



NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS making the case for equality



KATE KENDELL, ESQ.
Executive Director
National Center for Lesbian Rights

Kate Kendell leads the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), a national legal organization committed to advancing the civil and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and their families through litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education. Through direct litigation and advocacy NCLR works to change discriminatory laws and to create new laws and policies benefiting the LGBT community.

NCLR was lead counsel for same-sex couples in the landmark California marriage equality case which successfully challenged the constitutionality of state laws that discriminate against same-sex couples in marriage. Opponents then qualified to put the issue on the ballot in November as Proposition 8 which eliminated the right of same-sex couples to marry in the state of California. Kate was a member of the No on Prop 8 Executive Committee. After Proposition 8 passed in November by a narrow four point margin, NCLR and our legal colleagues filed a lawsuit challenging the validity of Prop. 8 in the court. The Prop. 8 legal challenge is still pending before the California Supreme Court.

Kate grew up Mormon in Utah and received her J.D. degree from the University of Utah College Of Law in 1988. After a few years as a corporate attorney she pursued her real love—civil rights advocacy—and became the first staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Utah. In this capacity, she oversaw the legal department of ACLU of Utah and directly litigated many high-profile cases focusing on all aspects of civil liberties, including reproductive rights, prisoners' rights, church/state conflicts, free speech, and the rights of LGBT people.

In 1994 she accepted the position as Legal Director with the National Center for Lesbian Rights and made the move to San Francisco. As Legal Director, Kate was responsible for strategy and vision for NCLR's legal program including coordination of all litigation, *amicus curiae* participation, and litigation strategy.

In 1996 Kate was named as NCLR's Executive Director. In that capacity, she is responsible for day to day operations and oversight of all aspects of agency operation, including coordination of all litigation and litigation strategy, and development of strategy with regard to policy and program initiatives. Major program emphasis includes all aspects of LGBT family law, youth rights, elder law, LGBT immigration and asylum, and homophobia and sports. She is also responsible for financial management and fiscal oversight of agency. Kate acts as the primary spokesperson on behalf of NCLR to the media.

She has done hundreds of interviews with dozens of print, electronic and web media, including the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Wall Street Journal*, *US News and World Report*, *The Advocate*, *Crossfire*, *20/20*, *National Public Radio*, *Salon.com*, and many others. Some of her most important and rewarding responsibilities include working with, and fostering alliances among, other community and advocacy organizations committed to social justice.

Kate and her partner Sandy Holmes live in San Francisco with their son, Julian, age 12, and daughter Ariana, age 7. Their family includes Kate's daughter Emily, age 27.