bob Bland. His passing comes after several months of healthy problems, and while being treated at UMC El Paso. Bob was 64 years old.

Born in North Carolina, Bob was a Democratic activist since childhood. He was first elected president of the High School Young Democrats in Goldsboro, NC and later to Rice University's Young Democrats where he was largely responsible for getting the Texas Young Democrats to oppose the Vietnam War in 1967.

In 1972, he returned to North Carolina and founded the Triangle Gay Alliance, the first LGBT organization in that state. He was the first openly gay person to be elected delegate to a county convention.

Bob moved on to Atlanta where he became involved in Jimmy Carter's Presidential campaign.

On victory in 1976, he moved to Washington and joined the staff of the Democratic National Committee as a direct response fundraiser.



In 1979, Bland moved to Boston as Development Director of the Union of Concerned Scientists. There, he founded the Boston-Provincetown Bicycle Ride. The 130-mile, one-day event continues to be the major annual event for the LGBT cycling community. He also was a member of the Boston Lesbian and Gay Alliance.

In 1990 Vershire, Vermont became his residence and he quickly got involved in Vermont politics as well as serving as Director of Individual Support for the Student Conservation Association. He was elected Town Auditor in 1997 and was quite involved in the 2000 battle for Civil Unions. In 2001, he became the Orange County Democratic Chair and was elected State Treasurer in 2005.

Purchasing a second home in Bisbee in 2006 and made Bisbee his full-time home in 2007. He resigned as Orange County Chair in July and was elected Cochise County Chair in November, probably becoming the first person to serve as a County Chair in two different states in the same year. He may well have become the first openly gay County Chair in Arizona.

While living in Bisbee, Bob served as the Chair of the Cochise County Democratic Party as was most recently elected Chair of Chairs for the State Democratic Party In addition to his political activities, he served on the Board of the Boys & Girls Club of Bisbee.

There was nothing Bob liked more than fighting for Democratic principals and LGBT rights. Bob was one of the founding members of the LGBT Caucus and played an integral part in getting us where we are today. His activism and spirit will be missed by those who worked closest to him. We extend our sincere condolences to Bob's family in Vermont, as well as to his extended family in Bisbee and Cochise County.

At this time there is no information about a memorial service or a place to send a donation. We will send out additional announcements as information is made available.

With Regards,

C.J. Carenza, Chair

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