

# THE DAILY RECORD

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Diversity Conference:

## Non-Discrimination Policies Relating To Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation

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**G**LBT — gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals — are collectively recognized as a minority that deserves freedom from discrimination. At least at some companies. And in some states.

At the Diversity Conference 2004, Donna Rose explained the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual process of transforming from a male to a female. A nationally recognized speaker, educator, writer and advocate for transsexual issues, she shared a unique story about her life as Dave and the personal conflict that led her to make the full sexual transition. Her experience and how employers have dealt (or not dealt) with employees going through sex changes was the focus of a well-attended session.

**Part Three  
Of Five**

### Donna Rose

Rose shared her before and after photos, talking about her youth, wrestling championships and ultimately marriage to her college sweetheart and the birth of their son.

Although conflicted for many years, Rose had managed to keep her identity conflicts private for many years. After 15 years of marriage and the onset of "middle age," Rose began seeking more and more information about gender identity.

With the help of the Internet, information has become readily available and has literally transformed transgender individuals into a community that can communicate with each other.

Starting with psychoanalysis, Rose began the long journey of exploring the best options to resolve the conflict and frustration felt in living up to someone else's expectations for so many years. The medical profession has a "standard of care" process to guide clients, surgeons, human resource personnel and families through the process of a gender transformation.

Once Rose started hormone therapy, it was time to tell her employer what was going on.

"My employer at the time was quite supportive," Rose stated. "My wife, not so much. And it took awhile to get to the point of explaining to my son what was going on."



DONNA ROSE



DAVID ROSE

Rose currently works as a manager at Dell Corp. and recently published a book titled *Wrapped In Blue*. This personal account of the process a transsexual faces is recognized as an important contribution to help society to understand some of the issues involved in this complex ordeal.

More information about Rose can be found at her website: [www.donnarose.com](http://www.donnarose.com)

### Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity Or Expression

In a handout from the Human Rights Campaign Foundation published in 2004, only a handful of states currently prohibit gender identity discrimination in the workplace, and where those rights are enforced, only four states actually have laws to protect this group in the private and public sector. States that prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in the private and public sector workplace add up to only 14.

The HRC report noted 7,149 private employers and colleges and universities provided health insurance coverage to employees' domestic partners in 2003 — an 18 percent increase from 2002.

At the end of 2003, Hawaii and Vermont (and the District of Columbia) recognized and provided varying rights to same-sex couples. California and New Jersey passed comprehensive domestic partnership laws and Massachusetts ruled in favor of marriage for same-sex couples.

A total of 7,335 public and private employers were found to offer domestic partner health insurance at the end of 2003. Many cities and counties offered certain rights such as hospital visitation for same sex partners.

The HRC Foundation also tracked 2,253 private employers and colleges and universities that included sexual orientation in the organization's primary equal employment opportunity or non-discrimination policy as of Dec. 31, 2003. This represented a 19 percent increase from the prior year.

A total of 360 of the Fortune 500 companies (72 percent) included sexual orientation in their written non-discrimination policies at the end of 2003. The closer to the top of the list, the more likely the company has an inclusiveness policy (i.e., 49 of the top 50 companies have such policies).

Employers with written non-discrimination policies including gender identity and/or expression as of Dec. 31, 2003.

Fortune 500	26
Other private employers	46
<u>Colleges, universities</u>	<u>7</u>
Total	79

Employers with written non-discrimination policies that included sexual orientation as of Dec. 31, 2003.

Fortune 500	360
Other private employers	1,493
<u>Colleges, universities</u>	<u>400</u>
totals	2,253

Source: HRC Foundation