



# THE MICHAEL D. PALM CENTER

BLUEPRINTS FOR SOUND PUBLIC POLICY

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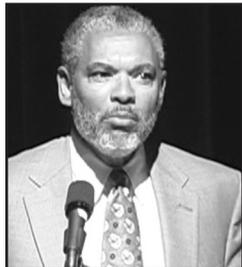
## CSSMM RE-NAMED

The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military has been re-named the Michael D. Palm Center. Announced at a UCSB October 23rd ceremony, the re-naming honors a \$1 million gift from the **Michael D. Palm Foundation**. Michael D. Palm, was a gifted educator, musician, athlete, business person and staunch civil rights supporter who embodied intellectual curiosity and service.



*Matt Foreman, NGLTF*

The Palm Center will continue to emphasize the study of sexual minorities in the military, while broadening its mission beyond that of CSSMM's. The new Palm Center's mission is "to use rigorous social science to inform public discussions of controversial social issues, enabling policy outcomes to be informed more by evidence than by emotion."



*Dean Melvin Oliver, UCSB*

During the re-naming ceremony, Matt Foreman, Executive Director of the National Gay Lesbian Task Force, delivered the first annual Michael D. Palm Lecture. Foreman discussed the role of social science research in informing highly-charged public policy issues.

## WEST POINT COMMENDS

### THESIS CHALLENGING GAY BAN

A West Point Cadet earned an academic award and Congressional recognition for a senior thesis arguing that the military's gay ban should be scrapped because it violates military values. A dozen scholars who study the military told Center researchers this was the first they had heard of a military service academy giving an award for research on gays in the military.

**Lt. Alexander Raggio's** study, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Be: A Philosophical Analysis of the Gay Ban in the U.S. Military," was written as a senior thesis for West Point's English Department, which gave it the BG Carroll E. Adams Award for best thesis. The award is presented each May to the West Point Cadet who writes the best dissertation in Art, Philosophy or Literature. The study also earned special recognition from the Vice Dean for education.

## PENTAGON SUGGESTS

### HOMOSEXUALITY IS DEFECT

Center researchers discovered a Department of Defense Instruction classifying homosexuality as a mental disorder, earlier this year. In June 2006, a group of lawmakers joined the American Psychological

Association and the American Psychiatric Association in asking the Defense Department to revise it. The Pentagon re-issued the instruction on July 10, 2006. The instruction now includes homosexuality in a list of "conditions, circumstances and defects" alongside bedwetting, alcoholism, personality disorders, mental retardation, and repeated venereal disease infections.

In November, lawmakers and the APA again asked the Pentagon to revise the instruction so as to "eliminate the continued stigmatization of homosexuality as a defect." The head of the psychiatrists' group, James H. Scully Jr. wrote, "Homosexuality is not a defect of a developmental nature." Congressman Meehan added, "it is imperative that the Pentagon immediately revise its classification of homosexuality to reflect the reality that it is neither a 'defect' nor a 'mental disorder.'"

## PRESTIGIOUS MILITARY JOURNAL PUBLISHES DEBATE ABOUT COHESION

A group of military experts engaged each other in a debate over why American soldiers are willing to risk their lives in combat. The discussion, which emerged out of an assessment of early military successes in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, was published this summer as part of a forum in the prestigious journal, *Armed Forces and Society*.

A 2003 monograph called "Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War," published by the Strategic Studies Institute, links Operation Iraqi Freedom successes to the levels of social cohesion present in the armed forces. "The U.S. Army," it argues, "is the best in the world because" its soldiers have "an unmatched level of trust" based on "close interpersonal bonds" and respect for their leaders. The study's conclusions stress both the centrality of social cohesion in motivating soldiers to fight and soldiers' commitment to the ideals of freedom and democracy.

But in this summer's *Armed Forces and Society* an article by Berkeley professor Robert MacCoun and two other civilian scholars, including Dr. Aaron Belkin, argues that the Strategic Studies publication ignores "basic scholarly guidelines for sound causal inference" and dismisses much of the literature on unit cohesion. MacCoun and his co-authors observe that while soldiers' commitment to the mission (task cohesion) is closely related to military effectiveness, emotional bonding among the troops (social cohesion) has no correlation with military performance.

The disagreements are considered an essential part of the scholarly debate on gays in the military because the rationale behind "don't ask, don't tell" depends on assumptions about the importance of social cohesion for military effectiveness. "The *Armed Forces and Society* forum provides a healthy opportunity for scholars to air their opinions on the connection between cohesion and combat," said Belkin.

## FELLOWSHIP, BOARD AND DEVELOPMENT NEWS

The Palm Center is proud to announce the following fellowships: **Jill Allyson Rough**, Graduate Research Assistant at George Mason University, is studying critical language skills and the impact of “don’t ask, don’t tell” on the Department of Defense.

Many thanks to **Jeff Wolk** for his outstanding service as Board Chair and welcome to **Steven Gluckstern**, the new Chair. Gluckstern has had a distinguished career in the financial services industry as well as an extensive background as educator, philanthropist, investor, and entrepreneur.

The Center is honored to have received a gift of \$1 million dollars from the **Michael D. Palm Foundation**. In addition, the Center is very grateful for recent gifts of \$63,000 from an anonymous donor, \$10,000 from an anonymous donor, \$52,000 from the **Wells Fargo Foundation**, \$30,000 from the **Arcus Foundation**, \$15,000 from **The Small Change Foundation**, \$10,000 from an anonymous donor, and \$5,000 from **Andrew Tobias** and **Charles Nolan**.

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